PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

(HANSARD)

SIXTH SERIES—VOLUME 125

HOUSE OF COMMONS

OFFICIAL REPORT

FIRST SESSION OF THE FIFTIETH PARLIAMENT
OF THE UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN
AND NORTHERN IRELAND
THIRTY-SIXTH YEAR OF THE REIGN OF
HER MAJESTY QUEEN ELIZABETH II

SESSION 1987-88

COMPRISING PERIOD
11 JANUARY—22 JANUARY 1988

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OFFICIAL REPORT

IN THE FIRST SESSION OF THE FIFTIETH PARLIAMENT OF THE UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND NORTHERN IRELAND
[WHICH OPENED 25 JUNE 1987]

THIRTY-SIXTH YEAR OF THE REIGN OF
HER MAJESTY QUEEN ELIZABETH II

SIXTH SERIES **VOLUM**

EIGHTH VOLUME OF SESSION 1987-88

House of Commons

Monday 11 January 1988

The House met at half-past Two o'clock

[MR. SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

The hon. Member for Coventry, North-East (Mr. Hughes), having behaved in a grossly disorderly fashion, was ordered by MR. SPEAKER *to withdraw from the House for the remainder of that day's sitting, pursuant to Standing Order No. 42 (Disorderly conduct), but he declined to comply with that direction.*

Whereupon MR. SPEAKER, *pursuant to the Standing Order, named the hon. Member for disregarding the authority of the Chair.*

Motion made, and Question put forthwith pursuant to Standing Order No. 43 (Order in debate), That the hon. Member for Coventry, North-East be suspended from the service of the House—*[Mr. Wakeham]:—*

The House divided: Ayes 152, Noes 23.

Division No. 125] **[2.50 pm**

AYES

Adley, Robert
Aitken, Jonathan
Archer, Rt Hon Peter
Arnold, Jacques *(Gravesham)*
Atkins, Robert
Atkinson, David
Beith, A. J.
Bell, Stuart
Bennett, Nicholas *(Pembroke)*
Biffen, Rt Hon John
Blaker, Rt Hon Sir Peter
Bottomley, Peter
Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Boyes, Roland
Boyson, Rt Hon Dr Sir Rhodes
Brandon-Bravo, Martin
Bruce, Ian *(Dorset South)*
Buck, Sir Antony
Burns, Simon
Burt, Alistair
Carlile, Alex *(Mont'g)*
Carlisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Carrington, Matthew
Channon, Rt Hon Paul
Chapman, Sydney
Clark, Hon Alan *(Plym'th S'n)*
Clark, Dr Michael *(Rochford)*
Coombs, Simon *(Swindon)*
Cormack, Patrick
Curry, David
Devlin, Tim
Dewar, Donald
Dickens, Geoffrey
Dicks, Terry
Dixon, Don
Dobson, Frank
Dorrell, Stephen
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James
Dover, Den
Dunwoody, Hon Mrs Gwyneth
Durant, Tony
Evans, John *(St Helens N)*
Faulds, Andrew
Fearn, Ronald
Field, Barry *(Isle of Wight)*
Forth, Eric
Foster, Derek
Fox, Sir Marcus
Freeman, Roger
Garel-Jones, Tristan
Glyn, Dr Alan
Golding, Mrs Llin
Goodlad, Alastair
Gow, Ian
Grant, Sir Anthony *(CambsSW)*
Greenway, Harry *(Ealing N)*
Gregory, Conal
Hamilton, Hon A. *(Epsom)*
Harris, David
Hattersley, Rt Hon Roy
Higgins, Rt Hon Terence L.
Hordern, Sir Peter
Howarth, Alan *(Strat'd-on-A)*
Howells, Geraint
Hughes, Simon *(Southwark)*
Hunt, David *(Wirral W)*
Hunt, John *(Ravensbourne)*
Irvine, Michael
Jack, Michael
Janman, Timothy
John, Brynmor
Kellett-Bowman, Mrs Elaine
Kennedy, Charles
Key, Robert
King, Roger *(B'ham N'thfield)*
Kinnock, Rt Hon Neil
Kirkwood, Archy
Lawrence, Ivan
Lee, John *(Pendle)*
Lilley, Peter
Livsey, Richard
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
McCrindle, Robert
Macfarlane, Sir Neil
McKay, Allan *(Penistone)*
MacKay, Andrew *(E Berkshire)*
Maclean, David
Madel, David
Marlow, Tony
Marshall, John *(Hendon S)*
Martin, David *(Portsmouth S)*
Mates, Michael
Maxwell-Hyslop, Robin
Mayhew, Rt Hon Sir Patrick
Meyer, Sir Anth
Mitchell, Andre
Mitchell, David
Moate, Roger
Monro, Sir Hect
Montgomery, Si
Morrison, Sir C
Mudd, David
Neubert, Micha
O'Neill, Martin
Orme, Rt Hon S
Owen, Rt Hon D
Page, Richard
Paice, James
Patnick, Irvine
Patten, Chris *(B*
Porter, David *(W*
Rhodes James,
Rhys Williams,
Riddick, Grahar
Rifkind, Rt Hon
Robertson, Geo
Rogers, Allan
Ryder, Richard
Sackville, Hon T
Sayeed, Jonath
Shaw, Sir Michi
Shelton, William
Shepherd, Richa
Sims, Roger
Skeet, Sir Trevo
Smith, Tim *(Bed*
Snape, Peter
Speed, Keith
Speller, Tony
Spicer, Sir Jim
Squire, Robin
Stanbrook, Ivor
Steel, Rt Hon D
Stern, Michael
Stewart, Allan *(*
Stott, Roger
Straw, Jack
Sumberg, David
Summerson, Hu
Taylor, John M
Taylor, Matthew
Thatcher, Rt Ho
Thompson, Patr
Thurnham, Pete
Tredinnick, Dav
Waddington, Rt

Wakeham, Rt Hon John
Waller, Gary
Welsh, Andrew *(Angus E)*
Wiggin, Jerry
Williams, Rt Hon A. J.
Yeo, Tim

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. David Lightbown and
Mr. Mark Lennox-Boyd.

NOES

Barnes, Harry *(Derbyshire NE)*
Benn, Rt Hon Tony
Campbell-Savours, D. N.
Clwyd, Mrs Ann
Cohen, Harry
Corbyn, Jeremy
Flannery, Martin
Heffer, Eric S.
Hughes, John *(Coventry NE)*
McCartney, Ian
Madden, Max
Mahon, Mrs Alice
Michie, Bill *(Sheffield Heeley)*
Mullin, Chris
Nellist, Dave
Patchett, Terry
Primarolo, Ms Dawn
Sedgemore, Brian
Skinner, Dennis
Thomas, Dafydd Elis
Wall, Pat
Wilson, Brian
Winnick, David

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. Bernie Grant and
Ms. Mildred Gordon.

Question accordingly agreed to.

Ordered,

That the hon. Member for Coventry, North-East be suspended from the service of the House,.

MR. SPEAKER *then directed that the hon. Member withdraw from the House, and he withdrew accordingly.*

MR. SPEAKER *left the Chair.*

PRAYERS

[MR. SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

Imprisonment of a Member

Mr. Speaker: I have to inform the House that I have received a letter dated 6 January 1988 from the resident magistrate in the petty sessions district of Belfast in the following terms:

"Dear Mr. Speaker,

Cecil Walker, Member of Parliament for Belfast, North, pleaded guilty before me at Belfast Petty Sessions on 26 October 1987, to taking part in a public procession, contrary to Article 3 of the Public Order (Northern Ireland) Order 1987. I fined him £50, to be paid within 28 days.

As that fine has not been paid Mr. Walker was today committed to Prison for a period of 7 days, unless the said sum be sooner paid.

Yours faithfully,

Maurice D. McHugh, Resident Magistrate."

Oral Answers to Questions

TRANSPORT

Air Services (Manchester-USA)

1. **Mr. Sackville:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what consultants he has had with the chairman of the Civil Aviation Authority on any recent applications for the licensing of air services between Manchester and the United States of America.

The Secretary of State for Transport (Mr. Paul Channon): None, Sir.

Mr. Sackville: Is my right hon. Friend aware that three American airlines have shown keen interest in starting new services from Manchester either to New York or to Boston? As there is general agreement in the north that direct air services from Manchester to our major markets are vital to the regeneration of the area, does my right hon. Friend agree that there are strong arguments for giving American airlines better access to Manchester under a renegotiated Bermuda agreement?

Mr. Channon: I entirely understand my hon. Friend's point of view, and many hon. Members agree with him about that important matter. It is true that the American Department of Transportation is at present considering a number of applications from American airlines for services to Manchester airport. We have continually reaffirmed with the American authorities our willingness to enter into negotiations about access to Manchester. Only last week we retabled proposals for the development of Manchester airport, and the United States Government have undertaken to study them and reply as quickly as possible.

Mr. Snape: Will the Secretary of State assure the House that those applications by American airlines will not be used as a bargaining counter by his Department to reduce the number of flights into and out of Gatwick or Heathrow? The right hon. Gentleman will know that that has been done when previous applications to fly in and out of Manchester have been made.

Mr. Channon: We want to act in the general British interest and in the interests of Manchester itself. Indeed, we have made proposals, which were developed with Manchester International Airport Authority, and which comprise a five-year development plan, providing for the progressive introduction of an agreed number of Manchester services. That plan is intended to form the basis for our discussion. I hope that negotiations can proceed and that they will be found to be generally satisfactory in Manchester as well as elsewhere.

Motorway and Trunk Road Renewal

2. **Mr. Madel:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport by what date he now expects to eliminate the backlog of motorway and trunk road renewal.

Mr. Channon: By 1992.

Mr. Madel: As the Government continue with their welcome and important programme of clearing the backlog of motorway and trunk road repair and renewal, will my right hon. Friend put into the programme a fourth lane for the M1 in the congested section from Bedfordshire to London, and a fourth lane on certain parts of the M25, which is equally heavily congested?

Mr. Channon: I am grateful for what my hon. Friend said at the beginning of his remarks. With regard to his specific question about four lanes for the M1 and the M25, I shall shortly place a contract for the addition of a fourth lane between junctions 11 and 13 of the M25. I am considering a similar study of another heavily used section between junctions 15 and 16. Just before Christmas I announced a review of the pattern of traffic on the M25 to see whether the capacity of other sections needs to be increased.

On the M1 we are adding some short stretches of climbing lane. I do not think that at this stage it is necessary to have additional lanes because, as the House

knows, before long the M40 will be completed between London and Birmingham, and I expect it to carry a substantial part of the traffic.

Ms. Armstrong: Is the Minister aware that there is still continuing disquiet about the progress of work on the A1? We see the A1 as central to the economic development of the north and, indeed, to the development of tourism, but the work means that it is difficult to travel on the road now, and our fears are that even when it is finished it will not be of sufficient standard. I hope that the Minister will reconsider his views on the A1.

Mr. Channon: A tremendous amount of work is being done on the M1. A tremendous amount of improvement is planned for trunk roads in general. The hon. Lady, of course, was referring to the A1. We are determined to make improvements. Let me say gently to the hon. Lady that one of the reasons why there are so many difficulties on the motorways and trunk roads is the backlog of maintenance caused in the late 1970s by the cuts in the maintenance programme.

Mr. Wiggin: Does my right hon. Friend agree that most users of the motorway system believe that it will never catch up? Has not the time come for a major review of the system with a view to increasing capital expenditure substantially and ensuring that the lifeline artery to our industry is brought up to date?

Mr. Channon: A review was carried out as recently as last April. I am sure my hon. Friend will be aware that capital provision for motorways and trunk roads is now higher than it has ever been. Indeed, it is 30 per cent. higher in real terms than it was in 1978-79. We have added 740 miles of new trunk road since we took office, and 350 schemes are in the pipeline. I assure my hon. Friend that the highest priority is given to that by the Government.

Rural Areas

3. **Mr. Matthew Taylor:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what representations he has received concerning the availability of transport in rural areas.

The Minister for Public Transport (Mr. David Mitchell): A number of representations were received when bus deregulation was proposed, but very few recently, as operators and local authorities have taken up the opportunities provided under the Transport Act 1985.

Mr. Taylor: I previously asked the Minister when the Government would make their response to the third report of the Select Committee on Transport on the financing of rail services. Can he now say when that response will be made? Will he seek time in the House to debate the conclusions of that report, with particular reference to local control of rail services in places such as Cornwall?

Mr. Mitchell: We expect to make a considered response to the Select Committee's report shortly. It would be quite wrong for me to speculate today in advance of doing so.

Mr. Harris: Does my hon. Friend agree that the introduction of the Transport Act 1985 has been a success in Cornwall? Will he take particular note of the extreme difficulty that has arisen in that county as a result of the crass decision by the Cornwall and Isles of Scilly health authority to abolish completely the hospital car service? Will my hon. Friend have discussions with the Development Commission to ensure that a grant is made from the rural development fund to the new voluntary car service, Medilink, so that it can help fill that gap?

Mr. Mitchell: I am aware that the hospital car service has been withdrawn. I understand that the county council is waiting to see whether any commercial service is put forward. Of course, the council has powers to subsidise such a service if it deems that to be right and proper. There is also, as my hon. Friend said, the opportunity of using part of the £1 million a year that the Department of Transport has given to the Development Commission for this sort of purpose.

ATTORNEY-GENERAL

"Spycatcher"

27. **Mr. Winnick:** To ask the Attorney-General whether it is intended to take any further measures against the publication of the book by Mr. Peter Wright entitled "Spycatcher" and if he will make a statement.

The Attorney-General (Sir Patrick Mayhew): Our litigation in Australia, New Zealand, Hong Kong and this country is continuing.

Mr. Winnick: Will 1988 see the end of all the ludicrous measures taken by the Government over "Spycatcher", and the restrictive measures taken against the media in this country that want to report matters of genuine public interest? Does the Attorney-General, as a senior member of the Government, ever wonder whether the amount spent on this matter — £500,000, or, more likely, £750,000—could have been far better spent on ensuring that children in need could have their operations on the National Health Service without all the waiting and difficulties that such children and their parents now face?

The Attorney-General: As is now well understood, the Government's sole objective in the litigation has been to protect the lifelong duty of confidentiality owed by former members of security services to the Crown. I do not believe that the people of this country regard that as ludicrous. It is sometimes necessary to spend money to defend an important principle. I believe that the money has been well spent.

Mr. Aitken: How much money has the taxpayer had to spend so far on this litigation in international and national courts?

The Attorney-General: Approximately £500,000 has been spent, and about £78,000 on travel costs.

Mr. Fraser: Does the Attorney-General realise that if he were to apply for a legal aid certificate to continue the litigation he would probably be refused on the ground that it was a waste of public money? Now that "Spycatcher" is so freely available throughout the world and this country, why does the Attorney-General not drop these ludicrous proceedings and merely continue to obtain an account of the profits of the book? I do not believe that anyone disputes that that would be the proper course of action.

The Attorney-General: My answer to the first question is no, because the Government have been concerned to defend the principle that I have already identified this afternoon. It has already become common ground that

there is a lifelong duty of confidentiality. What remains at issue is the extent of that duty and the availability of means to enforce it in certain circumstances.

As to publication elsewhere in the world, it is important to uphold the duty of confidentiality by demonstrating by an order of the court that it is not open to a former member of the security services to publish in his own country what purport to be his memoirs and to make a profit thereby.

Mr. Stanbrook: Does my right hon. and learned Friend agree that the case of Mr. Anthony Cavendish fully justifies the Government——

Mr. Speaker: Order. That is not covered by this question.

Departmental Select Committees (Memoranda)

28. **Mr. Allen:** To ask the Attorney-General how many memoranda *(a)* the Law Officers and *(b)* the Lord Chancellor have submitted to the departmental Select Committees since 1979.

The Attorney-General: No central record is maintained in either Department of evidence submitted to departmental Select Committees. There is no record of a Law Officer having submitted such a memorandum, but on one occasion written questions which had been addressed to a Law Officer were answered by letter. Inquiries indicate that since 1979 four memoranda have been submitted by the Lord Chancellor's Department.

Mr. Allen: Why is there not a Select Committee covering the work of the Attorney-General's Department?

The Attorney-General: Because the House of Commons so decided in 1979.

Mr. Mates: Has not the action in pursuing the "Spycatcher" saga been entirely justified by the subsequent——

Mr. Speaker: Order. That relates to the previous question. We are now on question 28.

Mr. Campbell-Savours: Has the Attorney-General's Department never submitted a memorandum on the operation of the Official Secrets Act? Does it intend in the near future to submit a memorandum on the operation of that Act? Prior to the debate on Friday, can we expect a statement on the Government's proposals for reform of that legislation?

The Attorney-General: The answer to the first two questions is no. The answer to the third question is that that is a matter for the Home Secretary.

Family Court

29. **Mrs. Virginia Bottomley:** To ask the Attorney-General when he expects to bring forward his proposals for a family court.

The Attorney-General: The Government are concerned to achieve the best possible arrangements for dealing with family business in the courts. Consideration is being given to the options in the light of consultation and further information that is being obtained. Ministers will not be in a position to take decisions until this work is complete.

Mrs. Bottomley: Has my right hon. and learned Friend had time to study the remarks by Sir John Arnold, on his retirement as president of the High Court family division, that he could see no such inevitable substantial increase in public spending on the introduction of a family court that could justify its delay on fiscal grounds? If my right hon. and learned Friend is considering cost, will he also consider the potential savings on supplementary benefit and legal aid that would be made by the introduction of a comprehensive conciliation service? Above all, will he consider the saving in human misery that will be made when we put an end to our outdated, incoherent and overadversarial court system?

The Attorney-General: I share my hon. Friend's great respect for the former president of the family division. Of course costs have to be considered when reflecting upon any means of improving our present system, which is indeed, open to criticism, as I know my hon. Friend believes. All the options are being considered. I shall, of course, draw to the attention of my noble Friend the Lord Chancellor the contribution that my hon. Friend has just made.

Mr. Alex Carlile: Will the right hon. and learned Gentleman call to his noble Friend's attention the problems that currently arise, sometimes with great injustice, in connection with legal aid? Will he especially mention to him that wives receiving voluntary maintenance have it counted as part of their income, even if it is payable to the children? Will he ask his noble Friend to bear in mind the legal aid position in reviewing the whole family court system?

The Attorney-General: Yes.

Mr. Sims: Does my right hon. and learned Friend recall that in 1974 the Finer committee recommended the establishment of a family court, that in October 1986 the Government asked for comments on that consultation paper, and that nothing further has happened? Does he appreciate that some of us who favour the introduction of family courts feel that the Government's policy on this issue is one of procrastination?

The Attorney-General: I am quite satisfied that there is no dragging of feet. As my hon. Friend, with his experience in these matters, will know, the matter is complex. A great deal is going on in the Lord Chancellor's Department. The civil justice review bears upon this and there is a degree of overlap with other matters that are being considered for innovation and reform. Ministers have asked for further information following the report of the interdepartmental committee, and as soon as he can my noble Friend the Lord Chancellor will put forward recommendations for the decision of his colleagues. I cannot give a date for that but we wish to do that as soon as possible.

State Security

32. **Mr. Dalyell:** To ask the Attorney-General if he will make a statement on the outcome of his correspondence with the BBC concerning security-related matters.

The Attorney-General: The suggestion contained in my letter of 4 December to the deputy director-general of the BBC remains open.

Mr. Dalyell: What was wrong with the D-notice procedure that it was not used?

The Attorney-General: Nothing was wrong with the D-notice procedure.

Mr. Aitken: If there was nothing wrong with the D-notice procedure, will my right hon. and learned Friend tell us whether he was in correspondence or communication with the secretary or any other official of the D-Notice committee, prior to issuing his large number of injunctions?

The Attorney-General: The D-notice procedure relates to matters that the Government consider to be sensitive from the security point of view, and those are identified by D-notices which are published. The D-Notice committee is not concerned with and no D-notice bears upon the preservation of the duty of confidentiality which is owed. I have had no correspondence with the secretary of the D-Notice committee.

Mr. Beith: If the right hon. and learned Gentleman is satisfied that there is nothing wrong with the D-notice procedure, what will he say to those who have to operate it—the editors, upon whose co-operation it depends? Is it not clear that the D-notice procedure is one of the many casualties of the right hon. and learned Gentleman's rush to go into the courts about these matters?

The Attorney-General: I think not. The D-Notice committee is a non-statutory body responsible jointly to the Secretary of State for Defence through the permanent secretary and to the media through a representative. It deals with those matters which I have identified. The duty of confidentiality which is owed by former members of the security services is an obligation of a civil nature owed to the Crown, and the Crown therefore has to take such steps in the courts as it thinks appropriate to enforce that duty.

Mr. Dalyell: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. In view of the unsatisfactory nature of that reply, I beg to give notice that I shall seek to raise this matter on the Adjournment at the earliest possible opportunity.

OVERSEAS DEVELOPMENT

Ethiopia

33. **Mr. John Marshall:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the amount of assistance being given to Ethiopia.

34. **Mr. Ian Bruce:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a further statement on the British contribution to alleviating famine in Ethiopia.

The Minister for Overseas Development (Mr. Chris Patten): I returned yesterday from a visit to Ethiopia. I believe that our response to the emergency has been generous, but a sustained effort by the Ethiopian Government, donors and voluntary organisations will continue to be needed this year. In the course of my visit I therefore announced the allocation of an additional 40,000 tonnes of food aid, which we will deliver in the coming months. This will be channelled through international and voluntary agencies.

With this allocation our contribution to the food aid needs of the Ethiopian people totals 94,500 tonnes, and the overall cost of our assistance, including our share of European Community relief programmes, totals some £35 million since the beginning of last year.

We will continue to monitor the situation closely, and will consider if there is more that we should do.

Mr. Marshall: Will my hon. Friend tell the House how the assistance given by the United Kingdom and other European Community states compares with that given by the Soviet Union to its client state, Ethiopia? Will he also tell the House whether, during his recent visit to Ethiopia, he was able to raise with the Government the matter of human rights in that country?

Mr. Patten: On the first point, we have so far pledged 94,500 tonnes of food aid. As I understand it, the Soviet Union has so far committed itself to providing 2,500 tonnes of rice to Ethiopia. The European Community has pledged over 200,000 tonnes of food aid to Ethiopia. Those figures speak for themselves. I do not have the figures for armaments.

On the second point, I raised the issue of human rights in a discussion with the deputy Prime Minister of Ethiopia. I also referred to political prisoners and, in particular, to the imprisonment of members of the royal family.

Mr. Bruce: On his visit to Ethiopia, was my hon. Friend able to assess the harm done to the aid programme by the continuing war? Was he able to gauge whether there are any moves to bring peace to that troubled land?

Mr. Patten: It is extremely difficult to run a relief operation of the size required in Ethiopia in any circumstances. It is clearly even more difficult in the circumstances of war. The main threat over the next few months will come from the security situation. We should be able to get food to Ethiopia in sufficient quantities and to deal with the other logistical problems, but there is a real worry that we may not be able to truck food around Ethiopia. The European Community has called for peace in the Horn of Africa. That would be the best way of securing development in that region.

Mr. Simon Hughes: Does the Minister accept that it was a great surprise to many people in the West that famine again broke out in Ethiopia? Does he also accept that the only way of securing long-term prevention of famine is by long-term development aid? Will the Minister tell the House why that aid has been blocked until now and why even voluntary agencies have not been able to use Government funds for their food projects in Ethiopia?

Mr. Patten: The major reason for the present situation in Ethiopia is that it has not rained. That is the reason for the crop failures in Eritrea and Tigre. We and other donors have drawn a legitimate distinction between humanitarian assistance and long-term development assistance. There is no point in long-term development assistance unless one supports effective and sensible policies, as other donors such as the Swedes would argue. I hope that the Ethiopian Government are now changing their agricultural policies. That would be in the interests of the Ethiopian people and would unlock a considerable amount of development assistance from the European Community, the World Bank and other donors.

Mr. Tom Clarke: Is the Minister aware that, just a few days ago, Moira Hart, the UNICEF emergency relief officer, was able to show me a list of donor contributions to the specific UNICEF appeal for emergency aid? Although that list covers contributions from countries such as the United States and the Republic of Ireland, there is a significant absence of any contribution from Great Britain. From his own experience, does the Minister

accept that the need for non-food aid is outstanding and urgent? Therefore, will he explain to the House why there is such an omission?

Mr. Patten: The hon. Gentleman will have heard me say earlier that so far this country has contributed about £35 million in humanitarian assistance to Ethiopia. We have done as much as anyone, and more than most. We shall, of course, continue to keep other appeals under consideration, and we shall provide resources to them when we think that it is right and necessary to do so.

Sub-Saharan Africa

35. **Mr. Brandon-Bravo:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on initiatives arising from the World Bank meeting on 3 December to discuss help for the poorest and most heavily indebted countries in sub-Saharan Africa.

Mr. Chris Patten: The meting identified substantial aid resources available from Western donor countries for co-ordinated support for structural adjustment programmes in poor sub-Saharan African countries with debt problems. Her Majesty's Government stated that they expect to commit about £250 million of programme aid over the next three years to the target countries. Total pledges at the World Bank meeting amounted to $6·4 billion. In addition, the World Bank expects to commit $6·2 billion to the special programme of assistance from the eighth replenishment of the International Development Association.

Mr. Brandon-Bravo: My hon. Friend has set out a most welcome and substantial package. Will he tell us something more about the effect of long-term debt on such countries, and particularly what sums may have been written off? Although we cannot always protect people from their own folly, is there some way in which we can break the cycle of debt and trouble?

Mr. Patten: The best way of breaking the cycle to which my hon. Friend referred is to make progress in implementing the Chancellor's important debt initiative for the most debt-distressed African countries. That initiative has been widely welcomed and was endorsed at the Commonwealth Heads of Government meting and by Commonwealth Finance Ministers. Another way of breaking the cycle is for debt-distressed countries to pursue the sort of policy reforms that are already being sucessfully implemented by several African countries.

Mr. Spearing: Is it not equally important to ensure that such malevolent cycles do not recur? What sort of terms are being planned for the £6,000 million replenishment that the Minister has mentioned? Is i essential that the return on such capital lending shou within the resources of the country and, in partic should not be prejudicial to the poorest people in country, whom such loans are originally meant to be

Mr. Patten: Of course, it is essential that the t should be such as can be managed by the po countries. The terms that are offered by the IDA extremely soft. I am sure that the hon. Gentleman know about the increase in the IMF structural adjust facility. He may also know that, a few weeks ago, Chancellor of the Exchequer announced that we intending to subsidise a lending equivalent of £750 mi under the structural adjustment facility. That covers r than one sixth of the total new lending. It is not per surprising that that was welcomed by the mana director of the IMF as a remarkable contribution.

Black South Africans

36. **Mr. Stanbrook:** To ask the Secretary of State Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will ma statement about the training being provided under the programme for black South Africans.

Mr. Chris Patten: The Overseas Developr Administration is providing 330 study places for b South Africans in Britain and South Africa at a co £2·1 million in the present financial year. We expec provide 490 places in the next financial year. We bel this assistance will make a positive contribution peaceful change and development in South Africa.

Mr. Stanbrook: Sooner or later, many suit qualified and experienced Africans will be required to the senior posts in the economy and government of So Africa. What discussions have been held with the fr line states and other states in Africa, such as Nig about providing appropriate training for Africans f South Africa for this eventuality?

Mr. Patten: My hon. Friend is entirely right. Tha one reason why we have increased our expenditure on for training and education of black South Africans f just over £500,000 in 1984-85 to almost £3 million in current financial year. I hope to be able to discuss the i raised by my hon. Friend when I attend the meeting of Southern African development co-ordination confere in Arusha later this month.

Britoil

3.31 pm

Mr. John Smith (Monklands, East) *(by private notice)*: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he will make a statement on how he intends to use the Government's special share in Britoil to preserve the independence of the company.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Nigel Lawson): The powers of the special share are set out in article 71 of Britoil's articles of association.

On 18 December the Treasury put out a press statement, stating that in present circumstances the Government intend to use their special share in Britoil to prevent any bidder from gaining control of the Britoil board.

The statement went on to explain that, if and when a formal offer is made for, or control obtained of, more than 50 per cent. of Britoil's shares, paragraph 71C of the articles of association will come into effect. This allows the special shareholder to outvote all other shareholders at a general meeting on any resolution. It also allows the special shareholder to require an extraordinary general meeting. This was reaffirmed on 23 December, in the light of the statement that day by the Panel on Takeovers and Mergers about the proposed BP offer for Britoil.

No such offer has yet been made. But, whatever the circumstances, I can assure the House that the powers of the special share will be used for so long as it is in the national interest to do so.

I cannot add anything more at this stage.

Mr. Smith: The Chancellor will be aware of the widespread concern, particularly among the management and employees of Britoil, that it is well known that British Petroleum wishes to take over the company. The Chancellor's statement that he would use the golden share did not seem to act as "a formidable deterrent", as the right hon. Gentleman predicted the golden share would on a previous occasion in the House. BP seems determined to proceed with its bid.

Would it not make matters much clearer if the Chancellor were to make it clear that the purpose of the golden share is, as he has told the House on a number of occasions, to deter a bid for Britoil, rather than to in some way modify the consequences of the takeover, as BP seems to imagine it might be? I invite the Chancellor of the Exchequer to make it clear that Britoil will be maintained as an independent company, with its corporate headquarters in Glasgow, and that the fundamental basis of the golden share will be maintained, whatever bids are forthcoming in the next few days.

Mr. Lawson: I have nothing to add to what I have said. This is a highly market-sensitive matter and it would not be proper for me to say anything further. I add that I do not think that this line of questioning—although I do not dispute the right hon. and learned Gentleman's right to ask the questions if he wishes to do so—is helpful to Britoil.

The location of the headquarters of Britoil is, of course, a matter for the Britoil board, as it has always been.

Sir Hector Monro (Dumfries): Following what my right hon. Friend said about the headquarters in Glasgow and the facilities in Aberdeen, is it not in the national interest that they should remain where they are?

Mr. Lawson: I note what my hon. Friend has said, I repeat what I said a moment or two ago, that the loca of the headquarters of the company is a matter for board, as it has always been. The special share ensures independence of the board.

Mr. Bruce Millan (Glasgow, Govan): The Chancell statement is welcome as far as it goes, but it does no very far, because it contains certain qualifications. Wi give an assurance that neither now, in this "mar sensitive period", as he calls it, nor later will he tell Bri Petroleum that if it gains control of the company's sh he will somehow allow his present powers to lapse, perh after a period? We want an absolute assurance that will not happen and that Britoil will be maintained a independent company.

Mr. Lawson: As I have already said, whether to use share is a matter about which the Government will h to make up their mind in the light of the circumstance the time and in the overriding light of the national inte I have said that in the present circumstances we will it.

Mr. Teddy Taylor (Southend, East): As the Chance of the Exchequer, rightly or wrongly, has been sadd with this very controversial, but highly undemocra power, would it be sensitive to the national interest for to seek the views of those bidding for Britoil as to whe they intend to support regional development and main the centre of the company in Glasgow?

Mr. Lawson: Any company interested in acqui Britoil is perfectly free to reveal its intentions on matter.

Mr. Andrew Welsh (Angus, East): Will the Chance give a clear and unequivocal pledge to use the golden sh to protect the independence of Britoil, so that that is c in *Hansard*? May I encourage him to fulfil that pledge assure us that if there is a change in that commitment th will be a full debate and vote in the House on a matte such great importance to the Scottish economy?

Mr. Lawson: I cannot give any assurance abou debate—that is not a matter for me—but when I Secretary of State for Energy in 1982 and this special sh was set up, I gave a pledge that if and when the share w to be redeemed, the House would be informed first.

Mr. Tim Smith (Beaconsfield): Does my right h Friend agree that raising this matter by means of a priv notice question is of no help whatever to Britoil and likely to be of advantage, only to, and in the interests a predator?

Mr. Lawson: That may be the case.

Mr. George Galloway (Glasgow, Hillhead): This is first time that I have witnessed the legendary arroga and complacency of the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

Mr. Geoffrey Dickens (Littleborough a Saddleworth): The hon. Gentleman should be here m often—*[Interruption.]*

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. Galloway: It is not a pretty sight. The Chancello answer to an earlier question about the siting of Brito headquarters was staggering in its indifference. In

[Mr. Galloway]

constituency, where the headquarters are situated, there are 800 people—Government Members may laugh like buffoons—

Mr. Speaker: Order. The hon. Gentleman should not use language like that.

Mr. Galloway: I apologise, Mr. Speaker. These 800 people are very worried and frightened about their future, yet all the Chancellor can say is that it is somehow a matter for the market place or the company to decide. Can the Chancellor find it within himself to assure my constituents and the people of Glasgow that he wants the headquarters of Britoil to remain there, and that he wants Britoil to remain an independent company?

Mr. Lawson: I welcome the hon. Gentleman on one of his infrequent visits to the House. Had he listened, he would have heard me say that the location of the company's headquarters is a matter for the board, as it always has been. When Britoil was formed from the old British National Oil Corporation, the board decided to locate its headquarters in Glasgow and, as the hon. Gentleman will know, it built a spanking new building to house those headquarters. That is where they remain to this day.

The board has unusual powers. That is why the power of the special share to control the board is especially interesting. Article 92 of the Britoil articles of association states:

"The business of the company shall be managed by the directors to the exclusion of the company in general meeting."

Mr. Anthony Beaumont-Dark (Birmingham, Selly Oak): Does my right hon. Friend agree that there is already large and welcome foreign investment in North sea oil, but that it would cause concern if companies such as Britoil and British Petroleum were to fall under foreign control, with the result that almost all the strategic qualities of North sea oil would be controlled by foreign interests? Does he agree that any such foreign bid for Britoil or BP would be stoutly resisted, under the provisions of the Industry Act 1975, in the best interests of this country?

Mr. Lawson: As I made clear in 1982 when I was Secretary of State for Energy, the purpose of the special share in Britoil is to ensure that control over the company does not fall into unacceptable hands. As for BP, my hon. Friend will be aware of the assurances that we have received from the Kuwaitis.

Mr. Charles Kennedy (Ross, Cromarty and Skye): Given the Chancellor's welcome confirmation of the Treasury's position on this issue, will he confirm that he does not agree with the criticism that has been made against Britoil—unfairly, in many people's eyes—that it is using tactics to try to increase the share offer from about 450p to 600p? Is that not an unfair allegation against the company?

Mr. Lawson: It would be wrong for me to venture into those waters, but I have noted what the hon. Gentleman has said.

Mr. John Marshall (Hendon, South): Will my right hon. Friend confirm that the golden share in Enterprise Oil has a life of five years? Why should Britoil be tre differently from Enterprise Oil? As my right hon. Fri is a believer in free markets, will he tell us how the gol share will encourage Britoil to become more efficient is to be protected by a share structure as antiquated as of the Savoy.

Mr. Lawson: It is not all that antiquated. It intr[illegible]oduced only in 1982. However, I feel much older that I did then—perhaps I am. My hon. Friend is ri to point to the fact that some golden shares are ti limited, whereas others are not. I read in the newspap today that the Britoil board envisages the day when gold[illegible]n share in Britoil will no longer exist.

M[illegible]. D. N. Campbell-Savours (Workington): Is not need[illegible]o act reinforced by the news that the Kuwaitis buyi[illegible] BP shares and now have 18 per cent. of them if not true that the Kuwaitis have refused to give undertaking that they will not purchase 29·9 per cent the company? Is there not a danger that the Arabs mi pick up a large section of North sea oil on the cheap?

Mr. Lawson: There is nothing to stop someone buy shares cheaply after a fall on the stock market. The h Gentleman must be aware of the assurances given by Kuwaitis that they are not seeking control over company or the management. It would be inconsist with those assurances if they acquired a shareholding 29·9 per cent.

Mr. Jonathan Aitken (Thanet, South): Will my ri hon. Friend clarify what he means by his frequ references to the "national interest"? Does he me Scotland's national interest, or is he concentrating Britain's national interest? If it is the latter, what differe can it make whether the oilfields are owned by Brit Petroleum or by Britoil?

Mr. Lawson: I am the Chancellor of the Exchequer the United Kingdom and a member of the Government the United Kingdom, and it is therefore the natio interest of the United Kingdom about which I speaking. However, obviously that does not mean tha would be indifferent to the views of Scottish Members

Mr. Dick Douglas (Dunfermline, West): May we ta it from the Chancellor's reply that, as the inventor of golden share, he intends to use it to keep Britoil as independent company? Given the sensitivity of the mark should he not, in all fairness, convey that to the chairm of BP, Sir Peter Walters, as soon as possible, with backing of all the legal opinion that he can muster?

Mr. Lawson: Britoil has, of course, been independe since it was floated more than five years ago. Article 7 explicitly envisages the possibility of a bidder acquiri more than 50 per cent. of the shares and states in the circumstances what the powers of the special share are have nothing to add to that.

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: Order. I regret that I have not been a to call all those hon. Members wishing to speak. This an extension of Question Time. We have another priva notice question.

Arab-Israel Question

3.45 pm

Mr. Gerald Kaufman (Manchester, Gorton) *(by private notice)*: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on British policy on the Arab-Israel question in the light of recent developments on the West Bank and Gaza.

The Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office (Mr. David Mellor): The current unrest underlines the urgent need for progress towards a settlement. We shall continue to work for an international conference as the framework for negotiations between the parties directly concerned.

Mr. Kaufman: Is the Minister aware that when I left Israel this morning the grim news was of still more disturbances, killings of Palestinians by Israeli forces and the clubbing of women demonstrators in east Jerusalem? Does he agree with me that, after 20 years of deprivation of civil rights under military rule, the patience of the Palestinians in the occupied territories has finally snapped and that, while the Israeli preoccupation with national security is understandable and accepted, no military response will put an end to the Palestinians' grievances, and neither will the deportation of individual Palestinians?

Is the hon. and learned Gentleman aware that in the past few days, King Hussein of Jordan, the Prime Minister and the Foreign Minister of Jordan, the Foreign Minister and the Defence Minister of Israel and Palestinian activists in the West Bank and Gaza, while offering differing interpretations and suggesting their own possible solutions, told me that disturbances will continue until there is a negotiated settlement stemming from an international conference convened under the auspices of the United Nations with the twin objectives of security for Israel and self-determination for the Palestinians? That point of view has been echoed to me by individual demonstrators—both women and youth—to whom I have talked.

Is the Minister aware that the main obstacles to the convening of an international conference are the obduracy and inflexibility of the Prime Minister of Israel, who is at odds with his own Foreign Minister on this issue, and that the continuing inertia of the United States Administration is contributing to the problem instead of helping to find a solution? Will the Government now consider whether an initiative from Britain can seek to end the stalemate so that, as so many have told me is their wish, in Jordan, Palestine and Israel, Jews and Arabs, Israelis and Palestinians, can try to live together in peace instead of being locked in conflict?

Mr. Mellor: I thank the right hon. Gentleman for his remarks and commend him on his visit, which was enormously helpful. It is clear that what he has said about the situation in the West Bank and Gaza—both today and in his article in *The Observer*—is entirely correct. A deep and desperate problem now faces the Government of Israel in finding the way forward. It is crucial that there should be widespread recognition throughout Israel—regardless of party—that the present situation cannot continue and that security cannot be maintained at the point of a gun. As my right hon. and learned Friend the Foreign Secretary said last October, the effect of that brutalise those involved, which, in the long run, si builds up more problems.

We believe, as the right hon. Gentleman has asse that there is an opportunity for an internat conference, under the auspices of the five perma members of the Security Council, within which ser discussions can take place between all the parties ways in which, in response to a genuine willingness t the occupation and allow the self-determination o Palestinian people, the state of Israel can have that precious thing, as we would see it—recognition b neighbours of its right to exist behind secure bound

We can none of us choose our neighbours, wheth our private lives or as nations, but it is absolutely fundamentally clear that long-term security canno maintained at the point of a gun and that, having re to the nature of the leadership of most of the neighbo countries, there is now an opportunity for a long solution to be found. In the first instance, however, a right hon. Gentleman has said, that will require movement from certain factions within the I Government.

I make two further points to the right hon. Gentle First, I am glad that he found his discussions with Jo so fruitful, as indeed do the Government. It is clear on the Arab side, as on the Israeli side, there is a le to live down. It is also clear that all who wish to play a in the process must legitimise themselves. At this there is a particular responsibility on the PLO to accep two relevant Security Council resolutions, Nos. 242 338, and to renounce violence to give effect to its pl and commitment that it is the representative of Palestinian people, and it will not be brought into framework unless it is prepared to do that.

As for the British position, we shall continue to d that we can to use our historic patterns of friendship all parties in the region to try to advocate that cause. genuinely delighted, as I am sure the whole House is, whatever issues may divide the House on party lines is not one of them.

Mr. John Biffen (Shropshire, North): Is my hon. learned Friend aware that then he went to Gaza undertook a difficult task and did it well?

Mr. Mellor: I am most grateful to my right hon. Fri

Mr. Andrew Faulds (Warley, East): Would it b order, Mr. Speaker, for me to congratulate my right and admirable Friend the Member for Manche Gorton (Mr. Kaufman) on the courage and vision o statement today and to couple that with congratulat to the Minister of State on his courage and vision in v he said and how he conducted himself while he was in middle east?

Is it not time that the international community, particularly the EEC, started to exert economic pres on the Fascist Government of Israel to make them rest their policies and in particular the activities of some of assorted thugs from Poland and America who have b misbehaving within the Israeli army?

Mr. Mellor: I am grateful to the hon. Gentleman fo words of commendation, but I cannot agree with prescription. It is clearly the duty of the en international community, whether through the Europ

[Mr. Mellor]

Community or through the United Nations, to make our views on the situation known, because the occupied territories are exactly that: they are not part of Israel, but, as the international community says, are administered in accordance with international law. Every effort must be made through every convenient forum to make all parties appreciate the need at this time to lay aside some of the burdens of the past and to try to work for a better future. We have already explored ways in which both sides could do that.

Mr. Tony Marlow (Northampton, North): Does my hon. and learned Friend accept that the many hon. Members who, like himself, have seen what is happening in Gaza, unlike the writers of the more spectacular editorials of the past few days, totally endorse his remarks? Does my hon. and learned Friend accept that, where an even-handed approach between tyranny—I think that that was my hon. and learned Friend's word—and the oppressed secures no result, the time has come to speak more in favour of the oppressed than of the oppressor? Will he tell the Israeli Government that if they go ahead with their totally illegal proposal to deport Palestinians from their homeland, the British Government, with others in the European Community, will see to it that the economic advantages to trade that Israel enjoys with the European Community will cease?

Mr. Mellor: My hon. Friend is unquestionably right to condemn the deportations. They are illegal under international law, and, what is more, they are counter-productive in their practical effect. They will only create martyrs and make a difficult situation even worse. I hope that the Government of Israel will pay heed to what the United Nations has asked and suspend the policy of deportations.

On my hon. Friend's comments about the West Bank and Gaza, it is impossible to understand the full dimensions of that situation without going there. Going to the West Bank and especially to Gaza is a deep shock. It is clear that the people there wish to have some hope for the future. However, such hope for the future will come only if two things take place: first, recognition by the Government of Israel that the status quo is not an option — it is unacceptable and cannot continue — and, secondly, that those who purport — some from a considerable distance from the West Bank and Gaza— to be the spokesmen of the people there should, by renouncing violence and accepting Israel's right to exist, bring themselves into a position such that they can play a proper and positive part in the framework of discussions that we are trying to establish.

I know that my hon Friend has ploughed a lonely and brave furrow in some of the discussions that he has had with groups in the region. I hope that he will impress upon them that statesmanship is looked for from both sides, not just from one.

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: Order. May I make a plea for brief questions and answers, because time is moving on?

Mr. Greville Janner (Leicester, West): I should like to express my own sorrow at the loss of life and the casualties in recent events and my hope that the parties will live together in peace. However, regretfully, I shoul that I trust that in retrospect the Minister will that his tactics and lack of tact, his lang behaviour, were unworthy and unhelpful to *[Interruption.]* They assisted only the extremis sides and did not assist Britain's prospects of useful role, as we would wish, in bringing the together.

Mr. Mellor: I know that the hon. an Gentleman speaks with sincerity. However, he h response from the House and does not need response from me.

Mr. Ivan Lawrence (Burton): Is my hon. ar Friend aware that, at the very moment when Gaza, the President of the state of Israel w international parliamentarians that relations be country and Israel had never been so close dur years since independence as now, under the pres Minister? Is it not obvious that the Israelis will 650,000 disaffected Arabs in their territories? Th is that no other Arab country wants Gaza o responsibility for its people.

Is it not a fact that the state of Israel is d anxious for a peaceful settlement but that no Ar of any responsibility, dares to come forward peace, boundaries and the future of Gaza with th

Mr. Mellor: I appreciate that my hon. an Friend speaks with great sincerity and awaren situation. However, I must point out that if t Government were full-heartedly to accept an inte conference, they would not find their Arab n unwilling to participate. I made it clear earlie happy to reiterate it for my hon. Friend's ben if progress is to be made, it will require efforts sides. I have sought to set out—I shall not rep few of our ideas about what is required.

However, my hon. and learned Friend s disabused of one idea. He seems to suggest tha willing to give up Gaza—*[Interruption.]* I mu my hon. and learned Friend that one section of t Government may be willing to give up Gaza, but Minister, Mr. Shamir, travelled to Gaza last year the opportunity of his brief visit to say that Ga of Israel and is not negotiable

Mr. Simon Hughes (Southwark and Bern Does the Minister accept that, although his re Gaza was understandable and, in many circums be welcomed, there is, as I found this new year o visit to Israel and the West Bank, a growing peace now among the Jewish community? responsibility of the Government is to encou enlightened members of the majority community to put pressure on their politicians and leaders so may achieve peace. That view is growing and is wi among the military and others, who are w recognise the independence of Palestine so lon have security for Israel.

Mr. Mellor: What the hon. Gentleman says is must remember that Israel is the middle e democracy and that this is essentially a battle for and minds of the Israeli voters. I hope that the p re-evaluation which many people in this country

to go through when watching their television screens during the past five or six weeks will also be happening in Israel.

It is important that the peace process, through the framework of the international conference, which seems to command wide support on both sides of the House, should be seen as an opportunity, not a threat, for Israeli's security needs to be recognised. For example, there is no reason why Israel's giving up of the occupied territories would mean that hostile armour would have to be replaced in the occupied territories or why a demilitarised solution should not be found. Clearly, there can be a way forward only if people are prepared to enter the process in the first place. Until then, I fear that we can see only all the problems of an area in limbo, which is what we see in the occupied territories at present.

Mr. Robin Maxwell-Hyslop (Tiverton): Since the people in Israeli-occupied Egypt and Jordan have been denied for two decades any form of democratic institution, such as we enjoy, does my hon. and learned Friend agree that unless those visiting those territories, as he did, speak out, as he did, there will be no voices to be heard speaking out clearly and sincerely as the alternative to violence? Does my hon. and learned Friend agree that speaking out openly is the only alternative to violence? I hope that all hon. Members back that alternative.

Mr. Mellor: I am particularly grateful to my hon. Friend as his warm private letter was the first I read when I returned from Israel. I am grateful to him for his message. One of the false hares that is around is the idea that somehow one makes matters better by not speaking out about them. I believe that it assists the process of drift and postpones the evil time when a decision must be taken if people, particularly friends, are not prepared to speak out and to say with candour what it is after all our duty as friends to say. I hope that this will be seen positively, as the whole international community sees it, not as a threat to Israel, because that is certainly not how it is interpreted.

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: Order. I must draw the attention of the House to the futher statement and important business before us. I shall allow two more questions.

Mr. Kevin Barron (Rother Valley): In rela international conference, could the Minist whether the Government, or any membe Government, have been in touch with the Ur since his visit?

Mr. Mellor: There is regular contact with States, and obviously it is crucial that all five members of the Security Council should play t have no doubt that the United States woul prepared to do that. Naturally, in a complicate there will always be discussions and inevitable of view on precisely the right framework. It r view, and we give it to all parties, whether members of the Security Council or countries in that the international conference is the only t option at present. We shall continue to advocat with all the more enthusiasm because it appear view expressed by the House this afternoon an occasions.

Mr. David Sumberg (Bury, South): While r be happy with living conditions in the Gaza stri hon. and learned Friend accept that, in cont Egyptians, over the past 20 years the Israelis ha rehouse thousands of people there? Is there r measure of hypocrisy, particularly in the Unite which, on the one hand, condemns what is goin Gaza Strip, yet condemns Israel for trying t refugees?

Mr. Mellor: I understand why my hon. Frie as he does, but the amount of effort that has b in the occupied territories on improving the qua of the people has been extremely limited and fall of what is needed. Indeed, I am sad to say th much attention has been paid to investing settlements in the occupied territories which on difficult situation worse. I do not know whethe Friend has had the advantage of visiting the territories, but I invite him to do so and to see f the miserable conditions which, once seen, memory.

Upholstered Furniture (Fire Resistance)

4.4 pm

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Corporate and Consumer Affairs (Mr. Francis Maude): With permission, Mr. Speaker, I should like to make a statement on the fire resistance of domestic upholstered furniture.

It is estimated that 90 per cent. of furniture on sale to the public is filled with polyurethane foam. The increasing use of this relatively cheap material since the 1950s has brought comfortable, upholstered furniture within the reach of many people who could not previously afford it.

There has been concern for some 20 years about its fire safety. In 1980 the Government introduced the Upholstered Furniture (Safety) Regulations, which require all domestic upholstered furniture to resist ignition by a smouldering cigarette. Since well over half of all furniture fires are started by cigarettes, this measure addressed the principal problem. This was then, and remains, the strictest fire safety regime in the world. Ireland is the only other European country with any legal controls over the fire safety of furniture.

However, concern has remained. The present regulations certainly improved ignition resistance — that is, that furniture became more difficult to set on fire—but the nature of the foam in widespread use is that once lit it burns with immense ferocity and speed, generating exceptional heat and emitting toxic fumes. Notwithstanding its fire performance, its comfort and low cost have made foam-filled furniture extremely popular with customers. Therefore, Governments over many years have consistently been reluctant to prohibit its use in the absence of reasonably priced, safer alternatives. Recent developments have altered this.

In July 1987 I issued for consultation a set of documents describing measures to improve significantly our already high level of protection. We received many responses, most of which expressed support for the principle of basing the regulations on a code of practice. Different views were expressed about the content of the code of practice and about how quickly new regulations could or should be introduced. I am grateful to all those who responded.

Public attention has been focused on this issue by the spate of tragic deaths in house fires over the holiday period, and I know that the whole House will join me in expressing sympathy for the bereaved families. Some of the fires involved foam-filled furniture. It has not been possible to ascertain whether such furniture pre-dated the implementation of the present regulations in 1982, but in view of the widespread concern, I thought it right to inform the House at the earliest opportunity of the Government's intentions.

It is my intention that the regulations will make it illegal to use standard quality foam under any grade of cover from the end of February 1989. There has been some debate about the fire-resistance qualities of high-resilience foam. I am satisfied that it provides better protection than standard foam, in that it is less easily ignited, but once lit it burns in much the same way as standard foam. Therefore, I am not satisfied that the advantages that high resilience foam carries over standard foam are enough to justify its continued use. Accordingly, the regulations will outlaw its use from the same date. Combustion-modified high-resilience foam will therefore be the o foam from that time. This material has developed and was commercially launched It ignites more slowly and gives off fewer fu foams in common use. Therefore, it is r experts as providing greatly superior fire re

As far as covering materials are conce concluded that we should eventually requir meet the match ignition test. This will be a from the end of February 1990.

These regulations will be made under t Protection Act 1987, which prescribes penalt up to £2,000 and imprisonment of up to si both, for each offence. Local authority tradi officers are responsible for enforcement an fully consulted. The classification of compon of practice basis of the new regulations wil substantially easier than the present law effectively. The code of practice will also hav of flexibility. If and when new materials or of materials are developed, the code will ena choice to be widened, while maintaining safe

I understand that representatives of chie have suggested a ban on standard and h polyurethane foam from 1 January 1989, months earlier than the date that I have ann not believe that that earlier date is feasible. introducing a legal requirement earlier than meet would be to interrupt the supply of fu public and to put at risk the 35,000 or mo manufacture of components and in the man distribution of finished furniture, but because public concern on this issue businesses will much more quickly than they consider acce to issue the regulations in draft at the end o By the end of February next year it will be furniture filled with standard or high-resilien by a year later, the end of February 1990, materials for upholstered furniture will hav match test.

These new regulations will ensure that furniture sold in future will be substantially present. However, this can be achieved on which must eventually be paid by the custom of the additional cost vary, but I am confi keen competition that exists in the furniture t them to a minimum.

There will remain for some years in furniture bought before even the present reg into force in 1982, and no new regulations that. Nor will furniture meeting these standards be entirely safe. It remains essent for every householder to exercise the utmos prevent fires from starting in the first place does start, the safety of the occupiers will b a smoke detector is installed. These are n inexpensive, retailing at some £10 to £15, a advise their installation.

Mr. Tony Blair (Sedgefield): I join th expressing deep sympathy to the relatives died so tragically in the spate of fires over C the new year.

I welcome, with significant qualificat statement, which surely marks as profound a climbdown as has ever been made in con

I pay tribute to the campaign that has been vigorously waged by many people, including chief fire officers, who had the courage to speak out when they might have remained silent.

Am I right in saying that the effect of today's statement is that all standard polyurethane foam is to go within a period of 14 months, contrary to the Minister's original proposals, which allowed it to be used for three years, that high-resilience foam is to go altogether, contrary to the previous proposals, which allowed it to be used indefinitely, and that ignitable covers are to go altogether after two years, contrary to the proposals that allowed them to be used indefinitely? Am I right in saying that the effect of these changes will be that after two years there should be only safe foam filling within fire-resistant covers and that any combinations of covers and filling should pass the full British Standards Institution 5852 test? Chief fire officers and others wanted more immediate action, and the only reason for delaying action was the difficulty experienced by the industry in gearing itself up to meet the changes.

The Minister's proposals were published on 1 July last year. Will he confirm that as long ago as 1 September 1987 the Greater Manchester fire service told him that the proposals were inherently defective because high-resilience foam had been tested and found wanting, that that view was unanimously agreed by the Chief and Assistant Chief Fire Officers Associations and that months ago, the British Standards Institution said that it was refusing a classification for those proposals?

Will the Minister also confirm that on 30 September the Crown Suppliers, the Government's own furniture suppliers, condemned the proposals in forthright terms and said that they represented simply what the furniture industry wanted, and that that was confirmed by the Home Office and the Fire Research Station? Is it not correct that the Minister's Department has known for months that those proposals were inherently defective? Only in the last two weeks, following a public outcry, has any effective action been contemplated. Will the Minister confirm that that is correct?

Will the Minister comment on what I was told today? I shall accept his assurance if he says that what I was told is incorrect. The proposals are the product of a Government working party set up by his Department. Will the Minister comment on the following information, which I was given today: that the working party included only one fire officer from anywhere in the country, that there was no representative from the Crown Suppliers, the Government's own experts, and that more than 20 representatives from the furniture trade attended the meetings of that working party? Will the Minister also comment on a specific point that was put to me today, that the minutes and reports of those meetings were drawn up by the furniture industry?

The general lesson that can be drawn from that sorry episode, no matter what welcome we give to today's proposals, is that in future, when the Department is faced with a conflict between the safety and security of millions of consumers and the commercial motives of a particular industry, it should put the public interest before vested interests, no matter how well connected.

Mr. Maude: The hon. Member for Sedgefield (Mr. Blair) could afford to be a little more generous. He referred to the proposals as a climbdown. That is arrant nonsense. This is the first British Government to take polyurethane foam furniture. The Gover party did nothing for five years, well after the recognised, and well after public concern w When the deputy leader of the Labour party of State for Prices and Consumer Protectio over a period of glorious inaction. This Go the first to introduce measures that are the t world.

My proposals today go substantially furt Last July, proposals were issued for consulta Gentleman has gone through some of the re consultations. The purpose of consultation p hear what people have to say about them. surprise anyone that we have listened to w said. Since before mid-October people have comments which have been very helpful. As as I have announced today, we have issued extended proposals which I hope will be wid

Combustion-modified foam has been a mercially for only a few months. It was launched only last year. There is no possibili made available in commercial quantities for to come. The date, that I have announced possible. There is much work to be done by to ensure that safer covering materials with properties will be available in the necessary q tests to be applied to those materials are Standards Institution tests. I hope that the B on the development of a range of fire devel that will extend the sophistication with whic can be applied and extend the classification. that the BSI will devote attention to achievi as quickly as possible.

The proposals mark a radical step forwa Gentleman referred to the working party, wh representatives from the industry, and, Gentleman said, a very distinguished fir produced proposals for consultation. I hope Gentleman and the House will join in welc represents a substantial step forward for pu stress that the proposals will not make ever because homes will continue to contain furni bought even before the present tough regu into force. There is nothing that any Govern to remedy that. I hope that, although the p tough and provide the best protection in the long way, people will not be lulled into a f security. The need for vigilance in every hom strong as ever, and I hope that people will pay

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: Order. I make a further p questions. We have a heavy day in front of u

Mr. Richard Holt (Langbaurgh): My hon. be surprised to know that the furniture i welcome his statement. This morning I was a of the furniture industry, which thought th might be earlier than my hon. Friend has pro reason for the delay in implementing the prop the foam has not been available. Even now ther no commercial trials of the new foam, n manufacturers able to say with satisfaction th

[Mr. Richard Holt]

be able to produce furniture under the new regime within the time scale. They want to do so, but they are subject to the actions of the furniture manufacturers.

As the regulations will deal with coverings, will they apply to curtains, drapes, loose covers and other items within the home that use similar materials? If that is the case, it will represent a fundamental change and go far beyond what is presently expected.

Mr. Maude: I am grateful to my hon. Friend for his comments. I am delighted to hear that the furniture industry feels that it can meet the timetable. If I could be persuaded that a swifter timetable could be met, I would be delighted to alter the time scale accordingly and bring forward the date on which the regulations come into force. I am open to persuasion on that matter. The regulations will not apply to drapes, curtains and other materials. They will relate solely to upholstered furniture.

Mr. Richard Livsey (Brecon and Radnor): On behalf of my party, may I also express condolences to the families who have suffered so grievously? In particular, as Welsh affairs spokesman for my party, I express sympathy for the great tragedy that occurred at Merthyr Tydfil. I am sure that you, Mr. Speaker, will call the hon. Member for Merthyr Tydfil and Rhymney (Mr. Rowlands), and I should like to be associated with his remarks. As recommended by the fire officers, we desire that no further standard foam should be used from 1 January 1989. The welcome flexibility shown by the Minister should be implemented if the furniture industry is prepared to bring forward the date of enforcement.

The Minister should consider an educational programme for householders on fire prevention. He should publish a code that householders can put in their homes so that youngsters can learn the fire code early in their lives.

I believe that there is a conflict of interest between the Department of Trade and Industry and the Home Office over the responsibility for fire prevention. I believe that the Home Office should take over that responsibility, so that a more objective set of rules can be placed before the nation.

Mr. Maude: I am grateful to my hon. Friend for his remarks about the bereaved families. I am also grateful to the hon. Member for Sedgefield (Mr. Blair), who made similar remarks, and I am sure that the whole House shares those sentiments.

There are real problems about introducing the regulations earlier than is proposed, because there is a long lead time. The regulations will come into force and operate at the point of sale—the point at which furniture will be available in the shops for sale to the public. Obviously, manufacturers need time to adapt. The safer, combustion-modified, foam is not available in commercial quantities at the moment. Manufacturers of this foam need to gear themselves up to produce it in adequate quantities. An enormous number of suites of upholstered furniture are produced every week and the demand will be substantial. I do not believe that it would be practical to introduce the regulations earlier, but I am open to persuasion. If the industry can persuade me that it is feasible, I shall be only too glad to do so.

Mr. John Ward (Poole): I congratulat
on his remarks. I do not believe that he
from anybody in the House, because he
reacted in a way that some of us w
predecessors had done.

When my hon. Friend has had time
comments made in the House today, will
to two other areas? The first is imported
I hope will be dealt with in the regulatio
he consider providing that, when furnitu
re-covering, new quality foam must be
foam must not be re-covered?

Mr. Maude: I am grateful to my ho
generous comments. The regulations will
on imported furniture. In fact, they will
trading standards officers to enforce the
imported furniture. Indeed, the Consum
1987 gives customs officers the power, at
into the country, to seize goods that do n
tests.

The regulations will certainly imp
covering of furniture. I am not sure
regarding the use of foams, but I shall l
let my hon. Friend know as soon as I c

Mr. Ted Rowlands (Merthyr Tydfil ar
one who attended the funerals last Frida
and four young children who died on 1 Ja
welcome the Minister's proposals. Giv
Member for Langbaurgh (Mr. Holt)
furniture industry could beat the Mi
deadline, would it be possible to meet the
deadline of 1 January 1989?

Did I hear the Minister aright, that a
the regulations will be fined only £2,00
time to impose much heavier penalties o
the new regulations?

Mr. Maude: On the hon. Gentleman
is possible to beat the deadline and fo
suggestion of 1 January 1988 to be met, I
to adapt the regulations accordingly. H
need persuading that such a change wo
the jobs of the 35,000 people employed

The level of fines was set by the Co
Act 1987, and I should stress that there
of six months' imprisonment. Indeed, t
can be imposed in addition to the fi
imposed of up to £2,000 for each offe
furniture is found that does not meet the
trading standards officers prosecute in
than one article of furniture, those fines
and add up to a substantial penalty in

Mr. Peter Thurnham (Bolton, North
my hon. Friend's proposals, which will
lives. Does he agree that it is not alwa
balance between the ideals of an accide
the limitations of current practice? If t
hon. Friend is right to put the safety of
otherwise beneficial interests of a dereg

Mr. Maude: I am grateful to my ho
made a good point and I agree with him.
again that, whatever the Government do
regulation, we cannot make the world
large extent, the safety of individuals

behaviour of individuals. I hope that the tough measures will not induce any sense of false security. Individuals' safety will largely continue to rest in their own hands.

Mr. Ian McCartney (Makerfield): The Minister's announcement represents perhaps the biggest change in policy in the eight years of this Government. On 6 October 1987, the Minister wrote to me saying that it would be wholly impracticable and undesirable if he took steps to ban the use of standard polyurethane foam, and he went on to give the reasons why. That letter was sent to me before the end of the consultation period. Unknown to me, that letter was also sent when the Minister had received from the Crown Suppliers a detailed analysis that showed that what he had said in his letter was completely at odds with the evidence provided to him. At the same time——

Mr. Speaker: Question, please.

Mr. McCartney: May I just finish this point, Mr. Speaker? At the same time, the industry was trying to scupper the arrangements.

Will the Minister arrange an urgent meeting between the fire officers and the foam manufacturers to introduce a time scale that will enable the regulations to come into force by 1 January next year? The foam manufacturers have said that they could have the foam in the shops by 6 September — that was announced this morning on Thames Television.

In a debate in the summer of last year I asked the Minister seven questions in relation to the promotion of fire detectors and other measures. I ask the Minister to reconsider those matters and to introduce proposals to further the issue of fire detectors and to consider other related fire safety aspects in the home. Without those arrangements, the toll of death will continue.

Mr. Maude: The hon. Gentleman has made a number of points. He spoke about the timing of the regulations. Some parts of the industry have suggested that the time scale could be shortened, but other parts have suggested that it is already far too short. One must try to get the balance right, because there is no benefit to the public in taking steps that require and involve the chain of supply of furniture breaking down. That would have an undesirable effect on jobs.

With regard to changes of policy, we issued consultative proposals, and we listened to what was said in response to that consultation. I hope that the hon. Gentleman will welcome that. I know that he has expressed views about several of these matters over some months. He referred to smoke detectors. They are now relatively cheap, and I hope that people will use them. However, none of those measures on its own adds up to complete safety. Even in total they do not add up to complete safety. That will continue to depend very much on the behaviour and vigilance of individuals.

Mr. Conal Gregory (York): As lethal polyurethane foam has been banned from prisons, Government buildings and, indeed, airlines, I congratulate my hon. Friend on extending the ban to domestic furniture, following my Adjournment debate on that specific subject on 1 July. Britain cannot accept a death toll that results in some 300 people a year dying from domestic fires. Sections of the United Kingdom furniture industry have been dilatory and have dragged their feet on this issue. I understand that already some 10 children have lost their lives from causes related to toxic fume
Will my hon. Friend take this opportu
manufacturers who, against the tren
alternative safe upholstery, and the r
offered it to the public?

Will my hon. Friend review the pen
to be inadequate? He referred to the Co
Act. Reputable dealers will, of course,
standards o ficers need a greater fist in t
inadequacy of the present £2,000 plus
my hon. Friend gave the matter maxim
sure that the announcement that he ha
been so welcome to both sides of the H
weight.

Mr. Maude: I pay a sincere tribute t
who has campaigned responsibly and co
issue for some years.

My hon. Friend referred to a ban on
Government buildings. That is not qu
foams have been in use in contract fur
for some time. I understand that the Cr
standard grade polyurethane foam in sc
in combination with materials that meet

I pay tribute to the firms that offer saf
public. I welcome the steps that have b
industry to develop safer materials, but
offer safer materials and furniture to
another to require the public to buy
experience has been that the availability
and the labelling system introduced u
regulations have not led to a significan
furniture by the public. I hear what my
about penalties. If it seems that the pen
offers at the moment are not ade
compliance with the regulations, we sh
again, and we are prepared to be flexibl

Ms. Joan Walley (Stoke-on-Trent,
Minister confirm that under section 3
Protection Act there is the prospect of c
against manufacturers because of the n
product liability? If trading standards
enforce the new regulations, will the
House how many extra officers will have
and how much money will be availab
councils to implement that requirement
will cost more money. Will it be possible f
to be enlarged to enable those who a
benefits to afford the new furniture, or wi
mean that there will be no prospect o
incomes being able to afford this furnitu

In connection——

Mr. Speaker: Briefly.

Ms. Walley: This is the next question,

Mr. Speaker: Order. This is not a debu
Lady ask her question briefly, please?

Ms. Walley: Will the Minister make a
smoke detectors to be made available to t
afford the high cost of the new furnitu
regulations be made to cover secondhand
sale of secondhand furniture?

Mr. Maude: The hon. Lady is absol
product liability provisions will apply to
will add a considerable extra sanction

[Mr. Maude]

penalties that the regulations will invoke. Trading standards departments have a responsibility to enforce the present regulations, and they will have to enforce the new regulations, but they will be easier to enforce effectively than are the present regulations. It is a matter for local authorities to decide how they apportion money for their various responsibilities.

The hon. Lady referred to the extra cost of furniture. She is right. The regulations will involve an increase in the price of furniture, and there is nothing that one can do about that, although I have expressed the hope that competition will keep the extra cost to a minimum. The hon. Lady will have to raise her question about the extra burden on the social fund with my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Social Services.

Smoke detectors are readily available and are now relatively inexpensive, costing no more than £10 or £15 each. I think that that puts them within the budget of most households.

The regulations will not apply to secondhand furniture. It would be virtually impossible to enforce a regime in that way. Sadly, it will not be possible to impose the regulations on secondhand furniture. That reinforces my point that the public must remain vigilant about that furniture, exercise great caution in buying cheap secondhand furniture, and inform themselves of its fire properties.

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: Order. In view of the pressure on business, I shall allow questions to continue until 4.45 pm; then we must move on.

Mr. Alistair Burt (Bury, North): My hon. Friend will know of my interest in the matter and my support for strengthening these regulations since the tragic death of nine people in a fire in my constituency on Christmas day 1984. In passing, it is right to pay special tribute to a man whom I met on that morning at that gutted house, Mr. Bob Graham, the assistant chief fire officer of Greater Manchester fire brigade, whose work on this issue has been significant in pressing forward with changes in the legislation. That work deserves special tribute.

I ask my hon. Friend to take most seriously the matter of smoke detectors and to consider the request made by chief officers. In particular, will my hon. Friend consider a scheme whereby the introduction of those detectors might be related to the sale of properties after an introductory date? It would be a simple way of ensuring the enforcement of the introduction of detectors. I am sure that it would be welcomed by many people, who see smoke detectors as the next stage in fire safety, without necessarily making people feel that they are safe in their house without making proper precautions against fires starting in the first place.

Mr. Maude: I pay tribute to my hon. Friend for the interest that he has taken in this exceedingly difficult issue over some years. I share his view about the work of Mr. Graham, the distinguished fire officer who has contributed greatly to the debate on the issue.

I shall consider my hon. Friend's suggestion on smoke detectors, but I have reservations about compulsion—requiring smoke detectors to be incorporated in homes from now on. As with any such measure, there is a serious danger that the installation of such devices could induce a sense of security which is unjustified and lead people to believe that if they have a smoke detector they do not need to worry about fire safety. None of those measures can replace the vigilance that every householder and house occupier should exercise.

Mr. Jim Callaghan (Heywood and Middleton): I welcome the Minister's statement as a move in the right direction to save lives. I am sure that the hon. Gentleman and the whole House will join me in conveying sympathy and condolences to my hon. Friend the Member for Stretford (Mr. Lloyd), who lost his mother in a similar fire last week. Her funeral is tomorrow.

I have in my constituency of Middleton the headquarters of an international rubber company, British Vita, which today announced that it has a new fire resistant foam, which it will now put on the market. Will the Minister contact the firm to evaluate the claims that it has made, in the hope that that can save lives?

Mr. Maude: First, of course I join the hon. Gentleman in expressing our deepest sympathy to the hon. Member for Stretford (Mr. Lloyd) for the loss that he suffered over the holiday period. All our sympathies were engaged by that tragedy.

On the other matter, I am delighted to hear what the hon. Member for Heywood and Middleton (Mr. Callaghan) said. The impact of the announcement that I have made will be such that many parts of the industry will constructively and innovatively examine ways of increasing fire safety, and that is very much to be welcomed. I shall certainly ensure that the company that the hon. Gentleman mentioned is contacted so that we can see what it is producing.

Mr. Barry Field (Isle of Wight): My hon. Friend has rightly acknowledged that many homes will continue to contain this dangerous foam furniture. I am sure that he will be just as keen to acknowledge the debt of gratitude that the whole country owes the retained fire services. Is my hon. Friend aware that the minimum training period for retained firemen, on whom rural communities such as the Isle of Wight depend so heavily, has remained unchanged for more than 30 years, at two hours a week?

Mr. Maude: My hon. Friend takes me somewhat outside the range of my responsibilities. However, I have heard his points, and no doubt the appropriate Minister will read them.

Mrs. Rosie Barnes (Greenwich): May I add my condolences to the many families that have been bereaved by domestic fires during the Christmas period? I hope that, in other instances, we shall not have quite so many sacrificial victims before action is taken.

I welcome the Minister's statement and would like to hear his comments on two aspects which I am not sure were covered by his proposed regulations. The first concerns the testing of foam in combination with fabric, simulated leather or whatever other materials are used in the construction of a piece of furniture. Such a regulation has been called for by the British Standards Institution, because a combination of ingredients can be far more flammable than any single ingredient. Will furniture be subjected to the test of a naked flame, and not only to that of the equivalent of a smouldering cigarette, which, I understand, has been the practice to date?

Mr. Maude: I shall take the hon. Lady's last point first. Yes, furniture will in future be subjected to a much stricter test than that of the smouldering cigarette. From 1990 all covering materials will be required to meet the match test, and all foams of a combustion-modified nature, which will be the only ones permissible from February next year, will have to meet the British standards test.

I am grateful to the hon. Lady for joining the rest of the House in expressing condolences, but I think that her remarks about the time that it has taken for the regulations to be introduced are a little unfair. The problem has been known for many years. This Government were the first to take any action, and for five years during the last Labour Government, when the Secretary of State for Prices and Consumer Protection was the right hon. Member for Birmingham, Sparkbrook (Mr. Hattersley) and the junior Minister in that Department was the hon. Member for Caithness and Sutherland (Mr. Maclennan), nothing was done.

Mr. Teddy Taylor (Southend, East): How does my hon. Friend intend to apply these important new standards after 1992, when the internal market of the European Community is completed, bearing in mind that seven, if not eight, of the current member states have standards that are less tight than our existing ones? Is it the view of the Government, and has my hon. Friend secured the view of the Commission, that after 1992 it will still be possible for a member state to restrict imports from other member states on the basis of national safety rules and regulations?

Mr. Maude: My hon. Friend has raised a serious and important point. Before the regulations are brought into force, they must be approved by the European Commission, and it is possible for other member states to raise objections to them if they believe they will restrict the free trade in goods within the internal market: Our level of protection will be, as my hon. Friend said, substantially ahead of any in the rest of the Community. My hon. Friend has mentioned a problem that exists, and we shall have to meet it.

Mr. Rhodri Morgan (Cardiff, West): What are the implications of the statement that the Minister has made for the labelling of furniture? As he will be aware, labelling is at present wholly unsatisfactory. It cannot be applied by shop assistants. They do not like it, and do not understand the red and green labelling for furniture that does, and does not, pass the match test. The labels are frequently torn off by people inspecting the furniture, and when putting them back the staff invariably put the green label —for passing the match test—only on leather furniture, and will not put it on any fabric furniture. To be on the safe side, they even put it on fabrics that pass the match test. Because of the uncertainty, they do not replace the label, when it is torn off, on any fabrics.

Will no labelling be required because all furniture will be safe in 14 months' time—or 12 months' time, if the Minister is persuaded by the comments made by some Members representing the views of the furniture manufacturing industry? Will he institute a good educational programme for shop assistants, so that they understand the real implications of the labels now in use and of those that will be used after the regulations come in?

Mr. Maude: The hon. Gentleman is saying that the present labelling requirements have not been the success that it was hoped they would be. That was partly because the industry did not, perhaps, take the labelling initiative as seriously as it might have done, and partly because the public did not inform themselves about the labelling. Under the new regulations, because all furniture will have to meet high standards, labelling will become of less importance. However, we shall have to examine the issue to see how the new set of proposals impinges upon labelling requirements.

Mr. Roland Boyes (Houghton and Washington): The Minister will be aware that Mr. Elton, the chief fire officer of Tyre and Wear, and his colleagues, have advised that fire and smoke detector alarms should be fitted. Many of the people who die in our fires each year are elderly—the group least able to afford the alarms. Will the Minister make the money available to local authorities or voluntary organisations to enable them to fit free smoke detector alarms in the homes of all elderly pensioners who are unable to equip themselves with the apparatus?

Mr. Maude: It is broadly up to local authorities—within statutory limits—to decide how to spend the resources at their disposal. Smoke detectors, as I have said several times today, are now relatively inexpensive, and I do not believe that a price range of £10 to £15 puts them beyond the means of many households. The potential benefits in terms of fire safety make them a worthwhile investment.

D-Notice Committee

4.47 pm

Mr. Tam Dalyell (Linlithgow): I beg to ask leave to move the Adjournment of the House under Standing Order No. 20 for the purpose of discussing a specific and important matter that should have urgent consideration, namely,

"the work of the D-Notice committee".

I have to persuade you, Mr. Speaker, that the matter is definite, urgent and important. You will have heard this afternoon, during questions to the Attorney-General, that there is considerable misunderstanding on both sides of the House—not only on the Opposition Benches, but on those of the Government—about the role of the D-Notice committee. You will have heard the gasps when the Attorney-General said that there was nothing wrong with the D-Notice committee. You will have heard the question from the hon. Member for Thanet South, (Mr. Aitken), which revealed that this is not just a single party matter.

The truth is that in recent months the D-Notice committee has been bypassed.

I must keep off the Government's reasons for having injunctions in the Scottish courts, but it will be well known that there is now a series of court activities in relation to STV, the *Glasgow Herald* and *The Scotsman*. The urgent question is whether those injunctions are legal at all. According to Professor Robert Black, a professor of Scots law, the party must be named in an interdict.

The moves against the newspapers are unprecedented——

Mr. Speaker: Order. In making his submission, the hon. Gentleman must not refer to matters currently before the courts.

Mr. Dalyell: We are in a difficult position. I recognise the difficulties involved in what is a very grey area. It is an urgent matter, but I shall leave it because in applications of this kind one must be succinct.

There can hardly be anything more important than allegations about the destabilisation of a democratically elected Government in Britain. The allegations follow the allegations by Colin Wallace and, rightly or wrongly, the allegations by a man who is very different from Mr. Peter Wright, namely, Mr. Anthony Cavendish, a thoroughly responsible source, and refer to smears on my right hon. Friend the former Prime Minister, on Ted Short and, indeed, on the leader of the Conservative party at the time, the right hon. Member for Old Bexley and Sidcup (Mr. Heath).

Surely nothing could be more important than to have a public inquiry into the events at the time when the former Home Secretary, my right hon. Friend the Member for Morley and Leeds, South (Mr. Rees) was in office. Contrary to what has been said repeatedly on Scottish television, endorsed by the former Prime Minister, now Lord Callaghan——

Mr. Speaker: Order. The hon. Gentleman has had his time.

The hon. Gentleman asks leave to move the Adjournment of the House for the purpose of discussing an important and specific matter that he believes should have urgent consideration, namely,

"the work of the D-Notice committee."

As the hon. Gentleman knows, I have to decide whether to give the matter that he has raised precedence over the business set down for today or tomorrow. I regret that I do not find that the matter that he has raised is appropriate for discussion under Standing Order No. 20 and I cannot, therefore, submit his application to the House.

Children's Hospital, Birmingham

4.51 pm

Mr. David Winnick (Walsall, North): I beg to ask leave to move the Adjournment of the House under Standing Order No. 20 for the purpose of discussing a specific and important matter that should have urgent consideration, namely,

"the acute problem faced by the staff of the children's hospital, Birmingham, in being able to admit children for major heart surgery."

The matter is specific in that it relates to the position at the children's hospital in Birmingham. It is certainly important in that I understand that more than 40 children in the west midlands require heart surgery at this time in this hospital. However, only five beds are in use in the intensive care unit.

As the House is no doubt aware, Matthew Collier, the four-year-old son of one of my constituents, is to be admitted today to the children's hospital. Hopefully, the operation will be carried out later this week. However, whether it will take place depends on the availability of beds in the intensive care unit. When I visited the hospital on Thursday I was shown around the intensive care unit. Only five beds are in use in that unit, which serves the whole of the west midlands. That is totally unacceptable.

It is understandable that my hon. Friend the Member for Coventry, North-East (Mr. Hughes) felt so strongly about this matter that he made his protest today. He wants to ensure that the child of one of his constituents is able to get the surgery performed at Birmingham children's hospital as quickly as possible.

I am sure we all hope that later this week Matthew Collier will have his heart operation, and we all wish him every success for a speedy recovery. How many other children such as Matthew in the west midlands will have to wait sometimes for weeks or months before an operation of this kind can be performed? One can imagine the constant worry of the parents.

The Prime Minister has said:

"I want an operation on the day, at the time and with the doctor that I choose."

If that is right for the Prime Minister, why should it not be right for our constituents and for their children? They should be able to have operations on the National Health Service without delay, hassle and publicity. The hospital in Birmingham does a splendid job, and it is wrong that it should have to operate on such a tight financial shoestring.

I urge you, Mr. Speaker, to grant a debate so that the acute problems faced by this hospital in being able to carry out major heart operations on children can be debated in the House. It is of far greater priority that funds should go to such hospitals than to continuing income tax cuts.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. Gentleman asks leave to move the Adjournment of the House for the purpose of discussing a specific and important matter that he believes should have urgent consideration, namely,

"the acute problems faced by the staff of the Children's hospital, Birmingham, in being able to admit children for major heart surgery."

I listened with concern to the hon. Gentleman, but I have to give him the answer that I gave to his hon. Friend the Member for Linlithgow (Mr. Dalyell). I regret that the matter that he has raised is not appropriate for discussion under Standing Order No. 20. However, I hope that he will find other opportunities to bring the matter to the attention of the House.

Proceedings of the House

4.54 pm

Mr. Dennis Skinner (Bolsover): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. It would be remiss if the House did not have on record what happened today during Prayers. What happened was not made known to all hon. Members and to the public at large because a decision was taken that is without precedent. I should like this to be carefully looked at. My hon. Friend the Member for Coventry, North-East (Mr. Hughes) raised a matter before Prayers, and in my view and in the view of other hon. Members he was dealt with in a fashion that could have been avoided. It was a secret decision because the public and the press were not present and proceedings were not being recorded by *Hansard*.

The matter should be carefully looked at and referred to a Committee to see whether the issue could have been dealt with in a different fashion. Many of us were of the view that my hon. Friend was trying to raise a matter of extreme importance, the one that has just been referred to, about whether——

Mr. Speaker: Order. That is not a point of order, but I shal deal with what the hon. Member has said. I do not know whether he was present in the Chamber at the time. I think that perhaps he was not. He should know that I did what was necessary in order to allow the House to proceed with its business. The proceedings of the suspension of the hon. Member for Coventry, North-East (Mr. Hughes) will be recorded in the Votes and Proceedings and in the *Official Report*.

Mr. Harry Greenway (Ealing, North): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. May I express to you the appreciation of many Conservative Members, and I am sure of many Opposition Members for upholding the ancient and vital tradition of the House that we start our proceedings with Prayers? You did that, Mr. Speaker, even though you were under wrong pressure not to do it. Could you establish once and for all, by saying what you have demonstrated by your action, that whatever happens, Prayers will take place every day before we commence our proceedings and that no hon. Member, whatever his grievance—I do not comment on anyone's grievance — will be allowed to disrupt that important and vital tradition?

Mr. Speaker: I confirm what the hon. Gentleman has said and draw to the attention of the House the Prayer for Parliament, which encompasses what we are about in this place.

Immigration (Members' Representations)

4.57 pm

Mr. Max Madden (Bradford, West): Mr. Speaker, I wish to raise a matter with you who are the guardian of the rights of Members and to ask whether you will make urgent inquiries into reports published during the recess that the Government are proposing to introduce rules that would stop hon. Members making representations to Ministers on matters about immigration and nationality. This would be a——

Mr. Speaker: Order. Is this the matter about which the hon. Gentleman has written to me alleging a matter of privilege?

Mr. Madden: Yes, Mr. Speaker, but it was not in that——

Mr. Speaker: Order. I have not yet had an opportunity to study the hon. Gentleman's letter in detail. He cannot raise a privilege matter in the House in this way.

Mr. Madden: I am aware of that, Mr. Speaker, and I do not wish to raise it in that context. I wish to raise it in the context that I should like you to make urgent inquiries into whether the Government are seeking to make such a proposal. It would represent the denial of the long-standing rights of Members. It would clearly create very considerable difficulties, because the representations that we make are usually against the advice and recommendations of officials. However, I understand that the Government will insist that in future we should make representations only to officials and not to Ministers. Lastly, it would create——

Mr. Speaker: Order. That is a matter for the Government, not a matter for me. I have listened to the hon. Gentleman, and I shall consider what he has said in his letter and reply to him.

Orders of the Day

Housing (Scotland) Bill

Order for Second Reading read.

Mr. Speaker: I have selected the amendment in the name of the Leader of the Opposition.

4.59 pm

The Secretary of State for Scotland (Mr. Malcolm Rifkind): I beg to move, That the Bill be now read a Second time.

The Bill is presented to the House towards the end of a decade of substantial and significant achievement in Scottish housing. Over the past decade, the Government have been entitled to point to a reputation and record of solid progress in almost every important matter affecting housing in Scotland.

Ten years ago, 120,000 houses in Scotland were deemed to be below the tolerable standard — that is, without some of the basic amenities that we ought to be able to take for granted. Today that figure is down to 55,000, and in a few years, on the present course, we shall be able to eliminate such houses.

We have also been concentrating on seeking to meet those categories of housing applicants who have particular requirements and whose housing must be of a particular nature to meet their special circumstances. There, too, we can point to some remarkable progress. For example, there has been a huge explosion in the quantity of sheltered housing, which is often deemed to be the most suitable for elderly people as it enables them to preserve maximum independence with the presence of care, when that is required.

Only 10,000 sheltered houses existed in 1979. Today that figure is 33,000, and is growing rapidly. The same is true of housing for the disabled. Such housing has to be specially adapted to meet the needs of disabled people in Scotland. Ten years ago only 3,000 such houses existed in Scotland. Today the figure is over 14,000, and it is growing by leaps and bounds.

We have also been anxious to ensure the development of one of the most exciting aspects of Scottish housing — the growth of the housing association movement. That movement had its roots in the developments of the late 1960s and 1970s, but under the present Government, it has enjoyed an explosion of resources and activity that has made a substantial impact. In 1979 there were only about 9,000 housing association tenants. Today, over 40,000 housing association tenants are being administered by literally hundreds of housing associations, thereby demonstrating the health and vitality of the housing association movement throughout Scotland. I make no secret of the fact that we have deliberately increased the resources of the Housing Corporation because the voluntary housing movement is highly creditable and deserves maximum support.

When commenting on housing, Labour Members often concentrate, understandably, on local authority housing and seek to encourage the House to consider the capital needs of the local authority housing stock in Scotland, which represents such a significant proportion of the housing stock north of the border. There, too, we can point with considerable satisfaction to what has been achieved — for example, in respect of local authority resources for modernising and improving the housing stock. In 1979 it amounted to £242 million. Last year it was £570 million which, even taking inflation into account, clearly represents a substantial real increase in the resources available to Scottish local authorities for the improvement, modernisation and rehabilitation of their housing stock. Capital expenditure on housing in Scotland was cut during the latter years of the last Labour Government, but, under this Administration, there has been continuing growth in such expenditure.

We have also given considerable importance to the need for growth of home ownership in Scotland, because we are aware that Scotland had—and still has—a lower level of home ownership than the rest of the United Kingdom and of almost any other country in western Europe. That has not been because of any lack of interest in home ownership by the people of Scotland, but because of the lack of opportunity until recent years. Since the enactment of the Tenants' Rights Etc. (Scotland) Act 1980, more than 106,000 Scottish public sector tenants have exercised that right, and the number of applications to purchase throughout the Scottish public sector is running at an all-time high, for local authorities, the Scottish Special Housing Association and the new towns. Hon. Members on both sides of the House should be delighted by that.

The Tenants' Rights Etc. (Scotland) Act provided the right to buy and, for the first time, gave Scottish local authority and public sector tenants statutory rights with regard to security of tenure and other such matters. Those rights are now taken for granted and are jealously protected by local authority tenants. They were introduced by the present Government and the measure that provided those rights was opposed by every Opposition Member. We must consider the Bill against that background of solid achievement over the past decade.

Before I turn to the detailed provisions of the Bill, it might be useful to refer to the Government's overall objectives and strategy with regard to housing policy in Scotland. I do not deny that an enormous amount of work still needs to be done. I shall identify three basic objectives which sum up the Government's housing strategy.

First, there is a need for a major regeneration of the peripheral housing estates in Scotland, particularly in central Scotland. There has been much reference south of the border to the need for inner urban regeneration. As we know from the Glasgow eastern area renewal project, perhaps the largest single need in that area has to a large extent been considered and dealt with during the past 10 years.

Other problems exist in most of our urban concentrations, but if one has to point to a comparable overall requirement in Scotland, it is in the peripheral housing estates that we see the need for urban regeneration. That is of particular significance when one considers any housing Bill. I am not suggesting that the regeneration of peripheral housing estates is merely a matter of housing policy. It goes much wider than that. As we have seen in the east end of Glasgow, we can achieve an environmental improvement and a transformation of the housing stock and we can even widen the forms of tenure that exist in such areas, but we also need to consider other means to ensure the economic as well as the visual and environmental regeneration of such areas.

I am not suggesting that the Bill or any housing measures could by themselves achieve all that needs to be

[Mr. Malcolm Rifkind]

done in respect of peripheral housing estates, but housing is clearly an important factor. It is a fundamental factor in the eyes of those who live in such peripheral estates, but not because they are slum properties. For the most part, slum properties have almost entirely disappeared in Scotland, but there is some monotony and dull and tedious housing which has created major problems in terms of the economic and environmental regeneration of those areas. Housing can make an important contribution to resolving such difficulties. The contribution of housing to the regeneration of peripheral estates is one of the Government's fundamental objectives.

The second major objective must be the further substantial increase in the level of home ownership in Scotland. Although home ownership has increased from about 35 per cent. of total population in 1979 to about 42 per cent. at the present time, that figure is woefully below the level that is to be found elsewhere in the United Kingdom and in most of the other developed countries. We must enable those on low incomes who aspire to home ownership to achieve it.

One of the most interesting and important developments in recent months has been a substantial increase in the number of those who live in flatted accommodation who are applying for the right to purchase their homes under the current legislation. The hon. Member for Glasgow, Cathcart (Mr. Maxton) may not be interested in assisting those on low incomes to achieve home ownership, which he takes for granted for himself and his family. We consider that it is insufficient for one simply to pay lip service to the desirability of home ownership for those on low incomes, unless one is prepared to provide the means whereby they can exercise that right — that means substantial discounts for those who live in such property — because that is no more than a cruel charade. Therefore, the continuing improvement in home ownership is of major significance.

That is not to say that home ownership will be the desired form of housing for every person in Scotland or in any other area. Frankly, at the end of the day, I do not mind whether individuals seek to buy or to rent their homes, as long as they have a real and meaningful choice and have chosen that form of housing which is most satisfactory to their requirements. It must be a meaningful, real choice, and it must not be forced upon them by the absence of any alternative to the housing rights that they have traditionally exercised. That is a significant factor.

The third major objective of our housing policy is, in substantial way, to widen the forms of tenure that are available to people north of the border. There has been a tendency to assume that the available choice, even for those who have any choice at all, is a crude, simplistic one between becoming an owner-occupier or continuing with traditional municipal housing tenure.

Opposition Members are aware that, in recent years, there has been increasing interest in broadening the spectrum of the kinds of tenure that are available. If one wishes to remain a tenant of rented property, there are several alternatives to the simple traditional relationship with one's local authority.

Most people will acknowledge—I hope that it is not a matter of political controversy—the interest in and the growth of tenant co-operatives of management and ownership kinds, of housing association activity, and the whole spectrum of new kinds of tenure. Tenan to remain tenants can take on much greater res for the administration and improvement of t and community in which they live. Therefore, alternative landlords. Often, the alternative la housing association, a tenants co-operative, or sector landlord, which often raises the ire of Members.

Let us be quite clear. The alternative to council housing of the traditional kind is n private sector landlord. That must be part of provision, but there are also many other excitin tenure. I hope that, in giving new rights to encourage them to choose other forms of tenur not simply invite a knee-jerk reaction from assume that they must oppose the legislation a harmful to their interests.

Mr. Bruce Millan (Glasgow, Govan): If landlord is such a valuable right, why can extended to private sector tenants?

Mr. Rifkind: I shall clearly answer the Gentleman's question. The public sector, Parliament, has a right to determine a diminu property rights of property owned in the pub That principle is fundamentally different from in the private property of individual citizen Members, in government if not in opposition, applied a similar distinction.

I tried to state what I believe to be the t objectives that the Government are seeking in their housing policy. What are the major proble face at present? We face one particular problem. we have a crude surplus of housing stock in S in other words, we have more houses in Scot there are households seeking accommodation conscious of the fact that in many areas there a lists and many people who are dissatisfied with t in which they are living.

That is not because it is slum property— there are few slums in Scotland at present—b the property is in a locality that has a poor repu which, for varying reasons, they are anxious to l if the house in which they live is quite adequate, the house is too large or too small for their circu Of course, there are also dampness problems. T the unprecedentedly high gross capital expen local authority housing should be welcomed. ensure that the mismatch of housing to people rectified as quickly and effectively as possible.

Secondly, we have a major problem that, parts of Scotland, there remains no meaning other than the municipal housing sector. In Mor Motherwell, virtually 80 per cent. of all h administered and run as traditional local authority stock.

Mr. Dennis Canavan (Falkirk, West): What with that?

Mr. Rifkind: Unless the people of Monkl Motherwell are quite different from the re population of Scotland and the United Kingdo a lot wrong with that. The hon. Gentlem appreciate that the vast majority of people in M and Motherwell and comparable areas would

choice. However benevolent, well-meaning or well-resourced their local authorities might be, the fact is that Opposition Members would like to have some meaningful choice in respect of the kind of housing tenure that they operate.

Glasgow district council remains the largest single landlord in western Europe. It is no surprise that the committee that was appointed by Glasgow district council to reflect on such matters recommended that at least 25 per cent. of Glasgow district council's housing stock should be disposed of in alternative forms of tenure to new landlords of various kinds.

Mr. John Home Robertson (East Lothian): Why not?

Mr. Rifkind: I agree with the hon. Gentleman. I am glad that the matter will not divide the House. Indeed, the more we see the response of Opposition Members, the more difficult it is to understand why they are likely, as I understand it, to vote against the Bill.

The Bill seeks to deal with major requirements and problems in three ways; first, by the creation of Scottish Homes; secondly, by a major attempt to attract substantial sums of private sector investment, not as an alternative but as a complement to public sector investment; and, thirdly, by providing new rights for public sector tenants with regard to the landlord of their choice.

In respect of Scottish Homes, I shall make two points as clear as I can. First, few people would question me when I say that, for the first time, the concept of a unified housing agency in Scotland has been extremely warmly welcomed. I cannot think of any significant source of comment that has done other than welcome the concept of a unified housing agency. That is indeed what Scottish Homes is and will be. Secondly, I am aware that there has been substantial controversy. Concern has been expressed by individual tenants of the SSHA who have launched a campaign and sought to suggest that the creation of Scottish Homes will somehow be a threat to them, their rights or their positions as tenants of the SSHA.

I say to Opposition Members what I have said to SSHA tenants. Any such concern is totally unjustified. There is not and never has been any proposal whatsoever to impose any degree of compulsion on any individual SSHA tenant. Indeed, I go beyond that statement. I remind Opposition Members that, as we were the Government—indeed, I was the Housing Minister at the time—who, for the first time provided these very rights for SSHA tenants, I should hardly be likely now to present a Bill to the House to remove them.

I challenge Opposition Members to state one single way in which SSHA tenants will be compelled to obtain new landlords or to lose any of the basic rights that the Government have provided for them in the tenants' rights legislation. If they are unable to provide any such evidence, I hope that they will not continue unnecessarily alarming tenants. That does no service to tenants, and, in due course, it will be shown to be unnecessary.

Mr. Archy Kirkwood (Roxburgh and Berwickshire): Does the right hon. and learned Gentleman agree that many of the fears that have been stirred up, for whatever reason, could have been allayed if proper consultation had taken place with the existing tenants of the SSHA? If such consultation had taken place and SSHA tenants desired to remain with their existing landlords, would have affected his plans for the Bill?

Mr. Rifkind: Not only were major consul documents published, but I had a meeting with te claiming to represent the tenant community, alth none of us has any way of knowing how many tenant represent. The SSHA sent every tenant a letter indic that none of their rights was affected by the measu

Mr. Donald Dewar (Glasgow, Garscadden): Sure right hon. and learned Gentleman is not surprised fears of SSHA tenants, because they have take elementary precaution of reading "Scottish Ho which says that the Secretary of State has it in mi an interesting phrase—that on the creation of Sc Homes the entire stock of SSHA houses sha transferred as a holding operation to a new lan division. It says that arrangements for a landlord div would be essentially transitional, and it suggests th 83,000 tenants of the SSHA would be magically put some other form of tenure over a short period. Tha the clear implication of those words. The right hon learned Gentleman has had to retreat in some dis from what he had in mind when he wrote "Sc Homes", which we welcome, but he is being a little in suggesting that the SSHA was scaremongering, wh has clearly won a considerable victory, if he is right in he is now saying.

Mr. Rifkind: I know the hon. Gentleman wan believe in the sinister conspiracy theory of politics, b he has read the document he will be aware that document makes it abundantly clear that while Government continue to hope that tenants will exe their rights to opt for new forms of tenure, there i question, nor has there ever been a question, of any te being obliged against his will to form a hou association, to acquire a new landlord or to be part tenants' co-operative. If the hon. Gentleman would li read from the document a single sentence or phrase says that those objectives will come about by b imposed on tenants against their will, or irrespecti their will, he will have a point to make. He cannot say nor has he said it.

The hon. Gentleman has referred to the Governm continuing policy: that we hope that SSHA ten eventually will become either owner-occupiers or ten of a private sector body. As a long-term objective, Government have no desire or policy to be a landlo Scotland or any part of the United Kingdom. I have m it clear on numerous occasions that the pace at which will happen will depend on individual tenants exerci their rights.

Mr. Dewar *rose*——

Mr. Rifkind: If the hon. Gentleman has some extract to read out, I will give way, but not if he is sin going to read out what he has already read out. The no suggestion of any compulsion on any individual ten and the hon. Gentleman knows that—*[Interruption.* is a matter of constant pleasure that Opposition Memb knowing that there is nothing in the Bill to which they legitimately object, are desperately anxious to find a ca to unify them in their pathetic attempt to suggest cau for concern.

Mr. Dewar: I go back to the question. If the right hon. and learned Gentleman were a tenant enjoying security of tenure and his landlord announced that he was going to be shunted into a transit camp—a landlord division of a new organisation — and that would essentially be a transitional arrangement, would it not be reasonable for that tenant to think that he was under some form of threat, and that persuasion might turn into duress? Would that feeling not still be in his mind if he had listened to the right hon. and learned Gentleman in the past few minutes, because only 30 seconds ago he said that it was the long-term intention of the Government that they should not be landlords in the public sector on a permanent basis. The right hon. and learned Gentleman seems to be saying that at some time he hopes to be able to get rid of SSHA tenants. Where is the choice for those who wish to remain in the SSHA under public sector tenure if the right hon. and learned Gentleman is still proclaiming his intention as a landlord of getting rid of them at the first opportunity?

Mr. Rifkind: The hon. Gentleman finds himself incapable of pointing to compulsion. That is the crunch. The Government have made it no secret that they are anxious to try to persuade tenants to opt for new forms of tenure. There has never been any proposal of compulsion. The hon. Gentleman would agree that we can hardly compel tenants to form a housing association against their will; it is physically impossible. If that were one of the major areas of growth that the Government were seeking to encourage, it goes without saying that that could be achieved only voluntarily.

The position is that Scottish Homes, far from posing any threat to tenants, is an unprecedented opportunity for them, if they so wish, to exercise as wide a choice as they believe appropriate. Secondly, Scottish Homes will be a means of attracting the major private sector investment that is crucial to the contribution required for the regeneration of housing in Scotland. [AN HON. MEMBER: "Where is the evidence?"] I will refer to the evidence later in my speech. Thirdly, Scottish Homes will provide the means of advising not only its own tenants but tenants throughout Scotland of the opportunities available to them and the means by which they can be exercised.

Before turning to the detailed provisions of the Bill, I offer my recognition of the remarkable achievements of the Housing Corporation in Scotland and the SSHA over their years of operation. Their activities will live on and will continue to make a necessary contribution under the umbrella of Scottish Homes.

Part I of the Bill provides for the establishment of Scottish Homes. It will have wide powers, many of which are held today by the Housing Corporation or the SSHA. It will operate under my direction and will be funded by grant from the Scottish block. The Bill provides for the dissolution of the SSHA and the transfer of its assets and liabilities to Scottish Homes. The Housing Corporation's responsibilities to housing associations in Scotland will also transfer to the new body. It is clear that the provisions bear a distinct resemblance to those which established the Scottish Development Agency in 1975. I have already emphasised my desire to see the same dynamic approach brought to housing as the SDA has brought to the Scottish economy.

Mr. Dewar: The right hon. and learned Gentleman voted against it.

Mr. Rifkind: Yes, and the hon. Gentleman be ready to vote against Scottish Homes. He bear that in mind, and draw the necessary co

Part II of the Bill will mean that in Scot England and Wales, there will be two new types —assured tenancies and short assured tenan for both types of tenancies will be freely between landlord and tenant, although either p able to ask the rent assessment committee to rent in certain situations. The provisions are detailed, and I mention only the main ones.

The Bill does not seek to introduce the ne one fell swoop; it applies only to new lettings c the legislation comes into force. It will not appl tenants, who will remain within the current sys regulation. There will be an amendment to the rules and an end to the phasing of registered ren as I will explain later. Part II of the Bill does the decontrolling measures of 1957. The Bill the Rent Act 1957 in several important respec

First, that Act removed rent control from so lettings, whereas the decontrol now proposed only to new lettings. Secondly, the Act gave th statutory security of tenure or protection fro whereas the present Bill confirms security of strengthens the law against harassment by Thirdly, the Act operated at a time when provided no support for tenants in need of whereas we now have a system of housing ben those tenants who find that they cannot afford rents.

Mr. Alistair Darling (Edinburgh, Central) right hon. and learned Gentleman accept that, are to be fixed by a bargain struck between landlord, in situations where there is an acute accommodation, such as in Edinburgh and rents will rise and this will, in turn, increase the public expenditure through increased housing

Mr. Rifkind: One of the reasons why, in there is an acute shortage of accommodation h virtual disappearance of the private rented se this sort of area. The hon. Member for Edinbur (Mr. Darling) will know that one of the p finding rented accommodation in Edinburgh a the absence of a private rented sector. There people who, for various reasons, find loca housing either unattractive or unobtainable cannot contemplate owner-occupation. I sh thought that the hon. Gentleman would be acknowledge that, unless we can revive the pri sector, unless that form of housing is availab who want it, some of his constituents will not f to meet their requirements. So we have to find doing that.

The only sensible, civilised way of doing tha proper rents to be charged, but where tenan income—[HON. MEMBERS: "They will be hi may, in some cases, be high, but if they are it s proper market rents are not being charged at t If hon. Gentlemen want to revive alternative their constituents who experience difficulty a is surely more sensible to subsidise the tenant w help through housing benefit than to maintain level of rents and thereby destroy that whol housing.

Very few who are involved in housing and who are not simply approaching these matters from a polemical point of view would do other than acknowledge that the disappearance of a private rented sector has created major problems in meeting the needs, particularly in urban areas, of many young married couples and others in Scotland. Hon. Gentlemen know that, although they may be unable, for political reasons, to admit it. A serious attempt must be made to revive this sector, and as long as the housing benefit scheme can ensure help for those on lower incomes it is well worth pursuing.

Mr. Darling: Is the right hon. and learned Gentleman seriously suggesting that in central Edinburgh there is a large number of empty flats waiting to come on the market if the rent is right? Is not the problem an acute shortage of space to let rather than of rents being unattractive to landlords?

Mr. Rifkind: The hon. Gentleman is incorrect. There are two problems. There are those who have accommodation but who, for various reasons and because of the present system, find it unattractive to rent; and there is the almost total absence of new buildings for private renting over the years, for similar reasons. The hon. Gentleman knows that there have been many gap sites in Edinburgh which in the end have been used for owner-occupier purposes but which, under a different system, might have been used for the development of private rented houses, thereby meeting the housing requirements of some of his constituents. So his own policy has been against the interests of the very people that he claims to represent.

Clauses 12 to 32 define the scope of the new rent regime and deal with security of tenure and the question of any rent increases. Most important, they provide that a landlord may recover possession of property only on certain specified grounds listed in schedule 5, and that he must follow a set procedure in seeking possession. The grounds for possession are fewer and slightly simpler than those currently available to landlords.

Clauses 33 to 37 concern harassment of tenants. Under the present law, it is an offence for any person to harass a tenant with the inention of causing him to leave his home. Providing proof of such an intention in the courts has, in practice, been difficult, so the Bill proposes an additional offence of harassing a tenant if the landlord knows or ought to know that his actions are likely to cause the tenant to leave. There is also a new civil right to improved compensation for tenants evicted illegally. Thus the Bill strengthens the tenant's position against a landlord who is tempted to act unscrupulously.

Clause 38 provides for the abolition of phasing of rent increases. Phasing prevents a landlord from obtaining the proper rent for his premises, so we are convinced that it should go, but on a timetable which is fair to both landlord and tenant.

Clauses 39 to 42 cover the transitional arrangements required as the Rents (Scotland) Act 1984 is phased out for new lettings and as the new regime comes into effect.

Clause 43 and schedule 6 change the circumstances in which someone can succeed to a regulated tenancy. Succession as a statutory tenant will be limited to the deceased tenant's spouse. Another member of the tenant's family will be able to succeed to the tenancy but will be subject to the assured tenancy regime and must have been living with the tenant for five years before the tenant's death.

Clause 64 relates to the new function of rent
Under the new arrangement, a local authority
required to refer to the rent officer every rent for
has received an application for housing benefit.
officer will then determine whether the rent pa
appropriate for the property. The objective is to
that abuse of the housing benefit system is preve
ruling out cases where rent is excessive, where the
is clearly over-accommodated or where the accor
tion is of a quality that few people could ordinarily
The rent officer will have discretion in such cases
the tenant's rent or accommodation is excessive,
allowance subsidy paid to the local authority co
will be restricted if the authority chooses to cont
pay the tenant housing benefit which covers the
rent. In the case of over-luxurious accommodati
amount of housing benefit that can be paid will i
restricted.

Mr. Dewar: The Secretary of State has
comment and a defence of sorts on the applicatio
test of an unreasonable rent. Will he say a word
about the other, even more startling, propositio
in every case the rent officer decides whether the p
is unnecessarily large and, if it is, he then calcula
hypothetical rent of a hypothetical dwelling house
right size, according to standards laid down
Secretary of State? This suggests that the wid
figure much talked about in connection with the
—who is struggling to live on in the matrimonia
in reduced circumstances will probably be told that
not be given full housing benefit for the rent beca
is living in a house that is too big for her needs.

Mr. Rifkind: I should have thought that it wo
common ground on both Opposition and Gove
Benches that, where a person's rent is being paid,
or in whole, by housing benefit, and therefore
public, it is not unreasonable to wish to be satisfi
the housing benefit paid goes towards the
accommodation which meets the requirements
tenant concerned. If a tenant wishes to
accommodation which is far larger than he or she re
that is entirely his or her right—*[Interruption]*

Madam Deputy Speaker (Miss Betty Boot
Order.

Mr. Rifkind: I am happy to try to respond,
Deputy Speaker, but at the moment I am not bein
an opportunity to do so. [HON. MEMBERS: "Oh!"
grateful for the sympathy of hon. Members
Opposition Benches.

I will begin again. If a tenant wishes to
accommodation larger than he or she requires——

Mr. David Lambie (Cunninghame, South): Wha
owner-occupiers?

Mr. Rifkind: —he or she is perfectly entitled to
and nothing in this Bill will prevent that. If they w
rent to be paid, in whole or in part, through h
benefit, there is no particular reason that I am aw
why the community as a whole should be expected
housing benefit for——

Mr. Brian Wilson (Cunninghame, North): Will th
hon. and learned Gentleman give way?

Mr. Rifkind: I have not even finished my senten

[Mr. Rifkind]

There is no reason why the community should be expected to pay housing benefit for a house which is grossly in excess of what a particular tenant requires. We are talking not about existing tenants, but about a new tenancy. If the tenant or the landlord knows that, whatever rent is charged, it will be paid by the public through housing benefit, I should have thought that Opposition Members would be the first to appreciate the potential for abuse. They have been the first to emphasise their anxiety about the possibility of excessive rents being charged. They do not want landlords to be able to abuse the system. Therefore, some check must be made to ensure that a landlord and a tenant are not acting in collusion. It will not happen in many cases, but it has happened in the past and could happen in the future. It is in the public interest to ensure that there has been no such collusion.

Mr. Wilson: The Secretary of State says that a tenant "wishes" to live in a larger property or one that is "more luxurious" than some anonymous person will deem appropriate for his or her circumstances. Will he acknowledge that some people who live in houses larger than mystical rules might determine to be appropriate are there not because they wish it but because of force of circumstance — sometimes specifically against their wishes? How will they be protected from the person who will go round with the measuring tape saying whether they are living in too big or too luxurious a house? Will he measure the pile of the carpets to define the luxury which is appropriate to someone in those circumstances? Will it mean the persecution of people living alone, sometimes in difficult circumstances? As my hon. Friend the Member for Glasgow, Garscadden (Mr. Dewar) said, they are precisely the people about whom bogus crocodile tears have been shed in the context of the poll tax.

Mr. Rifkind: I appreciate the hon. Gentleman's desire to create a bogy which he can then try to knock down, but there is no intention on anyone's part to deal with the matter other than sensitively and flexibly.

Mr. Bill Walker (Tayside, North): Does my right hon. and learned Friend agree that every time an individual or family applies for a council property, the measurements tht he has mentioned should be used to determine the type of property that should be allocated?

Mr. Rifkind: My hon. Friend makes a perfectly valid point. He should not be too worried about this. The Opposition cannot find anything of substance in the Bill which they can legitimately oppose, so they must find a reason to justify their vote tonight. No doubt this is part of that exercise.

Mr. Alexander Eadie (Midlothian): The right hon. and learned Gentleman should not be allowed to skate over the point. This could be a form of compulsory decanting. For example, as a consequence of losing her husband, a lady could be deemed to be living in property that is too luxurious—that is the Secretary of State's definition—for her. He said that the Government would approach the matter with sensitivity and understanding. The loss of a husband can be a traumatic experience. Where in the Bill do we find the sensitivity and understanding about which he is talking?

Mr. Rifkind: I have clearly said th about gross over-accommodation. It g that the housing needs of a widow are n than those of a pensioner couple. It is except in the minds of Opposition Me

Mr. Sam Galbraith (Strathkelvin an the Minister an example. My parents house in which they brought up their them should die, the other would be left with three bedrooms, a dining room, sitting room. Will that be gross over-a the partner who is left?

Mr. Rifkind: I will not try to gi [HON. MEMBERS: "Why not?"] For the Opposition Members would attack an might give as showing an indefens inflexibility of approach.

Mr. Dewar: The Secretary of State w his consultative document, entitled "Pri . . . Implications for Housing Benefit" on 17 November and on which comme 31 December. Paragraph 17, which de unnecessarily large accommodation, s officer

"will do this on the basis of a test of occu the number of habitable rooms, which wil by the Secretary of State for Scotland."

As the Secretary of State has designe have to lay orders or give other guidan give us some idea of what he has in mi

Mr. Rifkind: No, I cannot. [HON. M am sorry to upset Opposition Members to give hon. Members an idea will be w to a conclusion on these matters. At tha proposals to the House. I appreciate Op synthetic fury, but they would be the Government if public funds were used continue. The hon. Member for Glas (Mr. Dewar) knows as well as anyone officer would be expected to consid requirements of the tenant. If the tenant difference, that would be a matter for h reason in equity why the general publi to subsidise tenants who wish to live i that is grossly excessive to their require

Part III of the Bill gives tenants in t right, while continuing to rent the same alternative landlord. The effect of the p open local authority and other publ estates to competition and to the infl housing management practices of ot outline, the provisions in part III will c which have been approved by Scottish H Homes itself, the right to acquire a ho public sector landlord where the tenan transfer. That right will apply to most

We envisage that approved landlord housing associations, commercial landl operatives where the tenants themselve council. The Bill sets out the detailed will apply where the right to acquire pr Tenants' choice will be exactly that. N possible without the consent of the tena contemplate transfer under the provi unless he wishes to do so.

Part III provides for limited exceptions to the right for a public sector landlord to refuse an application in certain circumstances and for references to the land tribunal where disputes arise or delays occur. Provision is also made for Scottish Homes' agreement to be required for the first subsequent disposal of any property transferred under the tenants' choice provisions.

I should mention three matters that are not in the Bill. The White Paper proposed the abolition of the outstanding debt test which limits the discount that can be given under the right to buy on houses provided or improved since 1978. Although its abolition would benefit many tenants and encourage them to change to owner-occupation, I have noted the arguments made by local authorities and housing associations against wholesale abolition. I am reviewing what should be done, with a view, if possible, to introducing an amendment later.

The White Paper also promised a simplification——

Mr. George Robertson (Hamilton): The Secretary of State is outlining many proposals on Second Reading. What advice would he give local authorities which are about to allocate properties on estates, as Hamilton district council is at Barncluith? The council is in no position to know whether, at the end of the period specified in the Bill, it can recover outstanding debt or whether, due to a subsequent amendment, future rent payers will have to bear the burden of the benefits that the Government are giving sitting tenants.

Mr. Rifkind: That is a perfectly fair question. I appreciate the need to clear this matter up as soon as possible and I hope to be able to reach a conclusion at a fairly early date. I am not in a position to announce a decision today, but I accept the thrust of the hon. Gentleman's argument that local authorities are entitled to know fairly soon what is likely to be in the Bill when its progress through Parliament is complete. I hope to be able to communicate that in the reasonably near future to the district councils and to others interested.

The White Paper also promised a simplification of the arrangements for providing Government support for expenditure by local authorities on improvement and repair and other grants. An amendment to give effect to that will be introduced soon.

The White Paper made it clear that, consistent with the general intention to give people a wider choice of housing, we would seek powers to enable new town development corporations to dispose of their housing assets to a wide range of alternative landlords. We believe that it is important that the new towns should be able to offer a greater choice of house type, tenure and ownership to meet the needs and aspirations of their residents, and an amendment to enable that to happen will be introduced if it is thought to be necessary.

Mr. Lambie: Will the right of new town tenants to choose their landlords include the right to choose the local district council?

Mr. Rifkind: Scotland already has a higher proportion of local authority housing than almost any other country, and we believe that the one thing that it does not require is an increase in local authority housing—*[Interruption.]* There is a multiplicity of forms of tenure and, as I said, the one form of tenure that I do not consider appropriate is that which already dominates the Scottish housing scene. Most Opposition Members would agree majority of housing in Scotland is local au and that one of our objectives should b multiplicity and diversity wherever appro

Taken as a whole, the White Paper off Scotland — owners and tenants, the hor well housed — a major step forward housing. For some, particularly those who most acute, our policies offer action desig quick results. For others, the benefits will arising from the development of a clear s improvement of Scotland's housing tha sectors and seeks to dismantle the rigid ba unnecessarily inhibited people from enjoyi that best suits their changing needs.

I was asked whether our attempts to dev rented sector were likely to produce any i the part of those who might bring forward House will have noted that before the Bill a south of the border were presented to the developments giving great cause for c already taking place. We note that the Nati building society, one of the largest in the Un has announced that it proposes to invest private rented accommodation over the n Initially, it will concentrate on areas that inc Dundee and Edinburgh.

We also note with great interest that Qu company that is to administer the resources, by the former director of housing of Gl council, together with some of his senior c that housing department. They clearly be can contribute more to the development Scotland and to meeting the needs of low-i who require rented accommodation throu rented sector. That is to be commended.

I remind the House that, almost eight y day, I wound up the debate on Second R Tenants' Rights, Etc. (Scotland) Bill Members, including those on the Front B three things at that time: first, that there interest in the right to buy among Scottish c secondly, that the Bill would lead to the public housing in Scotland; thirdly, that the would fight it tooth and nail and repeal available opportunity.

Since then, more than 106,000 tenants the right to buy. Public sector housing in Sc weakened as Opposition Members suggested Above all, we have seen the conversion party to the principle of the right to buy. The for Garscadden and his colleagues ha emphasise to local authority tenants th provided under that measure are safe in th

Before Opposition Members go into the against the Bill, they may wish to ponde position that they adopted eight long years justified by developments since. They have swallow their words about the Tenants' (Scotland) Act. Through Scottish Homes changes proposed in the Bill, we shall complement the major transformation housing has enjoyed over the past decade. I commend the Bill to the House.

5.55 pm

Mr. Donald Dewar (Glasgow, Garscadden): I beg to move, to leave out from "That" to the end of the Question, and to add instead thereof,

"this House declines to give a Second Reading to a Bill which fails to tackle the crisis of homelessness in Scotland or to provide for resources to improve Scotland's housing stock, threatens to increase rents and reduce the security of tenants, further undermines the ability of elected local councils to provide for the housing needs of their people, and proposes to extend the power of central Government through an unaccountable quango."

For the past hour, the Secretary of State has looked distinctly uncomfortable. He started predictably with a flourish of triumph and a mass of rather misleading statistics. However, when he finished declaiming and started to deal with the argument and tried to explain the contents of the Bill, the triumphant flourish fell away, leaving a discordant and defensive collection of false notes. I do not think that he carried the House; even his hon. Friends looked distinctly uncomfortable.

This is a complex, lengthy and, I concede, important Bill. I agree with the Secretary of State that it has considerable potential. The House must weigh up that potential and decide whether it is potential for good or for bad. Having read the Bill and spent time examining the detailed results that would flow from it, I am convinced that it is confused in thought and that it will damage the interests of many groups of tenants in both the private and the public sectors. Much of it is irrevelant and the principle is badly flawed.

Directly or indirectly, the Bill will affect about half the households of Scotland — the households that rent in one way or another. Therefore, it deserves special attention. Consideration and consultation are important not just to the Bill but to the parliamentary process. We are entitled to protest about the way in which the Government have handled this matter. The "Scottish Homes" document was hurried from the press to give some sort of substance to a threadbare and flagging electoral campaign. It was followed by a White Paper last November and a plethora of consultative documents which were needed because "Scottish Homes" was no more than a political broadside and because the White Paper posed more questions than it answered. Indeed, the fact that it had given rise to much dismay and anxiety was reflected clearly in the Scottish Special Housing Association tenants' campaign, which many of my hon. Friends supported.

Against that background, the timetable should be the subject of severe criticism. We have fundamental discussion documents, raising questions that strike at the very heart of the Bill. The Government asked for comments on those documents by 31 December—in one case by 14 January — yet the Bill on which the consultation is centred was only published on 3 December and this debate is taking place before the end of the consultation period on some of the documents. That is not a proper way to proceed. It is insulting to public opinion, which should be heard and which should be effective; indeed, it was effective to some extent during the SSHA and wider public sector tenants' campaigns.

My hon. Friend the Member for Hamilton (Mr. Robertson) rightly drew attention to just one of the many important and completely unfinished matters on the Government's agenda when he referred to the possible abolition of the cost floor in the sale of council houses. We do not know what is happening, altho State said that we would know soon stand, in some areas of Scotland, th renting is being placed in limbo. Th gave us some rather halting hints that complete abolition of the cost floor ru considering partial abolition. That is

If the present rule about recovery is abolished, local authorities will b build, so that they do not have the pr or at best to avoid allocation to peo sector tenancies because the correspo would mean that remaining tenants in to bear a considerable burden as a re example of the way in which the wh botched and mishandled. At the Parliament there was no need for s resulting turmoil and dismay. The b whole consultation programme has Government have gone through th proper procedures have been observe reflects no credit on the Minister or

With regard to the substance of t sympathy with what the Secretary of not essentially object to the concept agency. Indeed, I go further than tha is a positive case for putting the Hou a distinct and defined Scottish basis those who now operate the Hous Scotland, who find themselves opera uncomfortable addendum to a Unite accept that there is a case for doing so and I do not deny that the presen clumsy and to some extent unsatisfac

I would understand it if Scottish ginger group — a combination of Housing Corporation's housing respo and operating as a parallel in hou Development Agency. There might about emphasis, but I would underst

The Scottish Development Agenc with other agencies and does not try When it goes into an area such as G eastern area renewal project — it tandem with the district council, the other elected bodies.

The Secretary of State may regret but the White Paper, "Scottish Hom consultation documents have given impression that Scottish Homes is n SDA, but an attempt to write a scrip in Scotland, whereby Scottish Homes on and take over the proper preser elected government. It cannot be a democracy — or for accountability, favoured by the Secretary of Stat sweeping range of essential housing of a board consisting of nine appoi appointees need not always be creatu of State, but that danger exists and it to move, as is undoubtedly threatene objectives of Scottish Homes, from d rule by quango.

I shall not labour the point, but t press speculation about the appointm That is a matter of key importance. I

be seen as a matter of patronage but that there will be a search for the right person based on qualification and merit. It would be the worst of starts and entirely unacceptable if the chairmanship of this very important body were seen merely as a consolation prize for someone who had given loyal service to the Conservative party in this place or in some other way. I am sure that the Secretary of State gets my message.

Hon. Members: Michael Hirst?

Mr. Harry Ewing (Falkirk, East): Michael Ancram?

Mr. Dewar: My hon. Friends remind me that there could be more than one unfortunate way of solving the problem of that appointment.

Mr. Harry Ewing: Only a couple of weeks ago, there was the disgraceful appointment to the SDA board of Sir Alex Fletcher, who voted against the establishment of the agency in the first place. That appointment was an insult and shows that my hon. Friend's fears are well founded.

Mr. Dewar: I shall leave that matter there.

Mr. Bill Walker *rose*——

Hon. Members: There is your man!

Mr. Dewar: Jobs have passed the hon. Gentleman by in this place and the same may well apply when he leaves the House. He should not be so eager.

Mr. Walker: That was a nasty jibe. In all seriousness, despite the flippancy on the Opposition Back Benches, I hope that the hon. Member for Glasgow, Garscadden (Mr. Dewar) does not take the view that anyone who has been a Member of the House should automatically be debarred from any other activity associated with Government policy.

Mr. Dewar: I did not suggest that as a general rule. I merely made a reference, the point of which I believe was appreciated by the House.

I hope that the Under-Secretary will be able to give some reassurance about the composition of the board of Scottish Homes. The White Paper specifically states:

> "The position of tenants is somewhat different and particular attention will be paid to the desirability of appointing someone able to contribute experience of the interests of tenants."

Schedule 1, which governs these matters, contains no reference whatever to that pledge. I hope that it has not been dropped and that it will be reinstated in Committee or that a cast-iron assurance will be given by the Government. Otherwise, the silence of the Bill on this point could be interpreted as sinister.

My objection is fundamental. As I have already outlined, I believe that the Bill is an attempt to undermine and encroach on the proper responsibilities of local government. Ministers may protest their innocence, but the education discussion document, which will doubtless lead to legislation, the local government legislation and the Bill, with all its explanatory documents, constitute a trilogy which local government rightly regards as threatening. If some of the more extreme proposals are implemented, councillors will be reduced to middlemen negotiating contracts with the private sector for a greatly diminished level of service.

It will be a long time before I forget the reaction of the Minister of State, the hon. Member for Galloway and Upper Nithsdale (Mr. Lang) when it was brought to his attention that the freeze on industrial a levels meant that an enormous escala into the poll tax and that there wo increases in the poll tax if present bud He replied, "They wouldn't dare," an it clear that the whole point of the pol the level of service and the ability of l meet the demands of the people of Homes is an invitation to go down the are plenty of quotations suggesting th no longer regard local authorities as housing services but as being elbowed stage by the new quango that we a endorse.

The Bill may be an improvement on largely because the SSHA and other ten have campaigned hard and effectively i the Secretary of State's attempt to pret some kind of unworthy scaremongerin seems remarkably hollow. I give him from the Scottish Homes document s landlord division was essentially a tran conclusion that one can reach on a f document is that people who insist on r sector tenancies will be seen as the equi going against the wisdom of a Conserv

Another, less dramatic but typical that in the Secretary of State's view tenants have been served well by a c body in the past the formation of Sc provide a valuable opportunity for tenure of SSHA stock. That is the situ

The SSHA has given good and caring we are now moving in a different directi Government a little while to get the mes create a situation in which people have go. No doubt they will manage it. No claims were somewhat optimistic. Howe intention has justified the tenants' camp and I am glad that on this occasion w retractions from Ministers.

It is interesting that the Secretary of deal of time talking about public secto a little time analysing the impact of private sector tenants. However, I surprised by that. As a total package, th for private sector interests—arguably, for public sector tenants. As you, Mr. heard on many occasions, Ministers ar Opposition Members of being concern vested interest—the public sector tena and I should like to express my concern changes that are being introduced in th will affect those who wish to remain in

Mr. Rifkind: Before the hon. Gentle private rented sector and if, for a mo aside our different views on the meani consultative document, will he inform th the House is entitled to know, whether that Scottish Homes as proposed in the or unacceptable?

Mr. Dewar: I do not object to the c together the SSHA and the Housi However, I object to the form and the

[Mr. Dewar]

has been done and to some of the powers that are implied and the script that has been written for Scottish Homes. The form itself is comparatively neutral. There is, indeed, a case for some reform, especially of the Housing Corporation, but the Secretary of State must not take from that any endorsement of the broad aims that he described or of the likely practical result of the policy set out in the Bill.

The idea that we should try to revive the private rented sector is no doubt laudable in itself. Of course,44es as the Secretary of State implied, the trouble is that the only way in which he can do so is by making letting more and more attractive to the landlord. In effect, the landlord must have a higher return out of higher rents. That will be at the expense of many tenants and that is the rub for Conservative Members and, indeed, for anyone who is interested in this question.

However, it is not just a matter of that philosophical point. If one considers some of the practical results of private sector tenancies, one sees that the balance of advantage is swinging heavily against private sector tenants. If they enter the private sector after the passing of the Bill, they will have to become assured tenants with assured tenancies, and several consequences will flow from that. Alternatively, they could obtain a short assured tenancy which, ironically, may well be longer than an assured tenancy. However, I shall pass by that little idiosyncrasy. Those hon. Members who serve in Committee will no doubt look forward to debating the "ish" of a short assured tenancy which may cause some problems if dealt with in an afternoon sitting. However, I leave that issue for the future.

The point is that with an assured tenancy there will be a weakening of the tenant's position. There is the issue of security for the tenant himself. The Secretary of State fairly referred to the fact that if someone were to be evicted, the landlord must go to court. However, the grounds for eviction have changed and are now much more in favour of the landlord. I shall give one example.

If the Secretary of State considers ground 10—I am sure that he does not need to look at it — he will discover that if it is proved that someone is behind with the rent and has been so for three months—the tenant need not be behind with three months' rent, it may be a sum of rent that has been unpaid for three months—he can be evicted and the court has no discretion in the matter, however deserving, difficult or human the circumstances may be.

That was not the situation before. The landlord could, of course, go to court, but the court had the discretion to look at the circumstances and to do what was just. There is now no discretion, which is symptomatic of the fundamental weakening of the tenant's position, which could be instanced in other ways.

The Secretary of State made a passing reference to succession to a tenancy. He mentioned the rule that if a relative, living in the family, wishes to succeed to the tenancy, that person must have been in the family, in the house, for five years. Under the present law, that period is six months for a protected tenant. It is arguable that six months is too short, but I am sure that five years is far too long.

All of us know of cases, perhaps from personal friends, but certainly from constituents, in which someone has moved legitimately and genuinely into the home to nurse an aged parent and, three or four years after that burden was willingly shouldered, the parent dies. Is the carer now to be unsure whether he or she can rely on the private sector landlord for the right to remain in that house? That cannot be progress or justice.

In fairness to the hon. Member for Edinburgh, West (Lord James Douglas-Hamilton) I should say that he wrote to me on 11 January. I received his letter today. In it he was extremely defensive and wrote:

"Although the Bill provides that the landlord will be able to seek repossession within 12 months of learning of the tenant's death, it is important to note that, as with all assured tenancies, he will be obliged to go through a proper process of applying to the sheriff before the tenant can be obliged to give up the lease."

However, if the sheriff has no discretion, that seems a poor defence.

The letter continued:

"Furthermore, since the landlord will be receiving a market rent and will get the same rent whoever the tenant is, he will in fact have no incentive to terminate the lease."

I am sorry, but that is just naive. I hope that the Under-Secretary does not mind my suggesting that he is being naive. That accusation may have been made before—I do not know.

However, I advise the hon. Member that there is another reason why a landlord may want to terminate a lease. He may want to get the tenant out so that he can sell the property to realise the capital sum. That will happen frequently. Therefore, it is wrong merely to say that it is sufficient to rely on the fact that it is always

"open to a tenant who transfers to negotiate a right of succession in the terms of the lease itself. Indeed, if both parties agree, it would be possible to write the present statutory rights into the new lease."

I have no doubt that it would be possible, but I know of many private sector landlords who would be anxious to avoid that agreement and who will avoid it. I repeat that the position of private sector tenants will be significantly weakened.

I give two other examples. First, the Bill contains the power to end the phasing of rent increases in the private sector. All Opposition Members know that that system has been in operation for some time on the basis of £104 per annum or a quarter of the existing rent, whichever is the greater. That was a real and substantial protection of which most of us have had experience, perhaps not as tenants but by being in contact with tenants. That protection will go. Second, key money will be legitimised by the Bill. That was banished by a Tory Government after the bitter experience of the 1950s, 1960s and the early 1970s. I cannot see that provision as being in any way a return to better days.

Finally, the point of the whole manoeuvre is unashamedly that the private sector tenants of the future will have not a fair rent system, but a market rent system, which means that they will have to pay considerably more. I could go on to mention other points, but time does not allow that now, although I hope that in Committee it will. My point is that private sector tenants, in whose aid this whole scheme has been brought forward, will be considerably damaged in the process.

Mr. Rifkind: At some stage, will the hon. Gentleman inform the House whether he and his colleagues wish to see some growth in the private rented sector and if they do, how they would wish that to be brought about?

Mr. Dewar: I should certainly be interested in seeing that. However, I do not believe that it should be bought at the kind of price that is implied in the Bill. I am honest in saying that that would be extremely difficult to bring about and no doubt we shall deal with that in greater detail later. I hope that, without overstating my case, I am suggesting that, however desirable the Government's objective, broadly stated, may be, it will be purchased at a considerable price.

Not only private sector tenants will be affected; let us consider housing association tenants. What solid comfort can they take from the Bill? They will face a great deal of uncertainty and confusion. After all, at present, sitting tenants in housing association property have the right to buy, but those who move within the housing stock after the Bill is implemented will lose that right and any new housing association tenant will not have it. It seems odd to have two households side by side, one with and one without the right.

Any new housing association tenant will have an assured tenancy, and my earlier points about security and succession apply. Rents are a mystery. The Government say that there will not be the old fair rent system. There was talk in some consultative documents about reasonable rents. Then there was talk about market rents and rather less than market rents, but how much less no one knows. We are facing substantial changes in the housing association grant system. I assume—perhaps the Under-Secretary will confirm this when he replies—that that will require legislation. I hope that he can also assure us that those changes will not be lost in some overall United Kingdom legislation. That would be particularly ironic at the time when the Housing Corporation in Scotland was being disentangled from the rest of the country and was being put on a separate basis.

Many hon. Members will know that it has been calculated—this has not been challenged by the Scottish Office—that on a housing association grant of 50 per cent., a unit cost of £33,000, which is about the average for inner-city rehabilitation of old tenement properties, an index-linked loan of 6 per cent. to make up the balance, and the usual management and maintenance costs, a three-apartment tenement flat, with a rent of about £800 under the fair rent system, will almost certainly end up with a rent of £2,500 plus per year.

The Government may not allow that to happen, because they recognise that the system has got them into such trouble, but that is the logic of the Bill and the consultation documents associated with it. That gives real credence to the genuine fears which I come across as a constituency Member and someone who perhaps moves more than others around the country that those who have given their lives to the housing association's community base will no longer be providing houses for the whole range of the community, but only for those on substantial housing benefit or those with substantial means.

The picture for the public sector is much the same. We know that massive rent increases—two or three times the rate of inflation—will come because of the further cut in the rate fund contribution this year. The Secretary of State came forward with all the exciting pros of the great job that he has done, but I looked at the last commentary available—admittedly it is about 10 months out of date — on the public sector in Scotland. Government contribution per public sector house in 1979-80 was £238, whereas in 1986-87 it was £52. That is why rents have risen, why the delivery of service is not what we should all like it to be and why the fabric of our housing stock is crumbling.

The past two years have been a bad time for those in the public sector and there is little comfort in the figures that are emerging. Naturally, the Secretary of State will say, "But we have provided a great new power with the great landlord lottery. Select-a-landlord is a great leap forward." It is to be found in clauses 51 to 60, but I do not believe that it will do a great deal for tenants in Scotland.

The other day there were pictures in every Scottish newspaper of the Minister of State riding on an elephant. It was an odd happening by any standard. If you ever visit Glasgow, Mr. Speaker, I cannot promise that you will chance upon an elephant wandering in the streets.

Mr. John Home Robertson: You will not find a Tory either, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Dewar: It occurred to me that, being in Glasgow, the Minister may have felt that he was in tiger country and would be somewhat safer on the back of an elephant. Whether or not it was a matter of being safer in a howdah, it was taking the governor-general motif a little far. In any event, I suspect that it was not a spontaneous happening, but a bright idea. Perhaps the man with that bright idea also invented the pick-a-landlord scheme.

The scheme is a lottery which has been rigged. It involved one-way traffic: the public sector can leave for the private sector, but no one can go the other way. The only organisation exempted is Scottish Homes. If people opt for the scheme, they will immediately run into considerable difficulties. Surely the Secretary of State must accept that. They will lose the right to buy. The Secretary of State has made great play of its importance, but as soon as people move into the private sector, so long as it is not into Scottish Homes, they will lose the right to buy.

The Minister will know that his junior colleague has also written to me about that. The hon. Gentleman stated:

"it will be open to tenants contemplating exercising Tenants' Choice to negotiate terms under which, at some point and after the transfer, they might purchase their homes, with or without discount."

It would be open to tenants, but if a tenant said to the average private landlord, "I have a great wheeze. Let us write into the contract at some point that I can purchase the property at a 60 per cent. discount as that is what I would have received if I had stayed in the public sector," not even the hon. Member for Edinburgh, West would believe a word of it.

The Minister continued:

"the willingness of a new landlord to enter into such an agreement might well influence a tenant's decision on whether or not to proceed with a possible transfer."

I agree with that, which is why few people will bother to enter into these agreements. The Minister continued—this is even more unlikely—that perhaps it could all be agreed and the rent could be adjusted to take account of that right. Is he suggesting that a tenant would have a lower than market rent if he gave up his right to buy, and that a tenant could say to his landlord, "I'll give up my right to buy, if you'll halve the rent"?

Mr. Rifkind: Yes.

Mr. Dewar: The Secretary of State says, "Yes." I hope that he will produce the private sector landlords.

Mr. Rifkind: I find it impossible to understand why the hon. Gentleman is finding this so confusing. When a

[Mr. Rifkind]

landlord is contemplating what rent to charge, the rent for a house which is subject to the right to buy will naturally be more—to make it worth his while—than the rent for a property where the tenant does not have the right to buy. If the hon. Gentleman does not understand that, he understands little.

Mr. Dewar: The Secretary of State is misleading the House. A landlord faced with the prospect of a tenant retaining the right to buy may decide that in order to buy in that right he will make a substantial concession on the other terms, including the rent, but why should a landlord make that concession if there is no right to buy? Where is the leverage or the bargaining power for a tenant in such a position? This is nonsense.

Mr. Rifkind: The hon. Gentleman does not appreciate that the landlord comes into the picture only if he is interested in acquiring the tenancy, and the tenant is interested in transferring it. If they are both interested in a transfer of the tenancy, these are exactly the sort of matters that they would wish to discuss. The real question involved would be whether the landlord and the tenant wished to agree a lower rent without the right to buy or a higher rent with it.

Mr. Dewar: That is in the land of make-believe. Perhaps we can have a private debate on another occasion and in another place.

Considering the factors to which I have referred, the succession and security points that I made in connection with other assured tenancies, and the fact that a market rent would be involved, all I can say to the Secretary of State is that clauses 51 to 60 will be a curiosity for housing academics in a few years' time because they will have made little impact on housing. I will not say that a tenant who has availed himself of it will be as uncommon as an elephant in Glasgow, but that may well be a fair comparison.

The common factor in all the groupings to which I have referred is the fact that rents will rise for all these tenants. There is no doubt about that. I have discussed with those connected with Quality Street some of their plans and aspirations. I very much doubt whether they will welcome the Secretary of State's remarks that they are doing better than the public sector. They regard it as something different, as a change of direction for their individual careers. They are entitled to those feelings. They do not consider it to be a pejorative reflection on the work that the public sector is carrying out, and it is unfair for the Secretary of State to make that point.

Certainly such organisations may have a slot in the market. For example, there are those who leave their homes because of divorce or matrimonial breakdown and it would be useful for them to have private sector accommodation for six or 12 months while they sort things out and make proper dispositions. Retired people may sell their homes to realise capital and may be interested in spending their last years in rented accommodation. Mobile executives also might be interested in rented accommodation.

However, I genuinely do not believe that the scheme can be run on a financial level to be attractive to the pocket and the needs of ordinary families in Scotland. That will happen only if the Government meddle with the odds by squeezing the resources of local authorities and forcing rents up again, as they have done in recent years. If they do that, they will confirm our fears about what is happening.

As we have had a debate about this, I realise that the Minister will say, "Of course we are worried about higher rents, but it will all be taken care of by the housing benefit system." That is far too confident an assumption, because section 64 coyly shelters at the back of the Bill. I was unconvinced by the Minister's explanation and defences.

Perhaps this is rather a mechanical point, but it is worth making. I understand that there are only 32 rent officers in Scotland, with about 16 in Glasgow. About 20,000 people in the private sector receive rent allowances. If every application from now on has to be taken by a rent officer and assessed according to the complicated test hinted at in section 64, the whole system will collapse. There is a reference in the explanatory memorandum to the need for more staff, but we are building an unnecessary bureaucracy, based on some peculiar social philosophy of humanitarian understanding.

I understand the point. I would not say that there is no danger of an unscrupulous landlord saying to a tenant, "We can put the rent up very high here. Do not bother going to the rent assessment committee under the Act because you will get it all back from housing benefit, and I will get a high rent." The tenant will be no worse off, but the public purse will suffer. I understand that argument, but I am unhappy that the Government can say to someone, "You are in a house for which, according to our judgment, we have decided you are paying too high a rent. You have to join the queue of the homeless or you will have to meet a substantial proportion of the rent without the benefit of any support which you could normally expect on the basis of income and needs from the housing benefit system. The only way you can avoid paying that extra money is by leaving home or asking the local authorities to bear the cost." That is asking the ratepayer ultimately to foot the bill. That is too a high a price to pay. I have reservations, but I understand the situation.

I have no sympathy with the second test, which deals with unnecessarily large accommodation. It seems extraordinary that when rent officers consider a claim for subsidy, they should also consider whether the claimant is over-accommodated. If he concludes the accommodation to be unnecessarily large, he will assess an equivalent market rent for a hypothetical dwelling of the same type in the same location which is not unnecessarily large.

A woman with a husband and a couple of kids could find that five or six years later the children have left home and the husband has died. Will that woman be told, "We have decided that your house is now unnecessarily large for you, and you can either find the additional money out of your own meagre purse, even though by every other criterion you should have help, or else you can go out on the street and find other accommodation"? That seems to be a hypocrisy, and a dangerous introduction into the law of Scotland.

Mr. John McFall (Dumbarton): Does my hon. Friend agree that that is a Hobson's choice for individuals in this situation? The Secretary of State says that elderly citizens in houses considered to be too large for their needs will have the choice of moving into smaller property. But such a property will be governed by a secure tenancy, and if they move into a house with a secure tenancy, the market val

will have to be charged. They will have to find the money from their own pockets if they move to another house or they will have to pay increased rent in their original house as a result of the withdrawal of housing benefit by the Government.

Mr. Dewar: We shall have to examine carefully in Committee whether that is the case. It might be possible to build in safeguards in such cases. The Bill is riddled with inconsistency and injustice.

Mr. Eadie: I shall be brief, as we have already had exchanges on this point. We have local authorities in the hypothetical circumstances that my hon. Friend has outlined to the House. Local authorities in difficult situations generally give lifetime undertakings to elderly people. They know that if they did not do that, they would be passing the equivalent of a death sentence in removing an elderly person to another house. If the legislation is enacted, that death sentence will be imposed upon elderly people.

Mr. Dewar: Let us hope not. It has been an unpleasant episode. The phrase "over-luxurious" is one to savour, but not one to be proud of using.

I remember the Minister's concern about the widow struggling with the rates and the unfairness of forcing her to meet a larger bill because she was living alone in the matrimonial home. I did not think that the Minister's compassion would extend only to the owner-occupier and not to the tenant.

The new housing benefit system imposes a heavy burden on those with modest incomes, as my hon. Friend the Member for Livingston (Mr. Cook) well knows. For every pound over the income support level, those in receipt of rent allowance will lose 65p. Taking into account rent rebate, it goes up to 85p. That marginal rate of 85p in the pound is 25p in the pound higher than the highest marginal rate for the richest taxpayer in the land. That reinforces the poverty trap with a vengeance.

When we consider the 20 per cent. rule for local taxation which will fall on those receiving benefit, and when we look at what will happen to rent levels for every class of tenant, we see that it puts them in a cruel squeeze. It makes all the fine pleading about reviving this or that worth very little when we are squeezing the financial life out of people who deserve better and who have very little to give.

Of course, there is a lot that can be done, and a lot that ought to be done. I cannot endorse the Government's record in any way or even any approach that has been tried by the Secretary of State. I object to the hypocrisy of Ministers who praise my local authority, the city of Glasgow, yet constantly bring out new provisions, legal and otherwise, administrative and legislative, which make its life more difficult.

I understand that the Minister for Housing and Planning was in Glasgow. The hon. Member for Broxbourne (Mrs. Roe), another Minister in the Department of the Environment, is coming next week, I gather. I almost stubbed my toe in Barrowfield on representatives from the Prime Minister's think tank, who were all coming to look at how Glasgow was changing, to learn and to take ideas to other parts of the country. I welcome the fact that people come and look at what is happening in Glasgow, but it is happening without the so-called benefit of this legislation.

Mr. Rifkind: Absolute rubbish.

Mr. Dewar: The Minister says it is rubbish, but it is self-evidently true. It is happening because we believe in variety and in mixing tenants. The trouble is that local authorities are often restricted by the Government's penny-pinching.

Let us consider how the new par-value co-operatives —*[Interruption.]* The Secretary of State may laugh, but I have had experience of them in my constituency. The Southdeen par-value co-operative has got off the ground with no thanks to the Secretary of State who refused to give his permission and refused to give any help. He blocked the development at every turn, but the Glasgow district council found ways to get it off the ground because it believed in it and wanted it. The Secretary of State's remarks show a certain tendency towards double standards and are touched with hypocrisy.

Let us consider the financial situation judged by the Government's figures. In 1981-82 the Government spent £889 million on housing in Scotland. In 1988-89 it has dropped to £630 million. The housing revenue account for local authorities in Scotland has been considerably reduced from £333 million to £284 million. Such reductions have happened in almost every other sector.

The other day I received a letter from the director of the Bield housing association, saying:

"the level of finance made available for specialist housing for the elderly in Scotland has been reduced very significantly during recent years — from 29 per cent. of housing association funding in 1983-84, to only 19 per cent. in the current financial year. Meanwhile,"——

Mr. Allan Stewart (Eastwood): Tell us the total figures.

Mr. Dewar: I will come to that in a moment. The letter continues:

"the numbers of very elderly people, likely to be most at risk from the consequences of ill-health, isolation and unsatisfactory housing, continue to grow substantially. We hope you share our concern at this neglect of some of the most vulnerable in society."

The question is not whether I share its concern, but whether the Secretary of State shares that concern.

In reply to the sotto voce comment from the hon. Member for Eastwood (Mr. Stewart) the reply given to me by the Scottish Office on 3 December makes it clear that, in real terms, in 1984-85 the budget for housing associations was £139·4 million, but in 1986-87 it was £106·5 million. The Secretary of State made the asinine point about what the budget was back in the 1970s, but the housing association movement was not off the ground then and no association had reached the point when it was making demands for finance.

Mr. Allan Stewart *rose*——

Mr. Dewar: No, I will not give way. I have already outstayed my welcome.

The Labour party is not alone in having doubts. The housing association movement and tenants' organisations also have doubts. The Secretary of State will be aware that the Scottish Association of Citizens Advice Bureaux has issued some guidance notes on the Bill, which state:

"The reduction in security of tenure, removal of restriction on rent levels and the proposed changes to Housing Benefits provisions will, we believe, lead to hardship for tenants and an opportunity for landlords to exploit their tenants."

I believe that that is correct and it is a fair and measured way of making the point.

If we have a housing policy the aim of which is

"A more pluralist and more market-orientated system",

[Mr. Dewar]

inevitably tenants will be hurt. The Bill does nothing for housing in Scotland. It is complicated, and confuses and essentially weakens the rights of individuals. It may be summed up by the quote in the White Paper on the homeless that rejected any "stopgap" measures. That meant no help for a particularly vulnerable group. That is typical of the Government's approach. We know that we will be carrying the vast majority of Scots and the unanimity of almost all those who work in housing when we go in the Lobby against the Bill. We will not be ashamed to do so.

6.43 pm

Mr. Alick Buchanan-Smith (Kincardine and Deeside): I have sat here for nearly two hours and I was beginning to wonder whether any of us from the Back Benches would have an opportunity to speak. I welcome the opportunity to do so.

I listened with care to the hon. Member for Glasgow, Garscadden (Mr. Dewar) and I do not believe that he was wholly comfortable with his arguments all the time. I am left in some doubt about why the Labour party and, in particular, the Opposition Front Bench seek to divide the House. I always understood that Second Reading dealt with the principles of a Bill. With one or two exceptions I saw little concern about the principles in the Bill. There was a modified welcome for Scottish Homes, which was seen as a possible step forward, but we then ran into a whole series of what I would describe as nothing but pure Committee points. I am expecting an interesting and long Committee stage. However, simply to give us a catalogue of Committee points is not necessarily grounds to vote against the principles of the Bill. Therefore, I am left wondering why we should have a vote tonight. Perhaps, between now and 10 o'clock, it will be decided that there should be no such vote.

The one issue on which the hon. Member for Garscadden displayed concern was the principle that tenants in public housing should have the choice of landlord. However, even then the hon. Gentleman said that that choice was irrelevant because it would not work. That is hardly a point on which to divide the House. Thank goodness we have not had Labour stewardship of housing in the years since 1979. As my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State has said, many tenants in Scotland today must be thankful for the opportunities that they have had as a result of the Government's policies and especially the right to buy—belatedly endorsed by the Labour party. Indeed, since 1979, there has been a 20 per cent. increase in the number of houses in private ownership.

I welcome the proposals in the Bill. Like my right hon. and learned Friend, I pay tribute to the work of the SSHA. That association has performed two roles in my constituency. For example, it encouraged the support of industrial development in the Aberdeen area following the exploitation of North sea oil. It undoubtedly made a major contribution in providing the necessary housing facilities.

Much more recently, the SSHA has been operating in the area of Garthdee of Aberdeen in my constituency where it was faced with a terrible problem of having to replace Orlit-type homes. That operation is now under way. At one time or another that operation has met with differences and difficulties, but it has been carried through with considerable sensitivity and understanding. I t that that operation will reach a proper conclusion. I tribute to what the SSHA has achieved not only i support of economic and industrial policies, but i sensitivity in looking after housing estates.

The Bill represents a perfectly sensible, nat evolution in the housing policy of recent years. I bel that the emphasis in the Bill is right, but I hope that right hon. and learned Friend remains committed mixed system of housing in Scotland. There is a rol the public sector in Scotland and it is one which has carried out well. Many tenants in my constituency w bear that out. Equally, with the scope and developme home ownership and the development of private tenan it is important, if we are to have a mixed system, that t sectors are healthy as well. At present I believe that right to encourage the private sector, but in our pol we should always seek to remain sensitive to the kin balance that we should have in the Scottish hou system.

I especially welcome the new, simplified structure the Bill introduces and the combination of the work o SSHA with the work of the Housing Corpora However, there are three matters that I should like to r My right hon. Friend has already given an assurance the right of a tenant to rent is as important as the rig the tenant to buy. I am grateful for that assurance must retain the security of those who wish to rema tenants. Every bit as much as my right hon. and lea Friend, I deprecate the scaremongering that has t place in recent months. I hope that my right hon. learned Friend will take every opportunity to make clear as he has in recent weeks that the security of te of those tenants, particularly SSHA tenants, wi maintained and respected. It means that, when we to the relevant parts of the Bill—for example, the to change the landlord and so on—it is important we scrutinise carefully the procedures that my right and learned Friend envisages.

I am glad that my right hon. and learned F referred to my second point at the beginning of his sp In our housing policy and in what we do after the Bi should be sure to take into account those whose need of a special nature. I am thinking particularly of the el and the disabled. My right hon. and learned Friend is to claim that enormous progress has been made in r years, particularly in the provision of sheltered hous commend the work of the housing associations, i operation with local authorities, in carrying that forward.

Much progress has been made, but much remains made, particularly in rural areas. The programm housing associations in rural areas was under t because available funds were allocated more to ar central Scotland than to rural areas and areas ou central Scotland. I am glad to say that the Ministe was then responsible for housing intervened and certain that proper allocation was made to rural ar

The provision of sheltered housing in rural ar every bit as important as what we try to do in renewal and in tackling the problems of some of the cities. Unless there is good provision of sheltered ho in rural areas, often the only choice to an individua move out with that community to institutional a modation, often many miles from where the indivi family and friends have lived. Therefore, the provis

sheltered housing, even sometimes on a small scale, can make such a difference to the quality and continuity of life, which, in social terms, all of us in the House support. Therefore, I urge my right hon. and learned Friend to ensure that in the future and through the Bill we continue to be committed to an expansion of sheltered housing and housing for those with special needs, particularly in rural areas.

My third point is about the continuing role of housing associations. I have already paid tribute to their work in sheltered housing. I hope that my right hon. and learned Friend will be sensitive to two concerns of those associations. First, will he bear it in mind that they will work under a structure that is headed by Scottish Homes? There could be a conflict of interests. For example, how will the funds be allocated among the purposes of Scottish Homes, the housing associations and private landlords? My right hon. and learned Friend must look closely at that, to ensure that there is fairness in the allocation of funds to those who are working under the umbrella of Scottish Homes.

A further point was touched on by the hon. Member for Garscadden. There is concern among present tenants of housing associations that rents in publicly funded projects are likely to be lower than those in mixed funded projects, which one will see increasingly as a result of the Bill. Therefore, I ask my right hon. and learned Friend to look closely at the effects on the level rents of present tenants of housing associations.

I welcome the proposals. As the hon. Member for Garscadden said, there is scope for improvement and there will be several points to consider in Committee, but for the life of me I cannot understand why the House is being divided on the Bill.

6.54 pm

Mr. Bruce Millan (Glasgow, Govan): The right hon. Member for Kincardine and Deeside (Mr. Buchanan-Smith) said that he gave a general welcome to the Bill, but some of the points that he made raised significant issues. There is plenty in the Bill with which Opposition Members fundamentally disagree, as I hope to show while supporting the remarks of my hon. Friend the Member for Glasgow, Garscadden (Mr. Dewar).

Anyone representing a Scottish constituency, especially in Glasgow, must know that housing, along with unemployment, is the most serious social problem that we now have in Scotland. It takes up much of our constituency postbag and surgery work. There are immense problems for ordinary people in finding suitable and adequate accommodation at rents that they can afford. There are problems of the backlog of repairs in my constituency, of a modernisation programme that cannot progress fast enough because of lack of money, of dampness, homelessness, an acute shortage of sheltered accommodation, and the rest. The peripheral estates have particular problems. At the beginning of his speech, the Secretary of State mentioned them and said that one of the Government's objectives was to overcome them, and then conveniently did not mention them again during what was nearly an hour's speech.

All those problems are either directly caused or significantly aggravated by the fact that simply not enough finance is allowed to local authorities to deal with the housing problems with which they are faced. Because of the shortness of time I shall not mention too many statistics, but the Secretary of State's latest announcemen on public expenditure on housing in Scotland for 1988-8 was £639 million. In the current year the estimate expenditure, on the right hon. and learned Gentleman' own figures, will be £699 million. Therefore, even on thos figures there will be a reduction of £60 million in the nex year, in cash terms. In real terms or in constant terms, an at 1987-88 prices, housing support grant to loca authorities has gone down from £371 million in 1979-8 to £46 million in 1987-88. Those figures were given by th Secretary of State in a parliamentary answer to my hon Friend the Member for Garscadden on 3 July 1987. Th Under-Secretary of State is looking even more confuse than usual. He will find the information in the *Offici Report* for that date.

It is not difficult to understand why, apart from th general problems of local authorities, there is an increasin rent burden on local authority tenants. There is the absur result now that, in cities such as Glasgow, the considerabl majority of tenants are already on housing benefit and wi be affected by the more stringent rules that will b introduced in a month or two. Nothing in the Bill doe anything to remedy those problems, which are of crisi proportions in a city such as Glasgow.

The only proposal in the Bill that directly affects loca authorities is that the local authority tenant should hav the right to opt out of local authority tenure to some othe type of tenure. As has been said, the unfortunate privat tenant who is dissatisfied with his private landlord is no given the same opportunity to move out of private tenanc into local authority tenancy. I do not know of any privat tenant in my constituency who would not jump at th chance of being a tenant of the local authority.

If we are to give not only groups of tenants but, as th White Paper said, individual tenants the right to opt ou of local authority management, we shall cause chaos i housing management in a city such as Glasgow. Peopl can move out of normal local authority housin management into, for example, tenants' co-operative That is done with the co-operation and approval of th local authority and I strongly support it.

I am glad to say that developments in that area are no taking place in my constituency. There is a vast differenc between that and giving unrestricted rights, without an rights to the local authorities, to people to move out o local authority management. It cannot be good for eithe local authorities or tenants who are left in local authorit management. In many cases it will not be good for tenant who move out of local authority management either. Non of that will solve the real problems in housing, which som of us face from day to day in cities such as Glasgow an other areas.

I am not in the least persuaded or convinced tha Scottish Homes is a good idea, even if it were suggeste by a much more benevolent Government than the presen one, or by a Government who wanted co-operation wit local authorities, and not a Government such as this, wh are antagonistic to local authorities and are introducin Scottish Homes in order to take more and more power out of the hands of local authorities and put them into th hands of a body that will be directly nominated by th Secretary of State. It will operate under clause 2 directl under his authority, and will have no power to do anythin except what is in agreement with directions o arrangements laid down by the Secretary of State.

[Mr. Bruce Millan]

I have seen no case for putting together the Scottish bit of the Housing Corporation and the SSHA, and no case for giving these vast powers to Scottish Homes, which will be subject at every point to the control and authority of the Secretary of State. That is centralisation of a type that I strongly oppose. There is certainly a case for hiving off the Scottish bit of the Housing Corporation and creating an independent Scottish Housing Corporation. I see no reason why it should be part of a United Kingdom set-up, ultimately controlled from London. As far as I can see, there is no reason to set up an organisation such as Scottish Homes on the basis outlined in the Bill.

Why has there been a decline in the private rented sector? There a number of reasons: apart from anything else, most of the houses were slums. We welcome the Secretary of State's announcement of a reduction in the number of houses in Scotland that are below the tolerable standard—but they were all in the private sector. That is one reason why the number of houses in the private sector has decreased significantly in recent years—and a good thing, too. Even if I thought it desirable, I do not believe that the private rented sector in Scotland could be stimulated or encouraged in a way that would benefit significant numbers of people. The one thing that we know will inevitably follow from private finance being involved is that there must be a profit at the end of the day. The White Paper acknowledges that. That means that rents will have to increase significantly. There is no dispute about that.

We are not talking about minor increases in rents, which, incidentally, in the private sector under the fair rents system have increased in recent years faster than the increases in inflation. Of course, it would be possible to provide houses in the private sector and to keep rates at a reasonable level if public money went into Quality Street and the rest of the operators by way of subsidy. The possibility of that is provided for in the Bill. It was mentioned in paragraph 2.14 of the White Paper and is now provided for in clause 2. Is it the Government's intention to cut funds to local authorities, on the one hand, and to pump money into the hands of private developers in the private rented sector, on the other? That requires an answer. Clause 2, which is operated only by the direct authority of the Secretary of State, not by Scottish Homes, allows for it, so let us have some explanation.

What we know from the Bill is that new tenancies, whether wholly new or merely new because a house has changed hands, and assured or short assured tenancies will be at much higher rents than the present fair rents. In certain cases, security of tenure will be lost, and, with the phasing out of rent increases, the elimination of many of the rights of succession and the cuts in housing benefit, the prospects for the tenant who is still in the private sector, and for the prospective private tenant, are grim.

Of course, the process will be gradual; it will not happen overnight. The agony will not occur for everyone immediately, but it certainly will come to those who are tenants in the private sector. Only a small number of people are genuinely interested in private rented accommodation at any particular time, at the sort of rents that are likely to be levied under the Bill. Any ordinary person who can afford the sort of rents paid under the Bill will buy accommodation and get mortgage interest relief, which is a subsidy that is now overwhelmingly greater in Scotland than that given to council housing applying for mortgage interest relief, no one whether he is living in housing that is excessive to accommodation needs. One obtains the relief in It is offensive that that type of system sh introduced.

As regards excessive rents in the private introduced a private Member's Bill, with the su my hon. Friend the Member for Glasgow, Sh (Mr. Marshall), to deal with the problem of scan exorbitant rents being levied in my constituen the Government blocked it. I am glad to say landlord in question is facing a charge of fraud. go into details, which is a pity, as I would like to s deal more about that landlord. My Bill, w Government blocked, would have provided prot the public purse, at the expense not of the tena is what the proposals will do, but of the unscrupulous, racketeering landlord. That is problem should have been tackled.

There are three excellent community-based associations in my constituency, and they are all worried about the Bill's contents. The board m the associations, who are ordinary people valuable time unpaid to do a service for the co are demoralised by the constant stream of docum have come out. They are extremely complicated damaging implications for community-based associations. They are worried about the new under assured tenancies and about the fact th will be living next door to one another, the one fair rent and the other paying a vastly increase tenancy rent.

The associations are worried about a probl which I shall be happy to be given an assuran Under-Secretary of State. If an existing tenant move into smaller accommodation becau excessively accommodated, he will lose the pro a fair rent and become an assured tenant, so he to move to smaller accommodation at a highe lose security of tenure. That will be the effect Does it make sense? It will stultify housing a management policies.

Overshadowing all, from the point of vi housing associations, is the fact that the G specifically intend to move away from the prese of calculating housing association grant. Th percentages are determined by an individual pro cases of new build in my constituency have had grant at a rate of more than 90 per cent., even fair rents are set at such a level that no one can houses unless he is on supplementary benefit. housing associations has calculated that if the su reduced to 70 per cent.—the sort of figur Government have in mind—the rents of th would double from £800 to £1,600. That is on number of things that are causing concern associations.

Not one tenant will fail to be adversely affe Bill. No local authority will be helped by the B will any housing association. The Bill does noth with the real problems of Scottish housing. Tha shall vote against it tonight.

7.9 pm

Sir Hector Monro (Dumfries): I am afraid that we have had another negative speech from the Opposition. They just do not seem to realise that things change over the years. Never have they been more caught out than they were over the right to buy, which they resolutely opposed. They have had to reverse their policy and now realise that we were right all along. I find it disappointing that so few ideas come from the Opposition. It is always "No, no" and there is never a bright idea from any Opposition Member.

A happy family, a job and a home are the most important issues for anyone's quality of life. The only thing on which I agree with the right hon. Member for Glasgow, Govan (Mr. Millan) is that there is much to do on housing. We know that from our surgeries and from our post bags. It is good to see a Bill that goes some way towards helping many people in Scotland to have better housing. If the Bill plays a part in achieving some of the objectives that I have mentioned, it will be welcome. Of course in Committee there must be clarification and development of policies, and we all accept that that stage of the Bill will be long and interesting.

My right hon. Friend spoke about why the Opposition oppose the Second Reading of the principle of having better homes in Scotland. As usual, the Opposition seem to be hanging on to the coat tails of the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities, which is also negative in its thinking. The Opposition have trumped up many non-existent objections and have frightened owner-occupiers, local authority tenants and tenants of Scottish Special Housing Association homes. They are creating the fear that the existing rights of tenants may be adversely affected, but nothing is further from the truth. *[Interruption.]* The hon. Member for East Lothian (Mr. Home Robertson), who spends his parliamentary year making sedentary interruptions, will have plenty of time to speak, and no doubt during the winding-up speech he will hold forth. No doubt some hon. Members will listen to him.

Any changes that Scottish tenants may wish to make will be made voluntarily. The establishment of Scottish Homes is a big step forward, and the amalgamation will be beneficial. I see the new concept of alternative ownership and landlordship as of little significance, and I expect a cautious beginning. I welcome the other measures, and especially the interest that the Government have shown in house improvements during the years that they have been in office. That is important, and I hope that the Government will continue to make efforts to see that much money goes into the non-HRA sector for housing improvement.

The changes in tenancies of private accommodation and the extension of the right to purchase local authority houses are welcome. Good houses must begin with good planning. I hope that we will set our sights a good deal higher than we set them in the post-war period in housing construction and architecture, and that we will get away from the high-rise flats, which have been a disaster in most areas, and from other unattractive housing schemes that we see dotted around the United Kingdom. We should be cautious about developing more flats in Scotland, because they frequently require a high management input in order to retain a reasonable environment. I hope that we will think carefully and give good advice to local authorities that ask about the improvement of whole housing It is sad to see good council house schemes that have to a lower environmental standard than we want t

Management and, of course, the advice of coun also covers waiting lists. I hope that the Bill will enab to grow shorter, because they are still far too long. I s like to see a much more sympathetic approach to who, for one reason or another, leave tied houses. authorities frequently feel that they can take no until there is a sheriff's order for eviction. That is a winded and unsympathetic approach towards a who has to leave a tied house, often for good re before he can be considered for a local authority h

Flats are a stepping stone towards getting on to t for a self-contained house. We should not encoura construction of flats, although, of course, an incr number of single people want such accommodatio unfortunately, nowadays an increasing numb divorced people want accommodation. Sometime are the only solution. We should think carefully building single-bedroom accommodation for e people and pensioners. We should never build house fewer than two bedrooms, because a tenant with a bedroom is unable to ask anyone to stay and to m a family home. We should aim to have nothing s than two-bedroom accommodation for our elderly p

I welcome the change in the policy of the Dumfri Galloway planning authority, in that it is now tak much more flexible approach to planning i countryside. As my hon. Friend the Minister kn have always thought that we must try to develop h in the country in the right place and of the right desig materials. We must do that if we are to keep people in the countryside, and that will encourage the schools, village halls and churches. Some pla authorities took a restrictive attitude to the 1960 pla circular which allowed buildings in the countryside they were attached to agriculture or forestry. That co is now years out of date, because neither of thos worthy industries wants additional housing. In any the majority of foresters in the Forestry Commissio in the forestry companies prefer to live in the town to go out daily to work.

Now that the Government have given a lead by 1985 circular, and more recently by their suppo alternative uses for agricultural land, we must be all to develop in the hamlets, in the villages and i countryside itself — provided that the building suitable and comply with the criteria on standards have mentioned. There has been a long battle to about this change of heart, but I am glad that i happened and look forward to the development of h in the countryside.

It is right that we should concentrate as mu possible on owner-occupation of the new developn and our encouragement of mortgage relief for o occupiers is of the greatest importance. It must n overlooked when debating a Bill such as this.

My last point on planning is that we must enco planning authorities to make land available for bu — whether the building is local authority or pr Unless we do that we will not make much progress to resolving the housing problem. Of course we encourage gap sites and other good sites in the

[Sir Hector Monro]

context, but if we have to go to the fringes, so be it. The land must be available and we must ensure that services can be made readily available too.

We must continue to provide maximum help with improvement grants. This is particularly true when reconstructing houses in the countryside that have been derelict for some time. The support that my right hon. and learned Friend will give this matter and to housebuilding generally will be most beneficial to the construction industry, which always has spare capacity and represents a good way of providing jobs for people in Scotland.

My right hon. and learned Friend's concept of Scottish homes is a major step forward. I have a high regard for the SSHA, the Housing Corporation and other housing associations. It is right to bring them together under one hat. There must have been many grey edges, so putting them together under incisive management will be a tremendous help to the present housing stock and in co-ordinating with local authorities to build in the right place in the future.

I welcome the housing association developments in Dumfries and Galloway, whether by the Hanover housing association, Kirk Care or the British Legion, but particularly by Loreburn housing association, which has made remarkable strides during the past five years, after its inception through the Holywood Trust and the work of the Keswick family. There have been great benefits to Dumfries and Galloway. There have been many inaginative developments, both separately and in conjunction with local authorities, mainly for special needs.

My right hon. and learned Friend highlighted the importance of housing for the handicapped and those with special needs. Here again, there has been some fine quality of design and attractive architecture, on which we must congratulate the housing associations. They have made great strides in the last 10 years. I am sure that my right hon. and learned Friend will encourage Scottish Homes to continue the work of the housing associations in Scotland.

Over the past three financial years the Government have increased substantially resources for local authority housing—by more than £150 million. The allocation for 1988-89 should be a record both on the HRA and the non-HRA.

I hope that this trend will continue, because much improvement is needed, particularly in local authority housing, to deal with condensation and dampness. The Select Committee on Scottish Affairs considered these problems, and the sooner they can be eradicated, the better.

I hope that my hon. Friend the Minister will clarify a point that was mentioned by my right hon. and learned Friend about the right to buy post-1979 houses and the outstanding debt. Local authorities do not know where they stand on this matter. If we consider the simple equation of a £30,000 house discounted by 60 per cent. to £12,000, there is a debt of £18,000. Many occupiers of post-1979 houses want to know where they stand, so my right hon. and learned Friend should tell us how the debt will be funded and what incentives there will be for post-1979 tenants.

The hon. Member for Glasgow, Garscadden (Mr. Dewar) asked whether a local authority could be an approved person under the terms of the Bill. I noted my right hon. and learned Friend's answer. He fel very unlikely. The local authorities in my const be interested in his answer.

The most important issue tonight is to bri everyone what a great opportunity the Bi Scotland for local authority housing and for It will be a good Bill by the time we have cons detail in Committee, on which Opposition M look forward to serving. I suspect that the ho for Dunfermline, West (Mr. Douglas) will be Committee. I hope that the Opposition and C see that their attack on the Bill is quite unfoun that we can put forward a constructive Bi provide more and better homes in Scotland.

7.25 pm

Mr. Archy Kirkwood (Roxburgh and Berw always enjoy following the hon. Member for D H. Monro) in these debates. He concluded t provided a great opportunity for housing in Sc I think quite the reverse. This is a sa opportunity. The balance of the argument consultation process has shown that to be fullness of time, history, too, will show it to

The areas of Scottish housing requiring attention are self-evident to most hon. Mem there are acute housing shortages in local Secondly, there are real problems reg affordability of rents, and that position will b more difficult when the planned housing ben are introduced in April. Thirdly, disrepair, inc conditions as condensation and dampness hand, and the general lack of local auth available for improvement grants on the othe condition of the housing stock in Scotland concern.

Since I was elected to the House, I have be get the Government to undertake a house cond north of the border. *[Interruption.]* I do no claim exclusively for myself, as I am reminded Member for East Lothian (Mr. Home Robe a survey would enable us to measure the extent which we cannot do at the moment. The Gov that local authority returns are sufficient for and that a house condition survey would cost spread over a period and with a rolling pr would inform our debates in a way that is no the moment.

There is also real concern about special ne We have mentioned only briefly the fu important issue of homelessness, which concerns people north of the border, particul cities as Edinburgh and Glasgow. The situat an urgent and strategic overall campaig provided us with an opportunity to do th Government appear to have missed it.

I have no quarrel with the Secretary of Stat to improve the peripheral estates. I was born near Easterhouse and, when I go back there, has become a much more rundown clapped-ou it was when I went to school there. We must be that problem. I also agree with the Secretary an increase in home ownership is much need

The Secretary of State's third objective of of tenure is also laudable. However, I wonde his heart of hearts, the Secretary of State thi

Bill will effect real improvements in relation to any of the three objectives. Those objectives cannot be attained unless all public, private and voluntary sector agencies are brought into play and a policy of diverse initiatives is set up and adequately financed with public and private money. There is no evidence that, in the tenure of this Administration, enough finance has been directed through local authorities to try to achieve some of those objectives.

It was argued that the Bill deals with important ideas. I do not dissent from any of them in principle. There is some sense in a unified housing agency. I subscribe to the view stated by the hon. Member for Glasgow, Garscadden (Mr. Dewar). He said that the Housing Corporation north of the border was in an anomalous position and could have benefited from a proper measure of unification with the SSHA along the lines of the Scottish Development Agency and given a co-ordinating and enabling role in Scottish housing. There is no objection to that. My party believes that diversification of tenure and a greater contribution from the private sector are not objectionable.

The only sensible way in which we can get a greater role for private finance in Scottish housing is to move to a mixed financial basis in a housing association context, bringing in Quality Street for example, and some other bodies.

In the special circumstances that apply in Scotland, we shall never be able to get an actual economic return for private landlords. It is not possible. The prevailing conditions in Scotland are quite different from those south of the border. One aspect that runs subliminally through the Bill is that we are moving in an ever more English direction, with some of the ideas and nostrums that ooze out of the clauses of the Bill. We must be aware of that. We must cater for our own special circumstances in Scotland in our own way.

The ideas and concepts in the Bill are welcome enough, but they are not of primary importance; rather, they are of secondary importance. Neither are they being deployed in an ordered and well-thought-out way. Even the potentially useful ideas in the Bill are being deployed in such a way as would render them inefficient, irrelevant, or, as the hon. Member for Garscadden argued, positively damaging in practice not only to private sector tenants but to public sector tenants.

I subscribe to the point that was made about the way in which the consultation timetable was organised. It was objectionable. I do not make a party political point—in the past, Governments of all parties have done it—but it appears now to happen more frequently. We should lay down a marker and strongly protest about the way in which the consultation process was gone through with such apparent disregard for public opinion. That is how it looks.

This is yet another enabling Bill. It is big enough; there are enough clauses and schedules to keep us busy until Easter. Enabling measures should be objectionable to the House of Commons. They leave an inordinate amount of power in the hands of the Government. I understand that schedule 1 is long, but the detail of the structure of Scottish Homes, which is of fundamental importance, is not set out in the Bill. Will there be decentralisation? Will there be regional committees? Will such regional committees consist of representatives of consumers and providers? Will there be a two-tier structure? None of those matters has been properly answered in the schedule deali the setting up of Scottish Homes. That does not be a helpful way to approach a Bill of this nature

The financial role of the new Scottish Homes left in limbo. How will it fulfil its funding role? Wi be an earmarked grant from central Government t be broken down for housing associations, the private landlords and developers, or will there be a capital allocation to be split up under the directio board of management? All such questions unanswered. I agree with the hon. Member for Gas This is an important Bill and it is quite wro Parliament should be presented with such a vague primary legislation.

The Bill is also objectionable in principle beca yet another move at the hands of this Government t centralisation without any real accountability. Th be regretted.

I shall briefly sketch some of my concerns a some have already been well aired by other hon. M No doubt, since I have been lucky enough to cat eye, Madam Deputy Speaker, I shall be on the hit nomination to the Standing Committee. I look for whiling away many hours. Hon. Members must be that the debate is not guillotined, leaving large ch the legislation undiscussed. There must be restrain Opposition side and some sensible business mana on the Government's side. If I am nominated Committee—

Mr. Dick Douglas (Dunfermline, West): T Gentleman may be nominated as the Whip.

Mr. Kirkwood: I may indeed at this rate be no as the Whip.

It is important to pace the work of the Comm that all schedules and clauses of the Bill receive consideration.

I listened carefully to the Government's case. down to the fact that, in their view, the Bill will choice. But will there be equal choice for all? I do n that there will be. Will there be effective, real choi for example, under clause 40, a tenant will lose to buy in certain circumstances? What choices doe contain for the homeless, the young, the low-p those who have special housing needs? What ch there for existing SSHA tenants? I raised the point Secretary of State. A process of consultation with SSHA tenants could have been undertaken in a thorough and comprehensive way. It would have the difficulty in which the Government n themselves.

Another question relates to cost. Over the months, the Under-Secretary of State has attende of conferences. I give him due credit for that. He quoted as saying:

"Scottish Homes is not intended as a device fo public expenditure."

Will that be true? I fear that the Bill is a device t proportion or public expenditure of gross product devoted to housing. We can all be cle statistics. It is easy to make selective points wh statistics. If the Bill means that, in totality, the pr of public money and the country's wealth that is to using housing north of the border is reduced,

[Mr. Kirkwood]

deeply regrettable. I suspect that it will happen, but I am willing to listen to any reassurance that the Minister might give.

I wish to ask the Minister a specific question about housing associations. Housing associations in my part of the world are concerned that if rent levels in the publicly funded sector are to be determined in line with mixed funded sector rents — that is, where there is a combination, whether it be with Nationwide, Quality Street, or whatever — there is a guarantee that present rents will increase. Surely that cannot be a good thing. If I have that point wrong, I should be happy if the Under-Secretary of State would disabuse me.

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Scotland (Lord James Douglas-Hamilton): Will the hon. Gentleman accept that the rents of housing association tenants who remain in the same house will continue to be registered by the rent officer?

Mr. Kirkwood: I know that. That is like saying tomorrow is Tuesday. I accept that; I am talking about the future. Perhaps we can discuss that point in Committee.

If the Bill is a means of cutting public expenditure on housing, that is regrettable. If capital investment had been maintained at the level of 1978-79 in real terms, local authorities would, according to my statistics, have an additional £817 million to invest this year, which is a substantial sum of money. Local authorities in the Borders are having difficulty in trying to work out what money will be available for housing improvement, because they have been told that they can spend on improvement grants only what they take in next years receipts from the houses they sell. A crystal ball would be needed to determine that, so it makes sensible public authority planning impossible.

The Scottish Council for Single Homeless, which I am sure has made representations to the Minister—it has to me — has argued that although single homeless youngsters aged 16 to 17 will have rights, because of the statutory duty of local authorities to pay attention to their housing needs, they will be priced out of the market by the combination of housing benefit cuts and other supplementary benefit changes. Although they will have a statutory right to a tenancy, they will be left with only £6·20 to pay for food, clothing and other needs. That is a ridiculous position for them.

I am worried—because in 1986 I served on the Social Security Bill Committee — about those under 25 years who are north of the border. They will face financial prejudice.

I do not want to rehearse yet again the arguments about the invidious position of rent officers having to decide on the appropriate level of housing benefit and whether houses are too large or too luxurious. Rent officers will be put in a ridiculously impossible position. There will be a direct conflict of interest, which is a new and worrying departure. I will want to look very carefully at the detail of clause 64 in Committee, and homelessness and special needs must also be properly attended to in Committee to make the Bill acceptable.

The hon. Member for Dumfries made the important point about the special housing needs of those in rural areas. I hope that the Under-Secretary will say a word or two to reassure the relatively small but hard-working and conscientious housing associations in are borders area and Dumfries and Galloway needs should be met.

The Bill, if it is anything, is a missed opp fulness of time I fear that the Bill, and any which comes from the Government — Government may say to the contrary— proportion of the nation's wealth devoted will accelerate the drift towards an E housing, which is totally inappropriate to c of the border and will be seen to run down by district councils in providing housing. I I hope that in Committee the Governme some of the points made in this debate.

7.43 pm

Mr. Allan Stewart (Eastwood): The ho Roxburgh and Berwickshire (Mr. Kirkwo number of markers for the Committee, rat a position of determined principle on the interesting to see where his corner will vote he and his collegues will abstain. He m considerable substance on mixed financ much potential. That was not mentioned Members, but it may be that my hon. Frie will mention that in his winding-up speec

Like those of my hon. Friends who ha puzzled by the Labour party's position have heard speeches from two Labour have contained statements to the effect t lead to the end of civilised local housin Scotland as we know and love them. The for Glasgow, Garscadden (Mr. Dewar) sa authority tenant will move anyway, and Member for Glasgow, Govan (Mr. M nobody will supply private finance anyway happen. The Labour party cannot take b must take one or the other.

I welcome the Bill, because it will lead of resources, new choices and the potentia the private sector in a range of different w hon. Friend the Minister that I hope the pa will be followed by a major and sustained ensure that tenants are made fully aware o the positive intentions of the legislation legislation does not seek to do.

The hon. Member for Garscadden an and learned Friend the Secretary of Stat exchange on the rights of SSHA tenants. absolutely clear. As my hon. Friend the I have had correspondence with him follo tions from the Barrhead and Neilsto tenants only a few days ago, and constituents. There has been considerable ing among ordinary tenants. I read the o on this point. I did not think that the origi wholly felicitous, but it is an object lesson, is any possible misinterpretation of the opportunity to see a dark Tory co basically innocuous wording, the Labour —*[Interruption.]* I am referring to the rights of existing tenants; the wording o document was splendid.

The hon. Member for Garscadden sai of local authority housing in Scotland wa must recognise that gross capital expend

in Scotland in recent years has increased sharply. The hon. Member for Garscadden did not give way to me in his speech—I make no complaint about that—but I was going to point out that under the Labour Government, from 1974 to 1979, gross capital expenditure on housing in Scotland fell by 37 per cent. in real terms. It has gone up by 14 per cent. in real terms since 1979. More local authority houses were modernised and improved in Scotland in 1986 than in any of the previous 10 years. Since 1979 in Scotland 30 per cent. of local authority housing stock has been modernised, and in the private sector the improvement and repair grants have been substantially increased, and rightly so, under this Government.

Some hon. Members have referred to the role of the Scottish Special Housing Association, and I underline its achievements. As a good example of the expertise of the SSHA in special needs housing, there is the local shelter housing project in Barrhead which was opened recently. That is a good example of what the SSHA can do and of the kind of expertise and experience that it will bring to a unified agency.

The housing associations have, of course, had an important role in the west of Scotland and also in rural areas, but there is something in the argument that the housing associations in some areas may be reaching the limits of their technology. I would see them as having a role in encouraging shared ownership. I would also like to see the extension of other forms of tenure, such as co-operatives, although no one should be under any misapprehension that it is necessarily easy and straightforward always to set up a tenants' co-operative.

In the local authority sector, we are moving from the era of quantity objectives to that of quality objectives. It is a tragedy that the houses in many estates in Scotland, substantial parts of which are difficult to let or are unlettable, are not old. They have been built within the past generation. So what is needed is a move to encourage greater mobility of council tenants—the average owner-occupier moves once every seven years, but, because of the present system, local authority tenants inevitably find it much more difficult to move — and also private investment and new forms of tenure.

I hope that my hon. Friend the Minister will agree with me that when we talk about bringing private investment into these areas we are talking not about the popular council schemes but about the unpopular ones, where there is a clear role for dynamic private sector initiatives. I emphasise, too, that improving the physical stock in many of these problem estates is not in itself enough; it must be part of a general programme of environmental improvement. That is where the unified housing agency will help, because, as I understand the present legislation, the Scottish Special Housing Association has that kind of power but the Housing Corporation does not. The new agency will have that power. I hope also that Scottish Homes in these areas will work closely with the Scottish Development Agency which now has an important role in focusing on the economic development of some of our peripheral estates.

As regards the private sector, I emphasise a crucial point—that private finance is not necessarily the same as private control. There are opportunities to bring in private finance in a number of ways. There is considerable potential for expansion of the private rented sector. We have 130,000 empty houses in Scotland. Some of them are empty because their owners are reluctant to under the present legislation. There is undoub in some areas for the expansion of the private the only way to achieve that is to ensure reason for those who make the investment. That is The hon. Member for Garscadden said that principle, in favour of the expansion of the pr but it will not happen unless those who are investment get a reasonable return on it.

I have never believed that there is one sing our housing problems. In the past, we ha suffered from over-planning, when we all thou answer was to build multi-storey flats or big si

Mr. Douglas: "We"?

Mr. Stewart: The hon. Member for Dunfe (Mr. Douglas) criticises my use of the wo certainly does not include me. Those who we and who were trying to do their best though were single answers to our housing proble believe that that is the right approach. We n variety and as many opportunities as possible right to give the private sector more opportu give tenants additional opportunities to choo Bill becomes law, I hope that we shall soo practical evidence of such opportunities bei into development and a real improvement, pa some of our worst local authority estates wh multiple deprivation and a high proportion which is difficult to let. Such a process will, I the full support of the House, and I am sure is a major step towards that end.

7.55 pm

Mr. Dick Douglas (Dunfermline, West): I to follow the hon. Member for Eastwood (Mr what he said, but I part company with him noticed it—when it comes to the experienc 1950s and 1960s with multi-storey flats and d particularly in my native city of Glasgow. having long, tedious arguments with the then the city council when I opposed such develo not being wise after the event, but I think tha problems in the so-called peripheral areas understandable needs of that time. Th development was to build as many houses as because, again with good reason, cost limits w the houses have not borne the test of time.

The Secretary of State suggested that the lot of misinformation about the Governm tative document and in relation to developm speak for any of my right hon. and hon. Frie speak of my own experience. There is a va SSHA tenants in my constituency and in constituencies. Their representatives came t others of my colleagues after they had met of State. The Secretary of State is an ad assume—we have had some evidence of it he can prepare his own case.

The representatives read the consultati they heard the Secretary of State, and th goodness, what will happen to us?" There is a difference, particularly as regards the role an the residual part of the SSHA in Scottish H Bill envisages it, and what was envis

[Mr. Dick Douglas]

consultative document. My hon. Friend the Member for Glasgow, Garscadden (Mr. Dewar) drew attention to these differences. Therefore, any responsibility for engendering fear in the minds of SSHA tenants rests with the Secretary of State and his Department.

I see no reason to bring these two bodies together, the Housing Corporation and the SSHA. The SSHA's submission to the Secretary of State is a bit vague in its reasoning for supporting the unification of the two bodies. As I understand it, the Housing Corporation of Scotland goes along with it because it wants to divorce itself or have some devolution from its English and Welsh counterparts. That is understandable, but it is not a reason for bringing together two bodies which are so disparate and which have opposing, if not conflicting, functions. One body has a financial, promotional function, while the other has a building, planning and execution function in relation to housing. The Government have decided to bring together those two bodies, perhaps because they wished it, but I can see nothing in that merger which will regenerate Scottish housing.

My hon. Friend the Member for Garscadden said that all the present activity in Glasgow, some of which is imaginative and dynamic, is happening in advance of the Bill, not because of it.

Mr. Home Robertson: In spite of it.

Mr. Douglas: I would not necessarily agree with that. The merger of the two bodies is not necessary to achieve what is happening now in Glasgow.

The Secretary of State spent eight minutes dealing with three points in relation to the future of Scottish housing. He mentioned peripheral housing estates, especially in urban areas. I wish to mention some areas in my constituency — some of my hon. Friends will have similar experiences—which are neither urban nor rural. They are the mining communities, whose heart and dynamism reside in the pits. I understand that a decision has been taken to close Seafield. That means that there will be no working pit in Fife. I could bore the House by mentioning all the mining communities whose heart and sould have been torn out. They include Valleyfield, Bogside, Oakley and Comrie. The reason for their existence has gone, but the social fabric has not been entirely eliminated. I have great pride in representing mining communities, and I know that the social cohesion still exists, although the reason for their existence has disappeared.

In any future review of Scottish housing, the Government must pay attention to mining communities. It is not enough to say, as the Secretary of State did, that housing is an important consideration and planning is different. The Government must make resources available to local district councils to help with housing and planning. Last Friday, I met officials of Dunfermline district council to discuss Steelend, where the houses belong not to the local authority but to British Coal. The estate was sold en bloc, and the local authority can do almost nothing because it does not have the resources.

I was born in Govan. Although housing conditions there were difficult and, in some cases, deplorable, we had points of reference to which we could look up. Govan town hall is a magnificent building. But the people of Oakley and Valleyfield have no buildings in which to have some pride. The Government must m resources for housing. It is not enoug houses are vacant. Some of the house area of Dunfermline, which were built 3 be knocked down. There should be m that estate, but the local authority resources to provide them.

I see nothing in the Bill — the State will correct me if I am wrong— our serious housing difficulties. It wou years after the destruction caused by th we still had not improved the standard course, there have been some improve expectations and desire for comfort h

My hon. Friend the Member for (Mr. Brown) and I represent an area wh of Ministry of Defence housing. The B sold en bloc to the private sector, again tenants. That regrettable incident is minds now. In one small village, Cro are in the public domain. Some are o and some by the Ministry of Defenc Defence houses are specifically exclud conferred by clause 51. If the Gover local authority tenants the right to Scottish Homes, or of some other lan not give similar rights to Ministry of

I realise that there will be difficultie are involved, but there is no reason wh done in Crombie. Indeed, there are esp why those tenants should be allowed t Scottish Homes. I hope that the Mi point on board. I have corresponded w Defence and other Departments on th that it is of great importance to peop the country well in the services and establishment at Crombie.

If the Government wish to associations and co-operatives, th resources. There is little expertise in constituency. The resources could through the local authority or through as the Housing Corporation. I admire in relation to tenants' management housing co-operatives in Glasgow background of experience that can b a long period, and we shall see the fru only in 15 or 20 years.

My hon. Friends and I will oppos does nothing to cure the malaise in Sco complicate an already complex issu injection of provate sector finance. Th Eastwood conceded that private sect attracted only if it could be guarantee get that good return, rents would ha Private sector finance will be attracte are commensurate with those wh elsewhere, and the "elsewhere" may n could be in London. The greatest in policy in Britain is shown by the London, where prices have more th years. That has caused difficulties whi any Government's approach to solvin problems.

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I hope that the Government will take on board some of the points that I have made, but I trust that my right hon. Friend and hon. Friends will oppose the Bill.

8.9 pm

Mr. Bill Walker (Tayside, North) *rose*——

Hon. Members: Oh, no.

Mr. Walker: It would seem that Opposition Members do not greet my speech with the greatest of enthusiasm.

First, let me say to the hon. Member for Dunfermline, West (Mr. Douglas) that we all understand the dreadful problems that occur when the source of employment that has created the fabric of a community disappears from it. Such change cannot take place easily or without pain, and no one can say that it is not likely to have a long-term impact on the community, whose recovery can be a tortuous and difficult process. When the Government came to office in 1979, we did not inherit a situation of which we as a nation could be proud. The housing problems in Scotland were legion and enormous. Those problems were often referred to by Opposition Members, not least in some of the many fine speeches of a man who is sadly missed in the House—Mr. Hugh Brown, the late hon. Member for Glasgow, Provan, who brought to the House much experience of local authority work, particularly in housing. He also brought to the House a realistic view—something that is missing from some Opposition Members' contributions.

Hugh Brown recognised the enormous problems, some of which were of local authorities' own making. Some of them resulted from the misuse of scarce resources, and some arose because although local authorities were genuinely concerned to do something, they could not achieve what was being attempted. In such cases, the end result was an improvement on the previous state of affairs, but it was not good enough. Time moved on and successive administrations, both local and national, inherited the problems.

If we are to use the nation's resources wisely and well, we must recognise that we need to channel them to where the need is greatest. The Government have recognised that, if we are to assist those who are in need—as we should and must—we must ensure that resources are channelled correctly. We must ensure that resources are not splattered over a wide area so that those who really need them do not feel the effects. We set about channelling resources—for example, through housing benefit—to those who really needed them.

The policies of successive councils—the majority of them Labour councils—of charging low rents often starved those councils of funds that could have been available. First, many people could have afforded to pay realistic rents and, secondly, an increase in rents could have come directly from the housing benefit system. Local authorities' failure to charge realistic rents brought about enormous cash flow problems.

Throughout Scotland the results of such cash flow problems are staring us in the face. Those of us who have examined properties for damp and condensation are horrified to think that in a civilised society people can be asked to live in houses in such bad condition. People's dreams of moving into houses with bathrooms and with adequate provision for their children were turned into nightmares. They found condensation an walls, and their children suffered bronchi a result of the damp conditions in which

That was a result of the absence of ade into the housing coffers. — *[Interrup* nowhere in this life if we do not recognise t citizens live in conditions in which they living. People ought not to be living in when their houses are public property problems—I do not say all of them—re mistaken policy of imagining that one cou a council housing system without charging to cover repair and maintenance.

Mrs. Maria Fyfe (Glasgow, Maryh Gentleman says that he sympathises with damp houses, houses with dangerous wir Did he oppose the Government's move to support grant to Glasgow district counci and remove that grant completely from Scottish councils, as well as cutting capit

Mr. Walker: As is so often the Opposition Members, the hon. Lady con funds when allocated with the way in whi budgeted for.

I return to my point. If, over a perio or even 10 years—realistic rents had be the balance had been made up from th through the various support systems now benefit, that money would have been cha into the housing coffers. That is the firs adequate funds could have been found people who could afford to pay full rents s them. I make no apology for saying tha would have been the most sensible and logi resources.

I am sure that Opposition Member different from mine. I want all the citizens to live in accommodation of which we can certainly not proud of the conditions in authorities have asked many of my constitu local authorities are good local authori deny that—but also in my constituency, council had enormous problems. It would pretend that it did not. However, the pr new. I remember looking at Fintry when a council candidate in Dundee. Fintry w time before some of the other ghastly h Not long after it was built, it was fairly obv would become a maintenance problem. was built in the wrong place. [HON. MEM I know that part of it was SSHA, but no

I can list every house in Fintry. I used t housing estate, which was called Linlathen If Opposition Members know Glasgow th know where Linlathen is. I lived in Allow not looking at matters through rose-tinted about the problems at first hand, because was fairly obvious to anyone with any b would be enormous maintenance problem first thing that was obvious. The secon houses were in the wrong place. They we from the places where the majority of peo it was obvious that the cost of travel woul

[Mr. Walker]

and would deter many people. Fintry was built long before many of the other housing schemes in Dundee which have even greater problems. The lessons of Fintry were lost.

I do not say that everything that the Government have done since coming to office has been right, because that would be nonsense. However, the majority of the action that we have taken on housing was long overdue. Even today we have the massive problem of houses standing empty. However, whereas 120,000 houses were below tolerable standards 10 years ago, we have brought that figure down to 55,000. That is a move in the right direction, but the target must be to eliminate the problem altogether.

I also welcome the substantial increase in sheltered housing. This again involves targeting scarce resources where they are most needed. Clearly, we must cater for the disabled and the elderly, but the old blanket provisions paid insufficient attention to this. Resources have been channelled into sheltered accommodation, often through housing associations, and I compliment the associations in my constituency on the splendid schemes that they have developed. Those schemes are working well and the tenants are happy, as I know from regular visits to them, because the only way to find out what is happening is to go and see for oneself. The increase in sheltered housing and accommodation for the disabled shows that the Government have been channelling scarce resources in the right direction.

Another welcome development is that 106,000 families have been able to buy their own homes. One dream that has turned into reality and not into a nightmare is the opportunity for people to have a stake in their own homes. The Opposition may ask what that really means. To people who grew up in council homes it means that for the first time they will have a nest egg to leave to their families, an opportunity which they never enjoyed before, because it simply did not exist for them. Today, 106,000 households in Scotland have that opportunity as a direct result of legislation that was opposed by the Labour party.

Home ownership does more than give people a stake in their homes. It changes attitudes. One has only to look at the estates to see the evidence—new doors, porches and windows, improved gardens and decreased vandalism. That alone would be a good enough reason to sell the houses. I sometimes wonder whether the discounts are big enough, because the benefits to the community are enormous. The people with whom I grew up in Alloway terrace in Linlathen dreamed of owning their homes and being part of the community, of owning a car and a television set. All those things are coming to pass because the Government are channelling resources in the right direction.

One of the benefits of the Bill will be to bring together the two major housing agencies. That is important, because in my view we have reached a crossroads where we must change direction and go not for quantity but for quality. The first and major challenge is to improve the quality of the existing housing stock. Secondly, we must ensure that the houses being built meet the special needs of the community. As my hon. Friend the Member for Dumfries (Sir H. Monro) said, we welcome the efforts to improve and regenerate peripheral housing schemes in the cities, because they are desperately needed in many areas, but we must also recognise the need for regeneration in rural areas.

We hear a great deal from the Opposition about unemployment, but in one part of my constituency there is a problem brought about by full employment. In Aberfeldy, firms cannot find workers because of inadequate housing resources. More houses need to be built in that area. In the initial stages, the need is often for housing at economic rents. That is another welcome benefit that could come out of the Bill.

We also hear a great deal about the availability of building workers. This, too, will be effected by the Bill. My hon. Friend the Minister will be interested to hear that for the past three months, on Monday mornings, I have been calling on the various places of employment in my constituency to discover the true employment situation. A consistent factor for companies in the building industry has been the dearth of building workers in north Tayside, so in my area at least, the stories about building workers on the dole are pure fairy tales. I am told that there is also a shortage of skilled building workers in the Dundee area.

The Bill will provide opportunities to widen the forms of tenure and letting. This, too, has attracted some hostility from the Opposition. Many of them must have faced the problem of finding rented accommodation at some time in their lives. Council house waiting lists always involved special qualifications or long waits, so for the young, ambitious person who was willing to move, the real problem was not finding a job, but finding accommodation near the available work at a rent that he or she could afford. I have certainly experienced that problem.

I should have thought that in the 40 years since I first tried to find rented accommodation the problem would have been solved, but it has not been solved, because, as a matter of policy, successive Labour Governments deliberately squeezed out the private sector landlords. I have no brief for Rachman-type landlords, but when I was a young man there were a substantial number of private lettings in Dundee.

The right hon. Member for Glasgow, Govan (Mr. Millan) suggested that they were slums, but he should know better because, like me, he knows Dundee well. He knows that immediately before and after the war, although there were slums in Dundee which needed to be, and were, removed, there were many private sector rented properties which were beautiful flats in first-class tenement buildings. That accommodation was forced out of the private rented sector by successive Labour Governments, so more and more people were deprived of the opportunity to rent such properties.

I also welcome the idea of management schemes and co-operatives. I do not object to something just because it is called a co-operative. Unlike the Opposition, I do not have such hang-ups. I believe that things should be judged on their merits — whether they are viable and an improvement on the present situation, and whether they provide increased choice and wider options. I therefore believe that there is scope for co-operatives, and I welcome their development. I also welcome the fact that the private sector will be encouraged to become involved in areas which so far have been the exclusive province of the public sector.

I am aware that a substantial number of Opposition Members wish to speak, so I shall conclude. I believe that my contribution has clearly shown that I welcome the Bill,

because there is much in it that will give hope, much that will bring about change, and much that will be welcomed in Scotland, just as the right to buy was when we introduced it some years ago, but it was equally resisted by Opposition Members. I believe that in about five or six years those voices on the Opposition Benches—the same voices and the same faces will still be there on Opposition Benches — will be saying, "We are modifying our stance," just as they did about the right to buy. Experience will show that the Bill contains much that will be beneficial to the people who really matter, the people of Scotland.

8.30 pm

Mr. Jimmy Dunnachie (Glasgow, Pollok): Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker, for granting me the opportunity to speak on the Bill, which is one of the most serious issues facing the Scottish people. The Bill has created great anxiety in my constituency. It is a direct attack on meagre resources and basic rights. It is not a real solution to the major housing problems in Scotland. It is instead an attack on the power of local authorities in Scotland.

Encouraging private bodies or companies to invest in rented housing will not solve Scotland's major housing problem. It will not do anything for the 200,000 people who are on the local housing lists. It will do little to cure the dampness which is a health hazard that affects the homes of 120,000 Scottish children. The Bill will not ease the plight of the 31,000 people who are homeless in Scotland. That figure is rising every week. Instead, the Bill will punish the local authorities for the good work which, despite the lack of funds, they have already begun. I refer to Glasgow district council and the great assistance that it has given to housing associations, tenants, co-operatives and par-value co-operatives.

The Bill will turn the clock back to the dark old days of the private landlord and will take away the benefits of post-war housing policy in cities such as Glasgow. In 1947 about 65 per cent. of all rented accommodation in Scotland was in the private sector and the vast majority were slums, without hot water, baths or toilets. Few repairs were done because all that the landlord was interested in was profit. Amidst all that housing squalor, a Labour Government empowered local authorities to embark on a massive building programme of council houses. That gave hope to many people in Scotland—a hope which had previously been denied them because they had been forced to live in private rented housing. However, this Government want to return to a system that produced yesterday's slums.

Indeed, the Government want to go further and to create a two-tier tenants structure, which will further widen the gap that already exists between the haves and the have-nots in today's society. The first type of tenant will be able to afford to pay a fair and economic rent. At least in theory, that tenant should be able to get repairs done. However, the second class of tenant created by the Tories is not so fortunate. He will be deemed unable to pay a fair and economic rent and will get little or no help with housing repairs. That will create ghettoes instead of inner-city regeneration that the Government promised last June. The unemployed, low-wage earners, single parent families, senior citizens and the homeless will all be sacrificed for the Tory principles which dictate that private investment must be rewarded with fat profits.

Both types of tenant lack a further security. There is nothing in the Bill to prevent unscrupulous landlords from increasing rents and refusing to carry out repairs. The Bill also brings back the fear of eviction. A landlord can apply for an order to evict a tenant for non-payment of rent or, indeed, for a record of late payment.

There is a further lack of security in the area of tenancy rights, which has been left rather vague in the Bill because it is open to landlord manipulation. What of the concept of Scottish Homes? Again, that is a further attack on local authorities, which, in the past, have stopped Governments imposing financial penalties on people who can ill afford to pay them. The Bill means that a democratically elected housing authority will be replaced by a Government-sponsored quango. The people who will form that body will follow Tory housing policies, irrespective of the hardship and the suffering that they will cause their fellow men and women. The entire goal is a giant step towards an erosion of democracy and social justice in what was once a caring society. Therefore, I ask the House to oppose the Bill.

8.35 pm

Mr. Andrew Welsh (Angus, East): We seem to have run out of Conservative Members, but other Opposition Members wish to speak so I shall be as succinct as possible to allow in as many other hon. Members as possible.

The Government's stated White Paper objectives on which the Bill is based were reasonable and deserved support. It is a worthwhile objective to give people a wider choice in housing, to improve the supply and quality of that housing, to encourage greater individual responsibility for, and control over, the conditions in which people live and to provide the means of dealing with the problems of homelessness. I am sure that all those objectives will gain support and be encouraged by all hon. Members. *[Interruption.]* As has been rightly pointed out, I am afraid that I must advise the Minister that he is alone. There is certainly not a Scot on his side of the House but he appears to have the support of an English colleague and reserves from Penrith are arriving.

Although the Bill's aims are desirable, the reality is that it does not deliver those worthy objectives. Worse than that, in comparison with the enormity of the actual housing problems in Scotland, the Bill is an enormous missed opportunity. Indeed, it is more important for what it misses out and what it does not do than for the quango that it creates.

We do not get much chance to legislate on Scottish matters and I regret that the Government have wasted this valuable opportunity to do something worth while about Scottish housing. There is nothing in the Bill which seriously tackles the major problems in Scottish housing. There is nothing in the Bill to tackle the growing problem of homelessness in Scotland, which has risen by almost 100 per cent. during the past four years. Indeed, as the hon. Member for Glasgow, Pollok (Mr. Dunnachie) said, the Shelter survey states that 31,000 Scottish families and individuals are now homeless.

However, in the White Paper the Government used the word "residual" to describe the homelessness situation. One man's residue is clearly another man's desperation. How does the Minister justify that statement when all our local authorities are facing the reality of demographic, social and other changes which are creating growing numbers of young, single and other homeless persons?

Nothing in the Bill addresses the 35 per cent. growth in housing waiting lists during the past few years. An

[Mr. Andrew Welsh]

estimated 200,000 people are now waiting for housing in Scotland. So far, the Government's response has been simply to restrict the market by selling council houses and simultaneously starving councils of the funds required to build alternative replacements.

There is nothing in the Bill about the national problem of overcrowding. About one in four Scottish people—1·25 million of our fellow citizens — still live in conditions of overcrowding. In Shelter's words:

"Overcrowding in Scotland is at levels which existed elsewhere in Britain twenty or thirty years ago."

However, the Government tell us that all is well and that those problems have been solved.

There is nothing in the Bill about a national house condition survey. If there is any ideal activity for a unified housing agency, perhaps that is it—it should produce such a survey. Evidence from the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities suggests that about 250,000 council houses need full modernisation and a further 250,000 require remedial treatment for dampness and condensation. In other words, 500,000 council houses in Scotland require positive action now. One would never have believed that that situation existed from anything that was said by the Secretary of State for Scotland. However, that situation exists and if any unified housing agency is worth its salt, that is the sort of thing that it should look at and deal with. Again, the Bill does nothing to solve those problems. Indeed, the opposite is true.

The Government's policy is merely to sell or remove the best council houses cheaply and to give no housing support grant funding to improve the remainder. In reality, the Government do not have a policy for council houses. We are entitled to ask the Minister to explain how these provisions will assist in meeting Scotland's major housing problems. Will his proposals for Scottish Homes, for the transfer of tenants out of the public sector and for altering the law of tenancy build more houses, reduce the housing waiting lists, house the growing numbers of homeless people or cure the problems caused by overcrowding and dampness which afflict such a large number of Scottish houses? Will the Bill achieve that?

I was a co-sponsor of the Housing (Homeless Persons) Act 1977 and I believe that it should now be updated, strengthened and improved after a decade in operation. Local authorities have a statutory obligation to house the homeless, yet they are being starved of the resources to carry out that task. What exactly will Scottish Homes contribute to housing the homeless, and how will it do it? I should like the Minister to state clearly how these measures will assist in increasing the supply of special needs housing. If there is no statutory obligation to do so, how will the measures ease the problem of homelessness?

If the Government's objective is to produce high-quality, rented houses at a low cost, that is possible, but only with suitable central Government financial assistance. If the objective is to produce high quality, rented houses at high rents, how exactly is that possible in Scotland, given the long history of high unemployment and low wages among the very sections of the population who most need that same, better-quality rented housing?

Under the Bill, rents will inevitably increase. They cannot do anything else if profits are to be made by private investors. Yet the Government's economic policies, by destroying large sectors of the Scottish economy, prevent people from affording those rents in the first place. It appears that the Government have forgotten exactly wh public sector housing was introduced.

If Scotland was generally a high salaried, hig economic growth and prosperous economy, I could se some hope for the Government scheme working, but is no London or the south-east of England, and th Government are making sure that that position continue In reality, the rented sector is contracting in Scotland an council houses are being sold without replacement. N wonder waiting lists are growing, when the Government housing support grant policy and give-away discounts a ensuring that local authorities cannot cope with thes problems. Only when there is a policy of adequate ne building and replacement for sold council houses will loc authorities be able to fulfil their obligations properly.

We are seeing the inevitable consequence of th Government's vendetta against local authorities and w are seeing an all-time low in public sector house buildin Indeed, now it is more or less completely wiped out. Th Government's housing policy in Scotland uses idea suitable to yuppies in south-east England, but they a being applied to Scotland without thought of th consequences for our country and its people.

While I welcome as a small mercy the clauses which giv tenants further protection against harassment and illeg eviction, I cannot go along with the other parts of th rents package. I should like the Minister to state wheth it is true that under the Bill tenants with short assure tenancies will have no right to a rent book, to know th name and address of the landlord, to be informed of change of landlord, and not to have rent charged advance of the rental period, and that they will have n protection from false entries in their rent book, followin the determination of a rent by a rent assessme committee. Is that true? If so, it simply will not do. I a left wondering whether the Government have hired M Rachman as their adviser on the Bill. The Governme have deliberately chosen to favour landlord confidence the expense of tenant confidence.

The Bill, following as it does the promising objectiv stated in the White Paper, is a real disappointment. It fai to match up to the reality of Scottish housing needs, an it must be judged on that failure.

8.44 pm

Mr. John McFall (Dumbarton): I thank you, Mada Deputy Speaker, for giving me the opportunity contribute to this debate. When the consultation paper c Scottish Homes was produced in the summer, I welcom it because it gave us an opportunity for a re-examinatio of the housing needs in Scotland, both public and privat as the latter has as many problems as the former.

There is undoubtedly a crisis in housing in Scotland an I shall give the House some statistics to consider. Son 150,000 people are on the housing waiting list, 20,0 people are homeless—their number has quadrupled the past four or five years — 250,000 people are overcrowded accommodation and 63,000 are in housing less than a tolerable standard. There are 850,000 houses the public sector, of which 120,000 need rewiring and mo than 300,000 are affected by dampness. Clearly, th problem is great.

Compare those facts with the figures for new bui houses. In 1979, about 8,500 new houses were built. Th figure decreased to 4,500 in 1985, representing a cut in ne

build over eight years of approximately 50 per cent. In 1979, 36,000 houses were modernised, whereas in 1985, seven years later, 20,000 were modernised, representing a cut of more than 40 per cent.

We look expectantly at the Government's proposals in this Bill, but we look in vain. There is no mention of homelessness. It is a blot on the Scottish housing scene, yet there is not one mention of it in the Bill. We look for provisions on special housing needs, and my hon. friend the Member for Glasgow, Garscadden (Mr. Dewar) mentioned the Bield housing association, which deals with the needs of the elderly, but again there is no mention in the Bill of special housing needs.

As was mentioned earlier, a house condition survey was carried out in England and Northern Ireland to assess the housing position accurately. If the Government were sincere about putting out a consultation paper and introducing a housing Bill, first of all they should know what they are talking about, and they cannot possibly know what they are talking about when they have consistently refused to implement a housing condition survey in Scotland. That is the only way in which they can accurately assess the entire Scottish housing scene. The Government are proceeding on false premises, because they do not know the position. Indeed, do they care?

Experts estimate that about £4 billion is needed for modernisation and repairs. There is a lack of information in the Bill. There is no technical annex and there are no costings. It appears that the Government are not interested in the financial aspect. One is led to the conclusion that the Bill has more to do with the Tory preference for home ownership at the expense of the public sector than with the nub of the issue, which is the crisis in housing.

The Bill seeks to eliminate the general subsidies to public-sector housing, by the decrease of rate fund contribution and housing support grant. The only consequence of such a policy is a consequent massive increase in rents. Let us examine the Government's record of the past eight years on housing support grant as a proportion of the total local authority housing revenue account budget. Since 1980 it has fallen from 37 per cent. to a mere 7 per cent. in 1985, so money has not been forthcoming.

The Bill contains a number of platitudes about tenants' rights. The Under-Secretary of State was with me at a meeting in Glasgow during the summer, where a number of tenant representatives put their points of view about the consultation paper. At that meeting the Minister mentioned that tenants would not be pushed into any other scheme against their will. However, tenants have not been consulted. I would suggest that if one member, one vote is good for trade unions, one member, one vote is good for the tenants of SSHA. If we have democracy in one sphere, let us be consistent and exercise it into another sphere. There has been massive criticism from the tenants' movement, because the Government have been less than honest in their approach to housing, and less than fair in their approach to tenants.

A number of doubts have arisen because of the Bill. We talk about the SSHA and the Housing Corporation in Scotland coming together. The SSHA has 85,000 tenants and it is in debt. That is important. The Housing Association has 40,000 tenants. The combined total is 120,000 tenants, out of 850,000 public tenants in Scotland. We expect that body, with no experience of attracting private capital, to be capable of regenerating Scottish housing. It is a farce. That is the only way that one could describe it. It cannot regenerate Scottish housing without the resources, the experience and the grass roots knowledge that local authority housing departments have built up over many years.

When we consider the implications of the Bill for local authorities, we see that their role is being changed to what is called an enabling role. If they have an enabling role, will the Minister say that local authorities can be given the power to require private landlords to house the ever-increasing number of homeless people, because the situation of homeless people in Scotland is becoming desperately serious?

My hon. Friend the Member for Dunfermline, West (Mr. Douglas) spoke about MOD properties. In my constituency there are a number of MOD houses, and I have been in contact with the Minister about them. The families in those properties reflect the society in which they live. Families break up, couples divorce and people have to move out of the house. In my constituency, as soon as a family breaks up, the Ministry of Defence requires the wife to leave the house. She comes to my surgery or goes to the housing department in Dumbarton for rehousing. In this case, the local authority is acting, not as an enabler, but as a receptacle for those types of problems. That is an instance of how the MOD deals with such problems. It is not a benign way. How would private landlords deal with such a situation, and what would be expected of local authorities? Can we expect private landlords to behave any differently from the MOD? Such practice will lead to "sink" schemes for the homeless and for the low-paid.

In 1983 the Government allowed low-paid people up to £86 per week in wages. If their wages were below that, they would get assistance and housing benefit. That figure has been cut from £86 in 1983 to £68 in 1988. The Government are doing nothing for the low-paid. Homeless and low-paid people will become an increasing burden on local authorities, which will not have the resources to deal with it.

The issue of private finance appears in the Bill. It is quite simple. Local authorities are non-profit-making organisations. Private landlords are profit-making. For every £1 that will go to a private landlord, there will be £1 less for repairs, modernisation and investment.

The Secretary of State mentioned Quality Street. I would put it to him that, instead of referring to Quality Street, we should be talking about quality homes. The Quality Street type of experiment has been attempted in Scotland by no fewer than 18 local authorities during past years. They ran into opposition from the Scottish Office because the Treasury was not very pleased. The local authorities and the public sector have been keen during the past few years to get involved in joint ventures with the private sector, but they need the resources.

During the recess I had the opportunity to read a number of stories to my youngest child. One of them was "The Three Little Pigs" and that story comes to mind tonight.

Mr. Home Robertson: There are not three of them.

Mr. McFall: The wolf blew the first two houses down, but it could not blow the brick house down. However, the political wolves on the Government Benches are blowing the brick houses down in my constituency, and they are

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blowing them down in a more leisurely way than the wolf in the fairy tale did, because they are doing it by systematically and cynically denying funds for housing.

If the Minister can answer one crucial question satisfactorily, I shall join him in the Lobby tonight. What level of public investment will be maintained as a result of the Housing (Scotland) Bill? If he can answer that satisfactorily, he will have my vote. I doubt whether he will, because at no time has the consultation paper or the Bill demonstrated any consideration for the real housing needs of the people of Scotland.

8.57 pm

Mr. Nigel Griffiths (Edinburgh, South): The right hon. Member for Kincardine and Deeside (Mr. Buchanan-Smith) asked why the Bill is being opposed tonight. It is a pity that he did not stay to hear the answer. It offers home owners seeking repairs grants hindrance, not help. It removes essential and basic rights from private tenants, such as the right to succession, the right to a fair rent and the right to their tenancies. It brings despair to the homeless whose numbers have doubled in four years, and it heralds a new era of Rachmanism. Those are some of the reasons why the Bill must be rejected.

The Secretary of State referred to the House's concentration on public sector housing, but I wish to comment on the potentially drastic effect of this Bill on home owners. Part I of the Bill can remove all outstanding repairs and improvement grants from local authorities and hand them over lock, stock and barrel to an unelected body.

Under the Bill, private developers can become agents for administering grants. Speculators can take over and decide on priorities in the interests of profit, not people. There need be no votes on priority programmes, no competitive tendering and no rights for home owners in the queue for grants to seek intervention or support from elected councillors. Clearly part I is designed to prevent Labour councils such as Edinburgh from halting the flow of grant money to speculators and instead giving that money, as a priority, to individual home owners as it has done in the past. The misuse of scarce resources by a Conservative-controlled council has been alluded to by the hon. Member for Tayside, North (Mr. Walker).

Part I of the Bill does not come as a surprise to the home owners of Edinburgh and Glasgow. The Secretary of State has just announced a cut of £11·5 million in the repairs budget for home owners in Edinburgh and a cut of £17·5 million for those in Glasgow. He has cut grants and now he wants to cut corners. He wishes to remove the safeguards that have developed over decades and leave many people at the mercy of the sharp landlord who hides behind glossy advertising campaigns.

The Bill will have drastic consequences for the elderly, the young, families and carers. The elderly tenant who transfers to a new landlord and remains in her family-sized flat will be penalised if she vacates her large flat to allow a family access to it and takes a new tenancy. First, she will lose the protection of a fair rent, and her rent will automatically be set at a higher rate, despite the fact that she is giving up a family-sized flat for a smaller one. The Secretary of State implies that she would have a choice, but his Department's circular of 17 November 1987 removes any such choice. That Government circular on the housing benefit regulations will force her to pay an higher rent for her larger flat.

She does not, as the Secretary of State alleged, ha enjoy greater luxury than he thinks reasonable t affected. There is no mention of that in the Bill o circular. She does not, as the Secretary of State all have to enjoy greater luxury than he thinks reasonab be affected. There is no mention of that in the Bill o circular. She does not, again as the Secretary of Stat claimed, have to be grossly over-accommodated t affected. Neither the Bill nor the latest Depart circular use the words "luxury" or "grossly".

The Secretary of State should read his Departm circular of 17 November before misleading the H That circular says:

"the Government propose that the rent officer . . . sh also consider whether the claimant is over-accommodate will do this on the basis of a test of occupancy in relati the number of habitable rooms, which will be supplied t by the Secretary of State for Scotland.

If a claimant appears to be over-accommodated unde initial test, the rent officer will carry out a valuation, an establish whether the claimant is in fact over-accommo by reference to a more detailed test. If he concludes tha accommodation is unnecessarily large he will then asse equivalent market rent for a hypothetical dwelling"—

not even a real dwelling—

"of the same type and in the same location which i unnecessarily large . . . The test of unnecessarily accommodation will be set as a maximum number of r of floorspace for particular family sizes."

The only gross thing about all this is the Secreta State's exaggeration about the future protection ava to the elderly. The only luxury is the luxury that the hon. and learned Gentleman affords himself in inve safeguards that he and the Government have no inte of enacting in the legislation.

There are no safeguards for the new tenant of a du landlord who becomes frail and whose son comes to after him. The Bill means that that son will have to up his home to look after his parent, but he will ha security of tenure, especially if the parent dies withi years. In that instance the right of succession will been removed. The Government will have enable tenant's landlord to throw the son out and to se property to the highest bidder. The Bill is an Government measure that will crucify the carer.

In case the new rents fixed do not bring high en returns to the private landlord, the Secretary of Stat taken the powers of arbitration from professional officers and given them to amateur appointees who their patronage to him. From bitter experience, pr tenants know that such rent assessment comm invariably set higher rents than those set by rent of under existing legislation. The Government are repl a system of gentlemen and players with a syste gentlemen and payers. If the rent assessment comm cannot find sufficient similar tenancies in the location, it appears that the Bill will sanction any le excessive rent, no matter how extortionate.

Therefore, it is hardly surprising that the body tha preside over all this will not be elected. Schedule I l the matter entirely to the Secretary of State. There w no representatives from tenants' groups or from resi associations, no place for local authority experts, no for community councils and no one elected from volu organisations that deal with housing. No doub

Secretary of State will follow his recent disgraceful precedent, illustrated by the health boards and the Scottish Development Agency, by appointing placemen. There will be too few exceptions to the rule—the appointees will be cost cutters, not consumers.

The new unelected body will be invested with horrendous powers. Part I of the Bill allows the Scottish Homes quango to purchase, compulsorily, land for developers, irrespective of the views of local people. Schedule 5 gives private landlords similar new powers over the lives of tenants—unprecedented since Rent Acts were first introduced in 1915.

Now the Government can let any landlord, no matter how disreputable, obtain possession and evict the tenant if he wants merely to refurbish the flats to sell them off. It is hardly surprising that the Bill has not merited support from any reputable quarter. Widespread opposition has come not just from tenants and tenants' organisations, but from the Scottish Association of Citizens Advice Bureaux, Shelter, the Scottish Council for Single Homeless, the Scottish Federation of Housing Associations and Age Concern.

If the Government are so sure of their case, why did they publish their proposals for tenants' choice on 18 December, the week before Christmas, allowing only 17 working days, including Christmas eve, for tenants and others to respond? It is a shameful sham of a consultation and the latest in a disreputable list.

Why can the Government not heed the response of people to those housing proposals? Why are they deaf to the pleas of the public but ever willing to pander to the private sector? Why do they not admit that the Bill is the result of an election gimmick gone gaga, and withdraw it tonight?

9.6 pm

Mr. John McAllion (Dundee, East): I suspect that there is agreement on both sides of the House on at least one point, which is that this is potentially one of the most radical Scottish housing measures ever to see the light of day, certainly ever to be debated in this Chamber. But that is as far as such agreement will go. The Opposition never could and never will agree to the many themes in the Bill which, far from extending tenants' choice as the Secretary of State for Scotland claimed, threaten the present rights of Scottish tenants. Far from beginning to tackle the acute housing crisis affecting Scotland today, they can serve only to make that crisis much worse.

As always, when we are dealing with specifically Scottish legislation, we know that whatever else the Government might have drawn inspiration from in introducing the Bill, they certainly did not draw it from the people of Scotland. The people have already made known what they think about the Government and their policies —they made it clear on 11 June, when three out of every four Scottish voters gave an emphatic no to the vision of Scotland that Conservative Members are attempting to fashion with legislation such as this.

We do not have to rely only on the evidence of last June to know that Scotland does not want this Bill. We have much more recent and specific evidence, which relates directly to the Bill. I am referring to the consultation process over the Scottish Homes proposals, during which the SSHA tenants overwhelmingly rejected the Government's ideas and formed themselves into a national federation of tenants specifically to fight the Scottish Homes plan. Many of my hon. Friends spoke at public meetings during that consultation process, as I did in Dundee. They will know the strength of feeling among tenants who oppose the Scottish Homes plan. The Government must answer the question: where is the moral justification for imposing the Scottish Homes proposals on tenants who do not want them? Where is the democratic justification for that?

The Government should know that the Scottish Federation of Housing Associations has argued that the future of the SSHA should be determined separately from the Scottish Homes proposals, and in full consultation with the 80,000 tenants of the SSHA. So why are the Government not prepared to give those tenants a ballot so that they can show whether they oppose or approve of the measures in the Bill?

We heard an awful lot about ballots from Conservative Members during the miners' strike. They were all in favour of ballots then. They always are in favour of ballots when they think that it suits their purpose. But in this instance, when they believe that a ballot will not suit their purpose, we do not hear about ballots at all. The SSHA tenants are to be denied the ballot that they deserve.

The tenants have already asked for such a ballot. It was refused by the SSHA itself. The chairman of the SSHA is Mr. Derek Mason, who is in the short leet for the position of chairman of Scottish Homes. I hope that he is more successful than some of the other candidates on that short leet. In this month's edition of "Labour Research", he is quoted as saying about the SSHA's tenants' demand for a ballot:

> "I do not see the point of a ballot when we know the result. We know virtually every tenant is against the proposals."

That is what the chairman of the SSHA says. He asks why there should be a ballot when we know that the answer is no to Scottish Homes.

But the Government, by bringing forward the Bill, are saying that they do not care what the tenants think or might say. Neither do they care what Scotland thinks or might say. They will give Scotland the Bill anyway and ram Scottish Homes down its people's throats. That is a dangerous road for any Government, especially one with so few Scottish Members, to embark upon. I urge them to think again.

I turn to the detail of the Bill and the issue of tenants' rights. For a long time, the Government have masqueraded as promoters of tenants' rights. What will the Bill do for the rights of tenants, particularly under the new arrangements for assured tenancies and short-term assured tenancies? It is important to take into consideration the Government's whole housing policy in this respect, and not only the legislation before us. We know, for example, that since 1979 the Government have been squeezing the money available to district councils to finance their housing revenue accounts. We know that housing support grant has been slashed. Dundee district council, for instance, used to receive more than £8 million a year in housing support grant from central Government; today, it receives nothing.

At the same time, the rate fund contributions to the housing revenue account have been dramatically pegged back. Dundee district council, which at one time could contribute more than £4 million from the rates to the housing revenue account, is now restricted to contributing less than £500,000 to it. The measures to be imposed by

[Mr. John McAllion]

the Government must have an effect on housing revenue accounts of district councils and on their ability to manage and maintain their stock.

Inevitably, rents have been forced up to much higher levels than they would have been had the Government maintained their financial support for council housing. Equally inevitably, the councils have found it increasingly difficult—indeed, well nigh impossible—to meet their responsibilities as landlords in the way in which they would have wanted, and would have done, if the Government had continued to support council housing financially.

The process of Government cuts was important in softening up the public sector housing and making it vulnerable to the sort of privatisation threat that the Bill now makes possible. Any hon. Member who has public sector rented housing in his constituency will know what damage has been done by Government cuts, and will know the frustration experienced by council tenants who can have emergency repairs done only towards the tail end of the year because their local office's maintenance budget runs out at the end of December, instead of the end of March as it should do. Hon. Members will know of the anger among council tenants whose aged metal-framed windows cannot be replaced in the current year, or in any of the years of the council's five-year plan, because there is such a backlog of houses requiring window replacement that it will take the council decades to work through it with the level of finance that is now available.

That is the context in which the measures contained in the Bill must be assessed. Pick-your-landlord might sound a fine idea, but what will happen? First, it will mean choice in one direction only, as several hon. Members have said—from the public into the private or independent rented sector. I know of thousands of tenants in Dundee who might want to pick their local district council as a landlord in preference to the present owners of the houses, but that choice has been denied them by the Government.

Even tenants who can pick their landlords and have the right to choose are in a much less straightforward position than would at first appear from the Bill. We know that private landlords across Scotland are, at this very moment, eyeing council housing stock; they have designs on it and it is not hard to see that they find only certain types of housing stock desirable—the sort that is basically sound and desirable and located in a good neighbourhood but which requires improvements of one kind or another which the council cannot afford to finance.

Those are the houses that interest the private sector landlords and they will make the tenants of such houses the kind of offer which many of them will find it difficult to refuse. A new kitchen or a bathroom or a complete new set of double glazed windows or whatever else the council cannot afford to put in will be offered by the private sector landlord. The tenants will be tempted and will opt to change ownership to a private landlord on the basis of the offer made to them by that landlord.

The improvements are what the tenant will get from the deal struck with the private landlord. However, every deal has two sides to it and the tenant will lose in other directions. First, there will be higher rents because under the new tenancies rents are to be at market level or are to be freely negotiated between the landlord and the tenant. We all know that market level or freely negot are shorthand for putting up the rents to a excess of current council house rents in Scotla

There will also be a loss of the rights that te public sector now enjoy. For example, as soon picks his landlord that is it. He does not get to p landlord and even if the landlord turns out to Rachman the tenant is stuck with him for the life. It is like a bee sting because under this le is a right that can be used only once and then has had it. The tenant will also lose the right to b house because that right extends only to pu tenants.

These tenants' rights about which the Tori either of fundamental importance or they are is no basis for saying that tenants in the public have these rights while tenants in the private se denied them. The rights should be available to and to all tenants, but that fundamental princi breached by the Bill.

There is also the loss of security of tenure from choosing a private sector landlord. The landlords repossessing assured tenancies are se schedules to the Bill. They include the tenant delaying the payment of rent which has beco due. Hon. Members should notice that it is n refusing to pay or of failure to pay, but merely delay in paying rent. Whoever drafted this Bi never knew what it was to be poor and experienced the regular scramble to try to scra the money to pay, the rent man. If a tenant do the money to pay, he will persistently find hi making payments.

Under this Bill it is the poor who will be th their houses by the private sector landlord. Th about delay in paying rent is nothing less tha for dispossessing the poor, and it should have a civilised society. However, Scotland has bec less civilised society in the last eight years sinc placed under a Government whom the Scottis not elect. It is not just the poor who will ha because if a landlord needs the house to pay it will not matter if the tenant has been a model he will go and it is just tough luck.

The Bill will mean higher rents, fewer rig security of tenure; that appears to be the Government's approach in trying to tackle housing crisis. It is a terrible indictm Government that after eight years this is the legislation that they can bring forward to Scotland's housing problems. The Bill will n problems. It will make them worse for the pe guilty of doing that.

9.18 pm

Mr. John Home Robertson (East Loth grateful to my hon. Friend the Member for D (Mr. McAllion) and to all my hon. Friend spoken in the debate for bringing to it an a because there is a housing crisis in Scotland, Friend the Member for Dundee, East ha appreciate that the Scottish Office does not aware of that state of affairs, but that is the crisis has been severely aggravated in recent financial and legislative interference of the G They do not want to know about that.

Less than a month before they published the Bill, the Government issued a parody of a White Paper which is more a catalogue of ministerial prejudice than an analysis of the Scottish housing scene. The essence of Tory thinking in Scotland seems to be that there is something fundamentally reprehensible about being a tenant. The Tories believe that public sector tenancies are an evil which must be stamped out of the Scottish body politic. That shows that the Government are out of touch with the people of Scotland, not least because more than 58 per cent. of Scottish households are tenants, mostly in the public sector. Perhaps that accounts for the fact that the Government have precious little support in Scotland.

The Government have gone to great lengths to force district and islands councils to dispose of houses and encourage tenants to buy, whether or not they can afford the costs of owner-occupation. Labour Members are happy for people who have acquired their houses, but I wish that the Government would understand that for a significant number of people it is best to remain tenants. Surely they have rights, too. When will the Government grasp that fact? These policies have contributed to a brand new crisis of owner-occupation in Scotland, with record numbers of mortgage defaults adding to an already disastrous crisis of homelessness.

The Labour party supports home ownership, and always has done, through means such as tax incentives, for example. However, it is wrong to promote owner-occupation at the expense of homeless people in Scotland. There has been a net loss of 46,000 council houses available to let since the Government came to power in 1979. The position will be further aggravated when the Minister removes the cost floor on council house sales, as he has threatened today.

Homelessness is a national scandal in Scotland. It is a personal tragedy for far too many of our fellow citizens. Twice as many cases of homelessness occur now as did four years ago. Last year, about 31,000 families and individuals found themselves seeking accommodation under the homeless persons legislation. What did the Government say about that? As my hon. Friend the Member for Dumbarton (Mr. McFall) said, there is not a word about homelessness in the Bill, although there was a brief paragraph in the White Paper, which I shall quote:

"The problem of homelessness also needs to be set in the context of the Government's plans. Homelessness is a symptom of failures in the housing system."

How about that for an understatement?

"The Government's proposals will make the housing system work better. It is important to address the problem in this way rather than through stopgap measures, specific to the homeless, which do not solve the underlying problem. The homeless will benefit from wider choice and a share in the general improvement of the supply and quality of housing as much as other sectors of the population."

The Government are not interested in taking any specific action to deal with this immediate and urgent crisis which afflicts so many of our citizens. It is an indication of the Government's appalling complacency.

In addition to homelessness, there are also the serious problems of overcrowding, bad housing conditions and dampness. A quarter of people in Scotland live in overcrowded homes. COSLA has estimated that no fewer than 250,000 houses need remedial treatment for dampness or condensation. It is difficult to get a clear picture of the need for repairs, because the Govern steadfastly refuse to conduct a house condition surv Scotland, as there is in England and Wales.

The Under-Secretary of State was a member o Select Committee on Scottish Affairs which investi the problem of dampness in housing some time ago. be interesting to see whether we shall have another Committee on Scottish Affairs. Perhaps we shall more about that on Wednesday. If the Under-Secret State were honest, he would have to acknowledge th Bill and the rest of the Government's policies aggravating Scotland's housing crisis.

One of the problems in Scotland today is that w governed by a tiny clique who know and care little their subjects. In political terms, the Government precious little to lose in Scotland. The fact that the Sc Conservative party has so few elected Members at lo national level—only 10 Members of Parliament—n that it is probably not aware of what the peop Scotland are talking about. Scottish Conserv Members are not speaking to them. They are speakin to tenants, but to merchant bankers and estate a Legislation such as this shows that those are the peo whom they are talking.

If Scottish Conservative Members met and co ponded with some of the 202,000 people who are stu waiting lists for rented houses, they might understan bitter anger and frustration of those who are being d the basic human right to live in a home of their own area in which they want to live. How on earth a party forces thousands of young families to live in overcro and insecure accommodation can still try to pose a party of the family really beggars belief. The Bill will things worse.

We know that the Secretary of State for Scotla beyond redemption. He is not about to start compro ing with public opinion in Scotland at this stage career. Indeed, he frequently brings to mind B famous words about politicians being bought and sol English gold.

The Under-Secretary of State for Scotland, the Member for Edinburgh, West (Lord James Dou Hamilton) has a reputation as a basically fair-minde compassionate man. I hope that we shall see manifestations of such qualities in the Comm Corridor.

When the idea of a Scottish Development Agency would include the Scottish part of the Ho Corporation was first suggested, we stated suppor such an initiative to help elected local councils to deal the growing housing crisis in Scotland. But what has emerged is quite different. It has emerged that Government intend to set up a monstrous new nati housing quango that will effectively supersede councils and will have a duty to revive the ugliest as of private landlordism in Scotland.

The worst fears that we have heard expressed have confirmed in today's issue of *The Scotsman*, no less. T is speculation about the appointment of no less a pe than the Earl of Ancram as chairman of the Sco Homes organisation. We know that the Secretary of S himself is personally to nominate nine members. The no undertaking that there will be a representativ tenants. We see some interesting jockeying for chairman's position.

[Mr. John Home Robertson]

Of course, there are precedents for such people being appointed. When Hamish Gray was dismissed by the people of Ross, Cromarty and Skye, he found himself promoted to Minister of State. Alex Fletcher, who was dismissed by the people of Edinburgh, Central, found himself appointed to the Scottish Development Agency. There must be some concern that the Earl of Ancram, who was dismissed by the people of Edinburgh, South, could end up as chairman of this outfit. I hope that the Minister can assure us that that will not happen. The people of Scotland presently face the severest provocation from an alien minority Administration. Frankly, some of us have already had enough of it.

Part II of the Bill will establish a whole new framework of landlord and tenant legislation. Frankly, that has more to do with encouraging private landlords than with protecting tenants. Indeed, that is the whole thrust of the Bill. My hon. Friend the Member for Glasgow, Garscadden (Mr. Dewar) rightly cited many examples of the erosion of tenants' rights. No doubt he will have opportunities to go into greater detail in Committee.

The term "assured tenancy" has a nice cosy ring about it. It is clear enough that we are talking about a variation on the theme of "Catch-22". Tenants will have two choices. They will have limited security but precious little rent control, or they will have limited rent control and precious little security. As we know, even the phasing limits on rent increases will be withdrawn by the Government. It appears that the Government are seeking to build on the spectacular failure of the private rented sector in recent years.

It is worth mentioning that most of the 130,000 empty houses in Scotland today are privately owned. That is a standing indictment of those owners who are prepared neither to let nor to sell such properties, but prefer to let them stand empty and rot. There is nothing to stop people letting houses at fair rents at present. Perhaps I should have declared an interest as a private landlord. There is nothing to stop people letting houses. It seems to be unnecessary for the Government to give such generous incentives to private landlords. They seem to be building on failure. There seems to be no ground for the hope that they will be able to provide the additional rented homes that we all know are required in Scotland.

Private landlords' share of housing in Scotland has collapsed to only 6·3 per cent. of the total amount. That includes some of the worst housing in Scotland.

Mr. Rifkind *indicated assent.*

Mr. Home Robertson: The Secretary of State is smiling. Even under his stewardship, that decline has continued. What grounds are there for expecting this to succeed, even with those incentives? Is it worth making the sacrifices that the Secretary of State is asking tenants to make? The Government are running an awful risk of reviving the evils of Rachmanism in their endeavours to revive the private rented sector. There is nothing wrong with private renting, provided it is subject to reasonable protection and controls. Perhaps I should give notice that, if any speculator decides to take unreasonable advantage of the provisions in the legislation, it is likely that a Labour-controlled Scottish assembly will take retrospective action in the very near future to restore such controls.

We cannot understand why the Governm obsessed with their doctrinaire campaign a authority housing. Local authorities could an allowed to continue to meet the need for ren in Scotland. As the Secretary of State rather acknowledged, they have given the lead in housing tenure, encouraging private develo promoting co-operatives.

The Glasgow district council has been setti in promoting housing associations. We need from the Tory Administration in that res authorities have been backing housing associ Government are proposing radical changes in housing association tenancies which could te out of housing associations in Scotland. It is offensive to the principles of voluntar associations that they should be forced to ja rents and undermine the security of future te proposed in the Bill.

I join other hon. Members in paying tribu tenants for the powerful opposition that demonstrated to the Scottish Homes propos already suffering from Government rent polic have made it clear that they are not prepared off to private sector landlords, accordi Government's original proposals. The Secret wriggled a lot on this subject in the course o but he knows as well as everybody else that clear indication in the original proposal Government intended to hive off SSHA hou thankful for small mercies. That has now beer by the Government.

I making a passing reference to the pic clause, which applies only to public sector may, for some reason best known to themsel uncertain future of becoming private secto wonder why dissatisfied private tenants will no to transfer their tenancies to local authorities, a more likely choice for tenants to make. Government breaking the clear understandi town tenants would be transferred to local The Secretary of State has said that he is activ to new town properties being transferre authorities, as was previously understood, whi some alarm among tenants of new town cor

I am still waiting for a reply from the Secre to a letter I wrote on 15 December about th reference to England and Wales in clause possibility that the Bill could find its way to packed with English and Welsh Members. grateful if the Minister could give us an assura It would be intolerable if the Bill were not c a Scottish Committee. The reference in the Bil is bogus. I fear that this could be another mar the dirty tricks which we have become ac enduring from the Scottish Office in recent ye and disgraceful that today the Scottish representative of the Government in Scotland being the representative of Scotland in the as it rightly ought to be. The Bill is an ugly exa

The Government are prepared to accept t value of tax relief on privately owned hous average of £680 per house per year. It is worth that 41 per cent. of all mortgage interest concentrated in London and south-east Eng same time, the average public subsidy for a c

in Scotland has fallen to £55·74, compared with £680 for private houses in England. The hon. Member for Stirling (Mr. Forsyth) asked whether we are against public subsidies for the private sector. When the Labour Government were in power, there was, broadly speaking, parity of subsidy for houses in both the public and private sectors. What a change there has been since this lot came to power. The interests of Scottish tenants have been sacrificed shamefully by the Government, and the Bill is intended to make matters worse. It is deliberately designed to force rents up to encourage private investment in rented houses.

One wonders how many rented houses will be achieved as a result of the Bill. On Friday 27 November I asked the hon. Member for Edinburgh, West how many additional private sector rented dwellings he expected to achieve as a result of the recent proposals in the White Paper on housing. On that day he said that he would reply to my question as soon as possible. We waited with bated breath while computers whirred in the Scottish Office to find how many extra houses would be achieved by the legislation. A definitive reply came on the Monday: "A considerable number." The Government have not got a clue as to how many houses the legislation is likely to achieve.

We know that many tenants cannot afford an increase in rent and have much to fear from the abolition of fair rents. But the Government seek to shrug that off by saying that there is no need to worry because the tenants will be protected by housing benefit. Of course, we know that they will not be, because of provisions debated earlier.

The Bill will centralise bureaucratic control over housing in Scotland. It will undermine the position of tenants. It will do absolutely nothing to provide for the needs of thousands of Scots who are homeless or who live in overcrowded, damp, sub-standard accommodation. This is the sort of insensitive, bad legislation which brings the Government of the United Kingdom into disrepute and could undermine the unity of the kingdom. Ministers who disobey the electorate should be aware of the sort of reaction that they are likely to provoke. I urge the House to reject the motion for a Second Reading of the Bill and to support our reasoned amendment.

9.36 pm

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Scotland (Lord James Douglas-Hamilton): I should say at the beginning that I have an interest in a company which could be affected by the terms of the Bill, but would say to the hon. Member for East Lothian (Mr. Home Robertson), as regards his question about clause 67(5), that I wrote to him on Friday: there is nothing sinister about that clause and it will be considered in Committee.

This has been a useful and wide-ranging debate. It has provided an opportunity to demonstrate——

Mr. Harry Ewing: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. I am astonished to hear the Minister say that he has an interest in a company. Is it not the usual procedure that when Members of Parliament become Ministers of the Crown they dispose of any interests that they may have in any company? It is unprecedented to hear a Minister begin his ministerial speech by saying that he has an interest in a company which might benefit from the legislation that he is introducing.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: I am certainly not a director or anything like that. It may be only a contingent interest. If the hon. Member wants to look it up Register of Members' Interests, he will see it. I wen the people in charge of the Register today; they w certain that it was a declarable interest, but, just in is, I am following the example of the hon. Member f Lothian who, I suspect, has a greater interest than

The Bill is intended to do three things: first, to p choice for tenants in housing, as and when they w secondly, to provide diversity of provision, princip the revival of the private rented sector; thirdly, to a new housing development agency in Scotland to the best use of resources. I draw the attention of the to a significant statement made in the debate Queen's Speech on Scotland on 29 June last year right hon. and learned Member for Monklands, Ea Smith):

"I think I speak for the vast majority of peop certainly for the Opposition when I say that we expenditure in our constituencies. We do not care too whether it is public or private, and it will be better if we can get an intelligent combination of both public expenditure leading in private sector expenditu [*Official Report*, 29 June 1987; Vol. 118, c. 340.]

The provisions of the Bill are, in large part, inten enable the sort of partnership which the right ho learned Gentleman was seeking. Assured tenanci remove one of the main barriers to private investment in rented housing, which will be welcomed. Scottish Homes, as a wide-ranging en and funding body, will work towards fin arrangements for housing with co-operation be private and public sector sources. Instead of everything itself, it will create the right climate in those seeking a home and those intending to provi can work together.

The hon. Members for Roxburgh and Berwic (Mr. Kirkwood), for Angus, East (Mr. Welsh) a Dumbarton (Mr. McFall) asked about a national condition survey. COSLA believes that such a su required, and we are keeping the possibility under r The hon. Member for Edinburgh, South (Mr. Gri asked about the cuts in non-HRA allocatio Edinburgh and Glasgow. In 1987-88, the figures inc £58 million earmarked for the backlog of repai improvement grants—£32 million for Glasgow an million for Edinburgh. The provisional figures for 19 include a reduced figure for each authority for this pu of £14·5 million, recognising that the bulk of the b has been cleared.

Hon. Members have talked about public expen Scottish Homes, housing choice, homelessness, a tenancies, housing associations and tenants' choice. try to answer as many points as possible during my s

When the hon. Member for Falkirk, East (Mr. E was a Minister in the Labour Government betwee and 1978, gross public sector investment decreased per cent. Since 1979, it has increased by about 14 pe I accept what the hon. Member for Glasgow, Garsc (Mr. Dewar) said about housing support grant reduced, but housing benefit expenditure has incr beyond all measure. Since 1978, it has increased mor 15 times, or by more than 1,500 per cent. parliamentary reply to the hon. Member for Clyd (Mr. Hood) on 18 December, I said that in 19 housing benefit in Scotland was £42 million. For 19 the figure was £664 million, which on any view immense sum.

Mr. Dewar: Does the Minister agree that the Government have forced up rents by a remarkably large amount?

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: The hon. Gentleman's point is correct. We want more money to be spent on management and maintenance, and the Grieve report on Glasgow, which was commissioned by Glasgow district council, stressed the necessary relationship between appropriate rent levels and housing management and maintenance. That report contained many relevant points.

The hon. Members for Dunfermline, West (Mr. Douglas) and for Dumbarton questioned whether Scottish Homes is an appropriate body to deal with Scotland's pressing housing problems. The hon. Member for Garscadden queried the powers that it will be given. Appointments to the board will be made entirely on merit. We are examining ways in which the views of tenants may be communicated to the board. That may involve a tenants' representative, but there is no need to prescribe it in statute. If we did that, and it was too narrowly defined, it might exclude some of the best candidates.

The Housing Corporation has no powers to carry out environmental improvements. It wants such powers, and the Bill provides them. Unifying the expertise of the Housing Corporation and the SSHA will extend the benefits of that expertise to more people than SSHA tenants. The idea that SSHA tenants' choice will be restricted is also a fiction. That was touched on by my hon. Friend the Member for Eastwood (Mr. Stewart). Scottish Special Housing Association tenants will have the same houses managed by the same staff, and the same rights.

Mr. Lambie: My district council is to conduct a referendum among SSHA tenants to establish their desire for a new landlord. If tenants in Irvine in my constituency decide that they want to opt for the district council as their landlord, will the Government accept that, or will they renege on their promises to SSHA tenants?

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: Tenants' wishes will, of course, be respected. The hon. Gentleman should remember that the Tenants' Rights, Etc. (Scotland) Act 1980, which the Labour party opposed, established the very rights which the tenants wish to be preserved and which will most certainly be preserved.

Mr. Lambie: Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: Let me finish my point. In the Tenants' Rights Etc. (Scotland) Act, introduced by my right hon. Friend the then Secretary of State, we brought in security of tenure—a right that I do not believe any political party will take away, even though the Labour party opposed the Bill at the time.

The White Paper confirmed earlier assurances that rents——

Mr. Lambie: The hon. Gentleman made an important statement. He said that tenants' wishes will be respected. If SSHA tenants in my constituency decide that they wish Cunninghame district council to be their landlord, will their wishes be respected?

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: I must make it clear to the hon. Gentleman that the right that we are giving tenants is an individual right that cannot be taken away. For example, if a referendum had been conducted in a certain town at the time of the Tenants' Rights, Etc. (Scotland) Bill, to ascertain whether people thought that tenants should have the right to purchase t majority might have said no, but 106,00 purchased their homes. The rights given in be honoured and tenants' wishes respected is passed, if a tenant wishes to transfer, hi should be respected.

Mr. Lambie: To the district council?

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: The h asks whether tenants should be able to tra public sector body to another. There is n access to the public sector; the problem is round. We are principally discussing housi The new element, in the form of Scottish H that more choice is offered to tenants.

The third reason for supporting the crea Homes is that a one-door approach for the actively involved, including local authoriti sector agencies, tenants and the private sec to avoid potential confusion about where can cause difficulties for those tryi partnerships. For that reason, the plans f Housing Development Agency will largely successes of the Scottish Development amendment describes Scottish Homes as able quango" but the body is being establi the same basis as the SDA, which the supported. The Scottish Development Ag throughout Britain because nowhere else in powers enjoyed by the SDA brought toge body.

My hon. Friend the Member for Taysi Walker) and my right hon. Friend th Kincardine and Deeside (Mr. Buchanan- clear that they support the Bill and said tha integrated approach. That was one of the GEAR project: we need co-ordination amo agencies. Scottish Homes will be a strongly with the capacity to ensure precisely such c being a funder and provider of houses, promoter and, above all, a partner. Scott continue with the process, but on a greate considerably more speed than before. L will be assisted in their role of assessing hou strategy planning.

The extremely important subject of ho raised by the hon. Members for Berwickshire, for Glasgow, Pollok (Mr. for Angus, East. The problem has many c into perspective, I should point out that th than 130,000 more houses than household more than half of them in the private sect must avoid mismatches, while bringing possible of those homes back into circul answer for Scotland as a whole must be reasons which make people afraid to let h empty for a while but which they will need to reform the private sector will achieve diminishing the rights of existing tenants.

The Government are committed to effective legislative framework to help th are doing a number of things to achieve have increased resources for capital inves authorities, particularly for special needs. S and guidance has been issued to local autho

standards and priority allocation policies. Thirdly, we have funded a number of initiatives such as the Shelter rural housing project to find homes for the homeless. Fourthly, steps have been taken to increase the availability of accommodation for rent through the housing association movement. Fifthly, our proposals to reform the private rented sector will increase the willingness of landlords to make property available for rent.

The hon. Member for Pollok suggested that the Government's proposals were a charter for rogue landlords and Rachmanism, but that is untrue, for a number of reasons. First, the proposals strengthen protection for all tenants against harassment and illegal eviction. Secondly, tenants will have security of tenure very similar to that under existing legislation, and safeguards are built in to prevent the charging of excessive rents and avoid Rachmanism. Rents will be freely negotiable between landlord and tenant, but tenants need not accept excessive rents.

There will be safeguards. First, a tenant with an assured tenancy will be able to obtain a determination of rent from the rent assessment committee if at the end of his initial tenancy agreement the landlord proposes a new rent which the tenant does not accept. If the landlord wishes to increase the rent, he must follow the set procedures which give the tenant the right of appeal to the rent assessment committee for arbitration. Secondly, a tenant with a short assured tenancy will be able to apply to the rent assessment committee during the tenancy for determination of a reasonable market rent if he thinks that the rent is excessive.

Thirdly, all rents for assured or short assured tenancies for which housing benefit is payable will have to be referred to the rent officer, who will assess the proper market rent for the premises and the appropriateness of the accommodation. If he finds the rent to be excessive or the tenants to be over-accommodated, housing benefit subsidy will be limited. That will help to ensure that excessive rents are not charged. Fourthly, the strengthened position of tenants against harassment and illegal eviction and the new right to compensation for illegal eviction will prevent landlords from charging excessive rents.

Under the new system, all tenants will have security of tenure, except that those on short assured tenancies will have security of tenancy only for the specified period of the lease. Arbitrary repossession will certainly not be allowed. The landlord will need to show that he is acting within the law.

Mr. Wilson: The Minister has twice referred to safeguards against harassment. Will he comment on the conclusion by the citizens advice bureaux that the incentives to harass will be so much greater than at present that they will outweigh any possible defences written into the Bill?

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: That is precisely why we are bringing in stronger measures against harassment. We can discuss this in Committee, but we believe that the measures are strong enough to achieve the purposes that the hon. Gentleman wishes.

A tenant with an assured tenancy has security of tenure unless the landlord can gain possession of the house on one of the limited grounds specified. That gives the tenant confidence that he or she can plan to reside in the house for as long as he or she wishes.

The hon. Member for Garscadden mention landlord can apply for repossession if the tenan than three months in arrears and that there is no for the courts. That is factually correct, but t must be more than three months in arrears both a of the service of the notice and at the date of hearing. That almost certainly means that the large and long-standing arrears.

The hon. Member for Angus, East asked w tenant would have the right to know the landlor Automatically, if the tenant signs a lease agre must know with whom he has made the agree who has signed it. That applies whether the lan person or a company.

There is no doubt that the proposal relating t and short tenancies will bring back into use a larg of houses for rent. We believe that that can only good.

With regard to housing associations, this record amount of £132·74 million is being given t them. The Government have more than tr resources for the movement since 1978-79. In th years, over £700 million has been made availa movement, and that will certainly be continued. that Scottish Homes will accelerate that prog housing association tenants will be subject t tenancies.

In that connection, the consultation docume proposed new financial regime for housing as makes it clear that public subsidy towards the c of new development will be based on rent level reasonable in proportion to the household inco average prospective tenant. I emphasise that associations will be expected to charge reason affordable rents. It will be for new tenants to a ability to pay the appropriate rent and to take int any assistance available to them from housin bearing in mind that their rents will be determin housing association themselves.

I take issue with the hon. Member for Pol talked about par-value co-ops and said that th council got round the Secretary of State's obstr fact, the Southdeen co-operative and the othe operatives in Glasgow were approved by the Se State. His approval is necessary and is given to th by the authority to the tenants of the houses c after careful consideration has been given to th arrangements. It is important that a success is each co-operative as it comes into existence. HAG regime will certainly be a flexible system considerable emphasis will be placed on disc individual projects between Scottish Homes housing associations concerned.

Opposition Members have failed to pr alternative prescription to our proposals. I sugge heart they know the Bill that we offer is a moderate and beneficial way forward. Indeed, Friend the Member for Dumfries (Sir H. Monro) right to say that Opposition Members were stru find reasons to oppose the Bill. A few years Labour party opposed the Tenants' Rig (Scotland) Act 1980. Indeed, I recall a whole Committee when we fought for the rights of cou tenants to be established on the statute book. T a logical development of the proposals in that A

[Lord James Douglas-Hamilton]

policies have been highly successful and more than 106,000 tenants have purchased their homes. Choice, diversity and responsibility will be equally successful now.

I am proud that a Conservative Minister for Housing, Walter Elliot, created the Scottish Special Housing Association, which has greatly improved Scotland's housing stock. I believe that we are continuing the work that he started many years ago as a Glasgow Member. With the combined expertise of the SSHA and the Housing Corporation we can continue that improvement but at a much greater speed than ever before. The Bill will improve the quality of housing in Scotland and we have an inescapable duty.

Question put, That the amendment be made:—

The House divided: Ayes 210, Noes 313.

Division No. 126] **[10 pm**

AYES

Adams, Allen *(Paisley N)*
Allen, Graham
Anderson, Donald
Archer, Rt Hon Peter
Armstrong, Ms Hilary
Ashley, Rt Hon Jack
Ashton, Joe
Banks, Tony *(Newham NW)*
Barnes, Harry *(Derbyshire NE)*
Barron, Kevin
Battle, John
Beith, A. J.
Bell, Stuart
Benn, Rt Hon Tony
Bennett, A. F. *(D'nt'n & R'dish)*
Bermingham, Gerald
Bidwell, Sydney
Blair, Tony
Blunkett, David
Boateng, Paul
Boyes, Roland
Bradley, Keith
Bray, Dr Jeremy
Brown, Gordon *(D'mline E)*
Bruce, Malcolm *(Gordon)*
Buchan, Norman
Buckley, George
Caborn, Richard
Callaghan, Jim
Campbell, Menzies *(Fife NE)*
Campbell-Savours, D. N.
Canavan, Dennis
Carlile, Alex *(Mont'g)*
Clarke, Tom *(Monklands W)*
Clay, Bob
Clelland, David
Clwyd, Mrs Ann
Cohen, Harry
Coleman, Donald
Cook, Robin *(Livingston)*
Corbett, Robin
Corbyn, Jeremy
Cousins, Jim
Cox, Tom
Crowther, Stan
Cryer, Bob
Cummings, J.
Cunliffe, Lawrence
Cunningham, Dr John
Dalyell, Tam
Darling, Alastair
Davies, Ron *(Caerphilly)*
Dewar, Donald
Dixon, Don
Dobson, Frank
Doran, Frank
Douglas, Dick
Dunnachie, James
Dunwoody, Hon Mrs Gwyneth
Eadie, Alexander
Eastham, Ken
Evans, John *(St Helens N)*
Ewing, Harry *(Falkirk E)*
Fatchett, Derek
Fearn, Ronald
Field, Frank *(Birkenhead)*
Fields, Terry *(L'pool B G'n)*
Fisher, Mark
Flannery, Martin
Flynn, Paul
Foot, Rt Hon Michael
Foster, Derek
Fraser, John
Fyfe, Mrs Maria
Galbraith, Samuel
Galloway, George
Garrett, John *(Norwich South)*
Garrett, Ted *(Wallsend)*
Gilbert, Rt Hon Dr John
Godman, Dr Norman A.
Golding, Mrs Llin
Gordon, Ms Mildred
Grant, Bernie *(Tottenham)*
Griffiths, Nigel *(Edinburgh S)*
Griffiths, Win *(Bridgend)*
Grocott, Bruce
Harman, Ms Harriet
Hattersley, Rt Hon Roy
Healey, Rt Hon Denis
Heffer, Eric S.
Henderson, Douglas
Hinchliffe, David
Hogg, N. *(C'nauld & Kilsyth)*
Holland, Stuart
Home Robertson, John
Hood, James
Howarth, George *(Knowsley N)*
Howell, Rt Hon D. *(S'heath)*
Howells, Geraint
Hoyle, Doug
Hughes, Robert *(Aberdeen N)*
Hughes, Roy *(Newport E)*
Hughes, Sean *(Knowsley S)*
Hughes, Simon *(Southwark)*
Illsley, Eric
Ingram, Adam
Janner, Greville
John, Brynmor
Jones, Barry *(Alyn & Deeside)*
Jones, Martyn *(Clwyd S W)*
Kaufman, Rt Hon Gerald
Kennedy, Charles
Kinnock, Rt Hon Neil
Kirkwood, Archy
Lambie, David
Lamond, James
Leadbitter, Ted
Leighton, Ron
Litherland, Robert
Livingstone, Ken
Livsey, Richard
McAllion, John
McAvoy, Tom
McCartney, Ian
Macdonald, Calum
McFall, John
McKay, Allen *(Penistone)*
McKelvey, William
McLeish, Henry
McNamara, Kevin
McTaggart, Bob
McWilliam, John
Madden, Max
Mahon, Mrs Alice
Marek, Dr John
Marshall, David *(Shettleston)*
Martin, Michael *(Springburn)*
Martlew, Eric
Maxton, John
Meacher, Michael
Meale, Alan
Michael, Alun
Michie, Bill *(Sheffield Heeley)*
Michie, Mrs Ray *(Arg'l & Bute)*
Millan, Rt Hon Bruce
Mitchell, Austin *(G't Grimsby)*
Moonie, Dr Lewis
Morgan, Rhodri
Morley, Elliott
Morris, Rt Hon J *(Aberavon)*
Mowlam, Marjorie
Mullin, Chris
Murphy, Paul
Nellist, Dave
O'Brien, William
O'Neill, Martin
Orme, Rt Hon Stanley
Patchett, Terry
Pendry, Tom
Pike, Peter
Powell, Ray *(Ogmore)*
Prescott, John
Primarolo, Ms Dawn
Quin, M
Radice
Randal
Redmo
Rees, P
Reid, J
Richard
Robert
Robins
Rogers
Rooker
Ross, E
Rowlan
Ruddoc
Salmon
Sedger
Sheerm
Shore,
Short,
Skinner
Smith,
Smith,
Smith,
Snape,
Soley,
Spearin
Steel, D
Steinbe
Stott, R
Strang,
Straw,
Taylor,
Taylor,
Thompr
Turner,
Vaz, Ke
Wall, P
Walley,
Wardel
Warein
Welsh,
Welsh,
William
Wilson,
Winnick
Worthin
Wray, J

Tellers
Mr.
Mr.

NOES

Adley, Robert
Alexander, Richard
Alison, Rt Hon Michael
Allason, Rupert
Amery, Rt Hon Julian
Amess, David
Amos, Alan
Arbuthnot, James
Arnold, Jacques *(Gravesham)*
Arnold, Tom *(Hazel Grove)*
Ashby, David
Atkins, Robert
Atkinson, David
Baker, Rt Hon K. *(Mole Valley)*
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Baldry, Tony
Banks, Robert *(Harrogate)*
Beaumont-Dark, Anthony
Bellingham, Henry
Bendall, Vivian
Bennett, Nicholas *(Pembroke)*
Benyon, W.
Bevan, David Gilroy
Biffen, Rt Hon John
Bigge-Davison, Sir John
Blaker, Rt Hon Sir Peter
Body, Sir Richard
Boswel
Bottom
Bottom
Bowde
Bowde
Bowis,
Boyson
Braine,
Brando
Brazier
Brittan,
Brooke
Brown,
Browne
Bruce,
Buchan
Buck, S
Budger
Burns,
Burt, A
Butche
Butler,
Butterfi
Carlisle
Carlisle
Carring
Carttiss

Joyce
les
tuart
Martin
lon Merlyn
n, Ms Jo
, George
Geoffrey
lan
off
e *(Dundee W)*
Ted
Ms Joan
Alex
e, Brian
, Barry
Hon Peter
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drew *(Oxford E)*
Isl'ton & F'bury)*
Hon J. *(Monk'ds E)*
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lon David
Gerald
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s Ann *(Dewsbury)*
atthew *(Truro)*
, Jack *(Wansbeck)*
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s Joan
Gareth *(Gower)*
Robert N.
drew *(Angus E)*
chael *(Doncaster N)*
Rt Hon A. J.
lan
avid
on, Anthony
es

the Ayes:
nk Haynes and
nk Cook.

im
Peter
Mrs Virginia
(Brighton K'pto'n)
Gerald *(Dulwich)*
on
t Hon Dr Sir Rhodes
Hon Sir Bernard
Bravo, Martin
ulian
Hon Leon
t Hon Peter
chael *(Brigg & Cl'ts)*
ohn *(Winchester)*
(Dorset South)
-Smith, Rt Hon Alick
Antony
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ohn
ris
John
ohn, *(Luton N)*
Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
, Matthew
Michael

Cash, William
Chalker, Rt Hon Mrs Lynda
Channon, Rt Hon Paul
Chapman, Sydney
Chope, Christopher
Churchill, Mr
Clark, Hon Alan *(Plym'th S'n)*
Clark, Dr Michael *(Rochford)*
Clark, Sir W. *(Croydon S)*
Clarke, Rt Hon K. *(Rushcliffe)*
Conway, Derek
Coombs, Anthony *(Wyre F'rest)*
Coombs, Simon *(Swindon)*
Cope, John
Cormack, Patrick
Couchman, James
Cran, James
Critchley, Julian
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Curry, David
Davies, Q. *(Staml'd & Spald'g)*
Davis, David *(Boothferry)*
Day, Stephen
Devlin, Tim
Dickens, Geoffrey
Dicks, Terry
Dorrell, Stephen
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James
Dover, Den
Dunn, Bob
Durant, Tony
Dykes, Hugh
Eggar, Tim
Evans, David *(Welwyn Hatf'd)*
Evennett, David
Fallon, Michael
Favell, Tony
Fenner, Dame Peggy
Field, Barry *(Isle of Wight)*
Fookes, Miss Janet
Forman, Nigel
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Forth, Eric
Fowler, Rt Hon Norman
Fox, Sir Marcus
Franks, Cecil
Freeman, Roger
French, Douglas
Fry, Peter
Gale, Roger
Gardiner, George
Gill, Christopher
Gilmour, Rt Hon Sir Ian
Glyn, Dr Alan
Goodhart, Sir Philip
Goodlad, Alastair
Goodson-Wickes, Dr Charles
Gorman, Mrs Teresa
Gow, Ian
Gower, Sir Raymond
Grant, Sir Anthony *(CambsSW)*
Greenway, Harry *(Ealing N)*
Greenway, John *(Rydale)*
Gregory, Conal
Griffiths, Peter *(Portsmouth N)*
Grist, Ian
Ground, Patrick
Grylls, Michael
Hamilton, Hon A. *(Epsom)*
Hampson, Dr Keith
Hanley, Jeremy
Hannam, John
Hargreaves, A. *(B'ham H'll Gr')*
Hargreaves, Ken *(Hyndburn)*
Harris, David
Hawkins, Christopher
Hayes, Jerry
Hayhoe, Rt Hon Sir Barney
Heathcoat-Amory, David
Heddle, John
Heseltine, Rt Hon Michael
Hicks, Mrs Maureen *(Wolv' NE)*
Higgins, Rt Hon Terence L.
Hogg, Hon Douglas *(Gr'th'm)*
Holt, Richard
Hordern, Sir Peter
Howard, Michael
Howarth, Alan *(Strat'd-on-A)*
Howell, Rt Hon David *(G'dford)*
Hughes, Robert G. *(Harrow W)*
Hunt, David *(Wirral W)*
Hunt, John *(Ravensbourne)*
Hurd, Rt Hon Douglas
Irvine, Michael
Irving, Charles
Jack, Michael
Jackson, Robert
Janman, Timothy
Jones, Gwilym *(Cardiff N)*
Jones, Robert B *(Herts W)*
Jopling, Rt Hon Michael
Kellett-Bowman, Mrs Elaine
Key, Robert
King, Roger *(B'ham N'thfield)*
Kirkhope, Timothy
Knapman, Roger
Knight, Greg *(Derby North)*
Knowles, Michael
Knox, David
Lamont, Rt Hon Norman
Lang, Ian
Latham, Michael
Lawrence, Ivan
Lawson, Rt Hon Nigel
Lee, John *(Pendle)*
Leigh, Edward *(Gainsbor'gh)*
Lennox-Boyd, Hon Mark
Lester, Jim *(Broxtowe)*
Lightbown, David
Lilley, Peter
Lloyd, Sir Ian *(Havant)*
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
Luce, Rt Hon Richard
McCrindle, Robert
Macfarlane, Sir Neil
MacGregor, John
MacKay, Andrew *(E Berkshire)*
Maclean, David
McLoughlin, Patrick
McNair-Wilson, M. *(Newbury)*
McNair-Wilson, P. *(New Forest)*
Madel, David
Major, Rt Hon John
Malins, Humfrey
Maples, John
Mariand, Paul
Marlow, Tony
Marshall, John *(Hendon S)*
Marshall, Michael *(Arundel)*
Martin, David *(Portsmouth S)*
Mates, Michael
Maxwell-Hyslop, Robin
Mayhew, Rt Hon Sir Patrick
Mellor, David
Meyer, Sir Anthony
Miller, Hal
Mills, Iain
Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)*
Mitchell, David *(Hants NW)*
Moate, Roger
Monro, Sir Hector
Montgomery, Sir Fergus
Moore, Rt Hon John
Morrison, Sir Charles *(Devizes)*
Morrison, Hon P *(Chester)*
Moss, Malcolm
Moynihan, Hon C.
Mudd, David
Neale, Gerrard
Needham, Richard
Nelson, Anthony
Neubert, Michael
Newton, Rt Hon Tony
Nicholls, Patrick
Nicholson, David *(Taunton)*
Nicholson, Miss E. *(Devon W)*
Onslow, Rt Hon Cranley
Oppenheim, Phillip
Page, Richard
Paice, James
Patnick, Irvine
Patten, Chris *(Bath)*
Patten, John *(Oxford W)*
Pattie, Rt Hon Sir Geoffrey
Pawsey, James
Peacock, Mrs Elizabeth
Porter, David *(Waveney)*
Portillo, Michael
Powell, William *(Corby)*
Raffan, Keith
Raison, Rt Hon Timothy
Redwood, John
Renton, Tim
Rhodes James, Robert
Rhys Williams, Sir Brandon
Riddick, Graham
Ridley, Rt Hon Nicholas
Rifkind, Rt Hon Malcolm
Roberts, Wyn *(Conwy)*
Roe, Mrs Marion
Rost, Peter
Rowe, Andrew
Rumbold, Mrs Angela
Ryder, Richard
Sackville, Hon Tom
Sainsbury, Hon Tim
Sayeed, Jonathan
Scott, Nicholas
Shaw, David *(Dover)*
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Shepherd, Richard *(Aldridge)*
Shersby, Michael
Sims, Roger
Skeet, Sir Trevor
Smith, Tim *(Beaconsfield)*
Soames, Hon Nicholas
Speed, Keith
Spicer, Sir Jim *(Dorset W)*
Spicer, Michael *(S Worcs)*
Squire, Robin
Stanbrook, Ivor
Stanley, Rt H
Steen, Antho
Stern, Micha
Stewart, Alla
Stewart, And
Stradling Tho
Sumberg, Da
Summerson,
Tapsell, Sir P
Taylor, Ian *(E*
Taylor, John
Taylor, Teddy
Tebbit, Rt Ho
Thompson, D
Thompson, P
Thorne, Neil
Thornton, Ma
Thurnham, P
Townend, Joh
Townsend, C
Tracey, Richa
Tredinnick, D
Trippier, Dav
Twinn, Dr Ian
Vaughan, Sir
Waddington,
Wakeham, Rt
Waldegrave,
Walker, Bill *(*
Walker, Rt He
Waller, Gary
Walters, Den
Ward, John
Wardle, C. *(B*
Warren, Kenn
Watts, John
Wheeler, Joh
Whitney, Ray
Widdecombe,
Wiggin, Jerry
Wilshire, Dav
Winterton, Mr
Winterton, Ni
Wolfson, Mar
Wood, Timoth
Woodcock, M
Yeo, Tim
Young, Sir G

Tellers for the
Mr. Robert
Mr. Tristan

Question accordingly negatived.

Main Question put forthwith, pursu
Order No. 60 (Amendment on Second or T

The House divided: Ayes 315, Noes 2

Division No. 127]

AYES

Adley, Robert
Alexander, Richard
Alison, Rt Hon Michael
Allason, Rupert
Amery, Rt Hon Julian
Amess, David
Amos, Alan
Arbuthnot, James
Arnold, Jacques *(Gravesham)*
Arnold, Tom *(Hazel Grove)*
Ashby, David
Atkins, Robert
Atkinson, David
Baker, Rt Hon K. *(Mole Valley)*
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Baldry, Tony
Banks, Robert *(Harrogate)*
Beaumont-Dark, Anthony
Bellingham, Henry
Bendall, Vivi
Bennett, Nich
Benyon, W.
Bevan, Davi
Biffen, Rt Ho
Biggs-Davis
Blaker, Rt Ho
Body, Sir Ric
Boswell, Tim
Bottomley, P
Bottomley, M
Bowden, A *(*
Bowden, Ger
Bowis, John
Boyson, Rt H
Braine, Rt Ho
Brandon-Bra
Brazier, Julia
Brittan, Rt Ho

Brooke, Rt Hon Peter
Brown, Michael *(Brigg & Cl't's)*
Browne, John *(Winchester)*
Bruce, Ian *(Dorset South)*
Buchanan-Smith, Rt Hon Alick
Buck, Sir Antony
Budgen, Nicholas
Burns, Simon
Burt, Alistair
Butcher, John
Butler, Chris
Butterfill, John
Carlisle, John, *(Luton N)*
Carlisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Carrington, Matthew
Carttiss, Michael
Cash, William
Chalker, Rt Hon Mrs Lynda
Channon, Rt Hon Paul
Chapman, Sydney
Chope, Christopher
Churchill, Mr
Clark, Hon Alan *(Plym'th S'n)*
Clark, Dr Michael *(Rochford)*
Clark, Sir W. *(Croydon S)*
Clarke, Rt Hon K. *(Rushcliffe)*
Conway, Derek
Coombs, Anthony *(Wyre F'rest)*
Coombs, Simon *(Swindon)*
Cope, John
Cormack, Patrick
Couchman, James
Cran, James
Critchley, Julian
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Curry, David
Davies, Q. *(Stamf'd & Spald'g)*
Davis, David *(Boothferry)*
Day, Stephen
Devlin, Tim
Dickens, Geoffrey
Dicks, Terry
Dorrell, Stephen
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James
Dover, Den
Dunn, Bob
Durant, Tony
Dykes, Hugh
Eggar, Tim
Evans, David *(Welwyn Hatf'd)*
Evennett, David
Fallon, Michael
Favell, Tony
Fenner, Dame Peggy
Field, Barry *(Isle of Wight)*
Fookes, Miss Janet
Forman, Nigel
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Forth, Eric
Fowler, Rt Hon Norman
Fox, Sir Marcus
Franks, Cecil
Freeman, Roger
French, Douglas
Fry, Peter
Gale, Roger
Gardiner, George
Gill, Christopher
Gilmour, Rt Hon Sir Ian
Glyn, Dr Alan
Goodhart, Sir Philip
Goodlad, Alastair
Goodson-Wickes, Dr Charles
Gorman, Mrs Teresa
Gow, Ian
Gower, Sir Raymond
Grant, Sir Anthony *(CambsSW)*
Greenway, Harry *(Ealing N)*
Greenway, John *(Rydale)*
Gregory, Conal
Griffiths, Peter *(Portsmouth N)*
Grist, Ian
Ground, Patrick
Grylls, Michael
Hamilton, Hon A. *(Epsom)*
Hampson, Dr Keith
Hanley, Jeremy
Hannam, John
Hargreaves, A. *(B'ham H'll Gr')*
Hargreaves, Ken *(Hyndburn)*
Harris, David
Hawkins, Christopher
Hayes, Jerry
Hayhoe, Rt Hon Sir Barney
Heathcoat-Amory, David
Heddle, John
Heseltine, Rt Hon Michael
Hicks, Mrs Maureen *(Wolv' NE)*
Higgins, Rt Hon Terence L.
Hogg, Hon Douglas *(Gr'th'm)*
Holt, Richard
Hordern, Sir Peter
Howard, Michael
Howarth, Alan *(Strat'd-on-A)*
Howell, Rt Hon David *(G'dford)*
Hughes, Robert G. *(Harrow W)*
Hunt, David *(Wirral W)*
Hunt, John *(Ravensbourne)*
Hurd, Rt Hon Douglas
Irvine, Michael
Irving, Charles
Jack, Michael
Jackson, Robert
Janman, Timothy
Jones, Gwilym *(Cardiff N)*
Jones, Robert B *(Herts W)*
Jopling, Rt Hon Michael
Kellett-Bowman, Mrs Elaine
Key, Robert
King, Roger *(B'ham N'thfield)*
Kirkhope, Timothy
Knapman, Roger
Knight, Greg *(Derby North)*
Knowles, Michael
Knox, David
Lamont, Rt Hon Norman
Lang, Ian
Latham, Michael
Lawrence, Ivan
Lawson, Rt Hon Nigel
Lee, John *(Pendle)*
Leigh, Edward *(Gainsbor'gh)*
Lennox-Boyd, Hon Mark
Lester, Jim *(Broxtowe)*
Lightbown, David
Lilley, Peter
Lloyd, Sir Ian *(Havant)*
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
Luce, Rt Hon Richard
McCrindle, Robert
Macfarlane, Sir Neil
MacGregor, John
MacKay, Andrew *(E Berkshire)*
Maclean, David
McLoughlin, Patrick
McNair-Wilson, M. *(Newbury)*
McNair-Wilson, P. *(New Forest)*
Madel, David
Major, Rt Hon John
Malins, Humfrey
Maples, John
Marland, Paul
Marlow, Tony
Marshall, John *(Hendon S)*
Marshall, Michael *(Arundel)*
Martin, David *(Portsmouth S)*
Mates, Michael
Maxwell-Hyslop, Robin
Mayhew, Rt Hon Sir Patrick
Mellor, David
Meyer, Sir Anthony
Miller, Hal
Mills, Iain
Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)*
Mitchell, David *(Hants NW)*
Moate, Roger
Monro, Sir Hector
Montgomery, Sir Fergus
Moore, Rt Hon John
Morrison, Sir Charles *(Devizes)*
Morrison, Hon P *(Chester)*
Moss, Malcolm
Moynihan, Hon C.
Mudd, David
Neale, Gerrard
Needham, Richard
Nelson, Anthony
Neubert, Michael
Newton, Rt Hon Tony
Nicholls, Patrick
Nicholson, David *(Taunton)*
Nicholson, Miss E. *(Devon W)*
Onslow, Rt Hon Cranley
Oppenheim, Phillip
Page, Richard
Paice, James
Patnick, Irvine
Patten, Chris *(Bath)*
Patten, John *(Oxford W)*
Pattie, Rt Hon Sir Geoffrey
Pawsey, James
Peacock, Mrs Elizabeth
Porter, David *(Waveney)*
Portillo, Michael
Powell, William *(Corby)*
Raffan, Keith
Raison, Rt Hon Timothy
Redwood, John
Renton, Tim
Rhodes James, Robert
Rhys Williams, Sir Brandon
Riddick, Graham
Ridley, Rt Hon Nicholas
Rifkind, Rt Hon Malcolm
Roberts, Wyn *(Conwy)*
Roe, Mrs Marion
Rost, Peter
Rowe, Andrew
Rumbold, Mrs Angela
Ryder, Richard
Sackville, Hon Tom
Sainsbury, Hon Tim
Sayeed, Jonathan
Scott, Nicholas
Shaw, David *(Dover)*
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Shepherd, Richard *(Aldridge)*
Shersby, Michael
Sims, Roger
Skeet, Sir Trevor
Smith, Tim *(Beaconsfield)*
Soames, Hon Nicholas
Speed, Keith
Speller, Tony
Spicer, Sir Jim *(Dorset W)*
Spicer, Michael *(S Worcs)*
Squire, Robin
Stanbrook, Ivor
Stanley, Rt Hon John
Steen, Anthony
Stern, Michael
Stewart, Allan *(Eastwood)*
Stewart, Andrew *(Sherwood)*
Stradling Thomas, Sir John
Sumberg, David
Summerson, Hugo
Tapsell, Sir Peter
Taylor, Ian *(Esher)*
Taylor, John M *(Solihull)*
Taylor, Teddy *(S'end E)*
Tebbit, Rt Hon Norman
Thompson, D. *(Calder Valley)*
Thompson, Patrick *(Norwich N)*
Thorne, Neil
Thornton, Malcolm
Thurnham, Peter
Townend, John *(Bridlington)*
Townsend, Cyril D. *(B'heath)*
Tracey, Richard
Tredinnick, David
Trippier, David
Twinn, Dr Ian
Vaughan, Sir Gerard
Waddington, Rt Hon David
Wakeham, Rt Hon John
Waldegrave, Hon William
Walker, Bill *(T'side North)*
Walker, Rt Hon P. *(W'cester)*
Waller, Gary
Walters, Dennis
Ward, John
Wardle, C. *(Bexhill)*
Warren, Kenneth
Watts, John
Wheeler, John
Whitney, Ray
Widdecombe, Miss Ann
Wiggin, Jerry
Wilshire, David
Winterton, Mrs Ann
Winterton, Nicholas
Wolfson, Mark
Wood, Timothy
Woodcock, Mike
Yeo, Tim
Young, Sir George *(Acton)*

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. Robert Boscawen and
Mr. Tristan Garel-Jones.

NOES

Adams, Allen *(Paisley N)*
Allen, Graham
Anderson, Donald
Archer, Rt Hon Peter
Armstrong, Ms Hilary
Ashley, Rt Hon Jack
Ashton, Joe
Banks, Tony *(Newham NW)*
Barnes, Harry *(Derbyshire NE)*
Barron, Kevin
Battle, John
Beith, A. J.
Bell, Stuart
Benn, Rt Hon Tony
Bennett, A. F. *(D'nt'n & R'dish)*
Bermingham, Gerald
Bidwell, Sydney
Blair, Tony
Blunkett, David
Boateng, Paul
Boyes, Roland
Bradley, Keith
Bray, Dr Jeremy
Brown, Gordon *(D'mline E)*
Bruce, Malcolm *(Gordon)*
Buchan, Norman
Buckley, George
Caborn, Richard
Callaghan, Jim
Campbell, Menzies *(Fife NE)*
Campbell-Savours, D. N.
Canavan, Dennis
Carlile, Alex *(Mont'g)*
Clarke, Tom *(Monklands W)*

Clay, Bob
Clelland, David
Clwyd, Mrs Ann
Cohen, Harry
Coleman, Donald
Cook, Robin *(Livingston)*
Corbett, Robin
Corbyn, Jeremy
Cousins, Jim
Cox, Tom
Crowther, Stan
Cryer, Bob
Cummings, J.
Cunliffe, Lawrence
Cunningham, Dr John
Dalyell, Tam
Darling, Alastair
Davies, Ron *(Caerphilly)*
Dewar, Donald
Dixon, Don
Dobson, Frank
Doran, Frank
Douglas, Dick
Dunnachie, James
Dunwoody, Hon Mrs Gwyneth
Eadie, Alexander
Eastham, Ken
Evans, John *(St Helens N)*
Ewing, Harry *(Falkirk E)*
Fatchett, Derek
Fearn, Ronald
Field, Frank *(Birkenhead)*
Fields, Terry *(L'pool B G'n)*
Fisher, Mark
Flannery, Martin
Flynn, Paul
Foot, Rt Hon Michael
Foster, Derek
Fraser, John
Fyfe, Mrs Maria
Galbraith, Samuel
Galloway, George
Garrett, John *(Norwich South)*
Garrett, Ted *(Wallsend)*
Gilbert, Rt Hon Dr John
Godman, Dr Norman A.
Golding, Mrs Llin
Gordon, Ms Mildred
Grant, Bernie *(Tottenham)*
Griffiths, Nigel *(Edinburgh S)*
Griffiths, Win *(Bridgend)*
Grocott, Bruce
Harman, Ms Harriet
Hattersley, Rt Hon Roy
Healey, Rt Hon Denis
Heffer, Eric S.
Henderson, Douglas
Hinchliffe, David
Hogg, N. *(C'nauld & Kilsyth)*
Holland, Stuart
Home Robertson, John
Hood, James
Howarth, George *(Knowsley N)*
Howell, Rt Hon D. *(S'heath)*
Howells, Geraint
Hoyle, Doug
Hughes, Robert *(Aberdeen N)*
Hughes, Roy *(Newport E)*
Hughes, Sean *(Knowsley S)*
Hughes, Simon *(Southwark)*
Illsley, Eric
Ingram, Adam
Janner, Greville
John, Brynmor
Jones, Barry *(Alyn & Deeside)*
Jones, Martyn *(Clwyd S W)*
Kaufman, Rt Hon Gerald
Kennedy, Charles
Kinnock, Rt Hon Neil
Kirkwood, Archy
Lambie, David
Lamond, James
Leadbitter, Ted
Leighton, Ron
Litherland, Robert
Livingstone, Ken
Livsey, Richard
McAllion, John
McAvoy, Tom
McCartney, Ian
Macdonald, Calum
McFall, John
McKay, Allen *(Penistone)*
McKelvey, William
McLeish, Henry
McNamara, Kevin
McTaggart, Bob
McWilliam, John
Madden, Max
Mahon, Mrs Alice
Marek, Dr John
Marshall, David *(Shettleston)*
Martin, Michael *(Springburn)*
Martlew, Eric
Maxton, John
Meacher, Michael
Meale, Alan
Michael, Alun
Michie, Bill *(Sheffield Heeley)*
Michie, Mrs Ray *(Arg'l & Bute)*
Millan, Rt Hon Bruce
Mitchell, Austin *(G't Grimsby)*
Moonie, Dr Lewis
Morgan, Rhodri
Morley, Elliott
Morris, Rt Hon J *(Aberavon)*
Mowlam, Marjorie
Mullin, Chris
Murphy, Paul
Nellist, Dave
O'Brien, William
O'Neill, Martin
Orme, Rt Hon Stanley
Patchett, Terry
Pendry, Tom
Pike, Peter
Powell, Ray *(Ogmore)*
Prescott, John
Primarolo, Ms Dawn
Quin, Ms Joyce
Radice, Giles
Randall, Stuart
Redmond, Martin
Rees, Rt Hon Merlyn
Reid, John
Richardson, Ms Jo
Robertson, George
Robinson, Geoffrey
Rogers, Allan
Rooker, Jeff
Ross, Ernie *(Dundee W)*
Rowlands, Ted
Ruddock, Ms Joan
Salmond, Alex
Sedgemore, Brian
Sheerman, Barry
Shore, Rt Hon Peter
Short, Clare
Skinner, Dennis
Smith, Andrew *(Oxford E)*
Smith, C. *(Isl'ton & F'bury)*
Smith, Rt Hon J. *(Monk'ds E)*
Snape, Peter
Soley, Clive
Spearing, Nigel
Steel, Rt Hon David
Steinberg, Gerald
Stott, Roger
Strang, Gavin
Straw, Jack
Taylor, Mrs Ann *(Dewsbury)*
Taylor, Matthew *(Truro)*
Thompson, Jack *(Wansbeck)*
Turner, Dennis
Vaz, Keith
Wall, Pat
Walley, Ms Joan
Wardell, Gareth *(Gower)*
Wareing, Robert N.
Welsh, Andrew *(Angus E)*
Welsh, Michael *(Doncaster N)*
Williams, Rt Hon A. J.
Wilson, Brian
Winnick, David
Worthington, Anthony
Wray, James

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. Frank Haynes and
Mr. Frank Cook.

Question accordingly agreed to.

Bill read a Second time and committed to a Standing Committee, pursuant to Standing Order No. 61 (Committal of Bills).

HOUSING (SCOTLAND) BILL [MONEY]

Queen's recommendation having been signified—

Resolved,

That, for the purpose of any Act resulting from the Housing (Scotland) Bill, it is expedient to authorise—

(1) subject to the prescribed limit—

(a) the payment out of the National Loans Fund of sums required for making loans to Scottish Homes;

(b) the payment out of the Consolidated Fund of sums required for fulfilling any guarantee given by the Treasury in respect of sums borrowed by Scottish Homes;

and in this paragraph of this Resolution "the prescribed limit" means the limit of £1,500 million under the said Act on the aggregate amount outstanding by way of principal in respect of—

(i) money borrowed by Scottish Homes;

(ii) money borrowed by any wholly owned subsidiaries of Scottish Homes otherwise than from Scottish Homes or from another such wholly owned subsidiary;

(iii) money borrowed by the Scottish Special Housing Association or by the Housing Corporation, the repayment of which is a liability of obligation transferred to Scottish Homes under the Act;

(iv) sums issued by the Treasury in fulfilment of guarantees in respect of sums borrowed by Scottish Homes from a person other than the Secretary of State;

(2) the payment out of money provided by Parliament of—

(a) any expenses of the Secretary of State under the Act; and

(b) any increase attributable to the Act in the sums so payable under any other enactment;

(3) any payment into the Consolidated Fund or the National Loans Fund under the said Act.—*[Mr. Maclean.]*

Poland

Motion made, and Question proposed, That this House do now adjourn.—*[Mr. Dorrell.]*

10.31 pm

Mr. Alex Carlile (Montgomery): I am most grateful for my great good fortune in earning the opportunity to initiate a debate on the United Kingdom's relations with Poland. I am pleased to see a number of other right hon. and hon. Members in their places, including the hon. Member for Ealing, North (Mr. Greenway) and the right hon. Member for Castle Point (Sir B. Braine).

The people of the United Kingdom, not just those of us who have Polish blood in our veins, and successive United Kingdom Governments have a much greater interest in and understanding of Poland than most other countries. This is reflected in the welcome demand, which we have heard recently, of the Prime Minister to meet Mr. Lech Walesa. We are concerned to give more economic support to Poland and to develop further our cultural and trade relations with that country, but at the moment I perceive little meaningful change as yet sufficient to give us the confidence to do so. Perestroika is being attempted, but as yet with little evidence of real glasnost.

Our concern is perhaps best illustrated by reference to some specific cases which, I am afraid, show how devious the Polish authorities can be at times. Nowadays, as the Polish Government claim, they do not imprison people for what are, on the face of them, political offences; but unfortunately the Polish Government still imprison people for their political views and accuse people of false crimes because of those views. It is worth recalling that that is nothing new.

Father Popieluszko was accused of keeping an arsenal of weapons, including dynamite, at his vicarage. It was alleged that all the weaponry was found during an official police search, yet, when vigorous public protest was made against this grotesque fabrication of evidence, the proceedings against the father were dropped. Sadly, of course, he was murdered instead. His murderers, all commissioned officers of the security police, have now been granted an amnesty and they can look forward to an early release — an early release which would not be countenanced for murderers in this country.

Compare that with the fate of Captain Adam Hodysz, whose only crime was to assist Solidarity. He is serving his six years' sentence in full in Barczewo, one of the harshest, if not the harshest, of Polish prisons. The Polish Government must be told how dimly we view the mercy —the scandalous mercy—shown to Father Popieluszko's murderers.

Polish Government policy, of course, maks it difficult for Her Majesty's Government to invervene. They cannot, one understands, intervene in cases involving what would have been criminal charges in the West—which brings me to the cases of Kornel Morawiecki and Jan Andrzej Gorny. Those are clear enough cases. Both men face trumped-up charges of a non-political nature; but let us look at the reality. Both are outstanding leaders of the underground in Poland. The Communist authorities hunted them desperately from the imposition of martial law on 13 December 1981 for nearly six years. But why? They do no more than lead peaceful protest against the Government. They are actually the voice of legitimate, though illegal, opposition.

Mr. Gorny is a member of the national executiv committee of Solidarnosc and the leader of underground Solidarity in Silesia. At the moment, he is supposedl accused of non-payment of maintenance to his wife, yet strangely, on the basis of that civil charge he has been hel incommunicado and denied access to his lawyers since 1 November 1987. This does not sound to me like th treatment normally afforded to a person on a mino criminal charge, let alone a minor civil charge. In reality this is just the sort of case in which I would hope th Minister would be making strong and specific representa tions to the Polish Government, and not allowing th cloud of an apparently normal judicial charge to deceiv him.

As regards Mr. Morawiecki, the situation is simila Since 1982 he has been the leader of the Solidarity Defian organisation, which has developed a network of branche throughout Poland and which resolutely opposes th regime's claim of sole rights to govern Poland on the basi of its diktat. There is no record of a single terrorist ac committed by his organisation nor of a single attempt o life or damage to any property by it, yet warrants for M Morawiecki's arrest were out for six years. He is no charged with terrorism, on the basis of the allege interception of listening devices, but that charg materialised only after his arrest on 9 November 1987. is another case, in truth, of a political prisoner bein arrested for his beliefs.

Now we come to what I believe to be the worst of thes cases, the case of a woman who was arrested with M Morawiecki, Hanna Lukowska-Karniej, mother of thre children. I would like to quote at some length from a open letter sent by her daughter, Zofia, to Professo Bartoszewski, a respected Polish humanitarian, honoure for his outstanding efforts to save Jewish lives during th Nazi occupation of Poland. In the letter, Zofia says:

"My mother will not reply to your letter for the time bein as she is at present in jail accused of having misappropriate the identity document of another person . . . A month aft the publication of the warrant for my mother's arrest, in Jun 1984, she was arrested and charged with participation in th leadership of the Solidarity Defiant organisation. Luckily, i July of that year there was an amnesty and my mother wa released. The amnesty however did not terminate the trail c chicanery, invigilation and close surveillance of my mothe In July 1985, after a brutal house search, involving th breaking down of our front door, she was forced to shy awa from her own home. Simply speaking, she was driven awa from it by the harassment of the Security Service. The burde of harassment then fell upon me and my siblings. I was the 17 years old, my brother Edward 15 and the youngest siste 8.

From July 1985 to date we suffered about 10 hou searches, more often than not without any adult present. W have been watched, bugged and followed. On many occasion I have been taken from school for interrogations or hou searches. Recently, I was taken for a night-time interrogatio and only after the intervention of the Wroclaw Bishop's offi I was released at midnight. There were periods where I wa followed non-stop, step by step. A particular example of th barbarity was the setting up of this form of surveillance on m little sister aged eight, resulting in her nervous break-dow She was afraid to leave the house and cried continuously. was forced to smuggle her out of the house and hide her a friend's. She now stays with her maternal grandmother, wh is 83 years old, almost totally blind and herself in need of ca and attention . . . On 9 November my mother was arreste together with the leader of Solidarity Defiant. Regardless o the triviality of the charge levelled at her, which I mentio above, she was taken away to the Central Investigative Ja in Warsaw (more than 200 miles from her home) where sh remains. I have not been able to obtain a permit to visit h

for the past month . . . My siblings and I find it very hard being without our mother and I ask you to help releasing her . . . Surely"—

says this young girl—

"we have the right to live here as human beings without fear and grief to accompany the consecutive generations of this unhappy land."

That is a letter written not years or even months ago. That letter was written by a 17-year-old girl in Wroclaw on 8 December 1987, days ago.

I believe and hope that the Minister and right hon. and hon. Members will agree that the arrest of those individuals is a scandal. Of course, we must consider it in an historical context. Poland is not a Soviet country by her people's choice. Whatever justification was presented to the Polish people at the time of Yalta and Potsdam, it must now be accepted that the Soviet-dominated Government imposed on the Polish people have not been accepted by the population, and never will be. The imposition of martial law on 13 December 1981 is grim proof positive that Poland is ruled by the Soviets against the people's will. Day by day, we see evidence of rejection, most recently in the referendum, which showed that although the Polish people are prepared for change, as they have demonstrated by their actions, matters will really change only when their consent has been obtained.

Of course, there is a basis for hope. Glasnost, when it percolates through to Warsaw, holds prospects of a liberalisation of Poland which would create the conditions for perestroika by consent. All those developments will be welcomed by everyone concerned — and we are all concerned with those issues. But it is pointed out to us again and again by people who have first-hand knowledge of the workings of the Communist system that, so far, the changes made are no more than superficial and will have no substance until they are backed by the establishment of a much greater measure of free institutions in Poland.

We do not hinder the Soviet Union in projecting its ideas to us. The *Soviet Weekly* is printed and freely distributed in Great Britain. If we disagree with its contents, we challenge them in discussion, not by the imprisonment of its publishers. We have a legitimate right to ask for similar freedom in Poland and to project peacefully our way of life to the people of Eastern Europe; and we have an obligation to support, defend and protect those who are already doing so in Poland and other Soviet satellites.

People such as Morawiecki, Gorny and Karniej do not ask us to declare war on Soviet assumptions. They conduct their campaign in a peaceful but determined manner, and all that they ask for is our peaceful but equally determined support. Through the Minister of State, I ask our Government to continue to consider the reality of accusations levelled against people such as those three, to see through the false excuses that are made and to make it clear that British relations with Poland can be improved only when we see the reality of glasnost.

We should consider carefully how Poland responds. We should be prepared to increase the scope and content of the BBC world service's Polish language broadcasts so that it can reach more people in Poland more easily and for longer. We should even be prepared to consider the use of modern technology to beam uncensored programmes to Poland and to the other countries of Eastern Europe, which are deliberately deprived by their Governments of an unhindered supply of information. Above all, we must be seen determinedly to defend the voice of opposition and the freedom to speak and even to think.

If Mr. Gorbachev in the Soviet Union and General Jaruzelski sincerely want us to believe in their long-term intentions towards us—if they want us to believe that they are peaceful and honourable and that the only objectives that they have in mind are the welfare and prosperity of their people — they should refrain from harassing and arresting the very people who peacefully demand that they be permitted to follow the same objectives. We should not be afraid of saying that to them and of challenging their professed intentions every time that we have well-founded reasons to suspect them.

Some of what I have said has been harsh criticism, but it represents the genuine feelings of many in the United Kingdom who take a close interest in Poland. I do not want to be churlish. I recognise that there are the germs of change. However, the recent event of the Popieluszko amnesty has deeply shaken whatever confidence I had in the intentions of the Polish Government. Like many others, I shall remain prepared to accept every little piece of evidence of progress towards glasnost. I shall cheer any such evidence heartily if it is real evidence, but I have a long way to go to be convinced.

10.47 pm

Sir Bernard Braine (Castle Point): We should be grateful to the hon. and learned Member for Montgomery (Mr. Carlile) for raising this grave matter. Our interest in what happens in Poland stems not simply from the fact that there are large numbers of Polish people in this country who fought valiantly with us during the common struggle against the Nazis but who were unable to return to their homeland because of Stalin's brutal unilateral repudiation of the Yalta agreement. We are interested and we protest because the British people themselves are concerned at the continued denial of basic human rights in a land that suffered enough at the hands of Hitler and Stalin and deserves better treatment.

I had hoped that, following the visit of the British delegation to Warsaw in December 1986, which I had the honour to lead, we would see a great easing of the oppressive measures that the regime has seen fit to impose —after the Solidarity movement began to campaign for freedom. We have been sadly disappointed.

I have only a few minutes in which to speak and I am grateful to the Minister for permitting me to intervene. I wish, therefore, to make three specific points. First, while political prisoners incarcerated by the military dictatorship were released in September 1986, which was an encouraging sign, others have since been imprisoned on trumped-up charges because they continue to campaign for freedom, and for no other reason than that. I say "trumped-up charges" because that is the Communist way. The hon. and learned Gentleman mentioned the case of that brave priest Father Jerzy Popieluszko, who was charged with hoarding military weapons. When that charge was laughed out of court, they murdered him. Such trickery is disgraceful and indicates only too clearly that the regime knows that its authority does not rest upon the assent of the nation.

Secondly, when I was in Warsaw I specifically asked that the passport of Dr. Janus Onyszkiewicz — a dedicated leader of the Solidarity movement who had been a political prisoner and had been ill treated in prison—

[Sir Bernard Braine]

should be returned to him. He has relatives in this country. No charge has ever been brought against that brave and resolute Polish patriot who expresses the longing of all Poles for freedom. I hope that my hon. and learned Friend the Minister will make it plain that persecution of that kind cannot pass without censure and that the British Government will want to know why a passport continues to be witheld.

Harassment continues of groups not only of the Right and centre but of the Left. I wish to protest against the harassment of the Polish Socialist party by sporadic arrests and telephone threats. I, too, would contrast that with the soft treatment of the four brutal murderers of Father Popieluszko whose sentences have been substantially reduced. Their crime shocked not just the Polish nation but the whole of the civilised world. What kind of regime is it that behaves in this way?

Let there be no misunderstanding. The message from this House is that the British people want lasting friendship with the Polish people and want to see them free and prosperous, but the regime in Poland must be made to understand by one means or another that real detente will be possible only when it ceases to persecute its own people.

10.50 pm

The Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office (Mr. David Mellor): I congratulate the hon. and learned Member for Montgomery (Mr. Carlile) not only on stimulating this important debate but on attracting to it both the Father of the House and the Speaker—not a usual combination at this late hour. I am especially glad to see you, Mr. Speaker, in your place, as I know of your interest in Poland following your highly successful visit there just a few months ago.

The hon. and learned Member for Montgomery and my right hon. Friend the Member for Castle Point (Sir B. Braine), from whom I was delighted to hear, emphasised particular points about Poland and the way in which matters are conducted there, especially in relation to human rights. They have raised those points in all sincerity, just as we do, against the background of a long and good relationship between Britain and Poland and a great deal of good will from this country towards the Polish people, who have had to endure so much throughout history and not least in recent years.

Before dealing with the human rights dimension, I should like to consider more broadly Poland's position in the world today. In trade, Poland's large hard currency debts have meant that credits have not been available for major capital projects in recent years. Despite those difficulties, however, Poland is still Britain's largest export market in the Comecon area after the Soviet Union, and after West Germany, Britain is Poland's largest market in the West, so there is a strong trading relationship between us.

There are also substantial cultural and educational ties with Poland which are freer and more flexible than any other country in eastern Europe. The British Council, through its admirable British Institute in Warsaw which you, Mr. Speaker, may well have visited, together with the Polish Cultural Institute in London, plays an essential role in promoting and encouraging new forms of contact. A rich pattern of contact also exists independently of government, which is exactly as it should be, thro direct links between universities, learned socie institutions and individuals. Several hon. Members taken part in meetings of the Anglo-Polish round table I am glad that dates have been fixed for a further mee in Warsaw next May.

Another special factor in our relationship is the that Poland has so often been at the leading edge of cha in eastern Europe. The societies of eastern Europe a varying degrees weighed down by a discredited poli and economic system imposed on them by force by Soviet Union at the end of the last war. None has t readily to Marxism-Leninism—Poland perhaps leas all. Stalin himself said that introducing Communis Poland was like trying to saddle a cow. At last, howe the need for change—long recognised in Poland beginning to be recognised in the Soviet Union.

Against that background, I should like to trace br the recent history of our relations with Poland. One start, of course, with the period of Solidarity, which hon. and learned Member for Montgomery describe clearly in his speech. That period saw an admir attempt to make freedom of association and the rule of compatible with a Communist political monopoly. forcible suppression of Solidarity and the period of ma law came as a bitter shock to people in this country, inevitably caused damage to our relations with the P authorities.

Together with our allies and partners in the Euro Community, we pressed the Government of Ge Jaruzelski, in the months and years after December 1 to release political prisoners, restart a genuine dial with the Polish people, and return to the path consensus-based reform. That was the message which right hon. and learned Friend the Foreign Secretary to General Jaruzelski and his colleagues during his vis Warsaw in 1985.

As my right hon. Friend said, that had some ef Recently, there have been signs of limited but neverth welcome steps forward in both the political and econ sphere. As the House knows, all those imprisoned clearly political charges were released in September 1 Plans for economic reform were revived and ce tentative steps have been taken towards a broadenin the basis of political life in Poland. I am sorry, as is right hon. Friend, if that process has slipped somewhat in the meantime.

Against that background, our political relations the Polish authorities have moved forward. Your visit, Speaker, was highly successful. Last month, the P Foreign Minister, Professor Orzechowski, paid an equ successful visit to London. A welcome by-product of visit was that we were assured by the Polish author just before it took place, that jamming of the BBC P service on short wave, about which we had protested many occasions, would cease from the start of this I am glad to tell the House that the jamming, which a clear breach of the undertakings in the Helsinki F Act, has indeed now ceased. An even more signifi outcome of Professor Orzechowski's visit was that it agreed when he saw my right hon. Friend the P Minister that she would pay a visit to Poland this ye

I turn now to the issue of political prisoners. As House knows, after the releases of September 198 number of people remained in custody in Poland charges where there was arguably a political element.

have continued to raise cases of this sort with the Polish authorities. My right hon. and learned Friend the Foreign Secretary told Professor Orzechowski last month, during a detailed discussion of human rights, that he hoped all forms of harassment of supporters of Solidarity would cease.

In addition, the opportunity was also taken during Professor Orzechowski's visit to draw attention specifically to three cases, those of Mr. Morawiecki, Mrs. Lukowska-Karnie and Mr. Gorny, which have been of particular concern to hon. Members. Indeed, as the hon. and learned Member for Montgomery knows, several colleagues have written letters about these cases. We shall continue to raise issues of this sort, as necessary, with the Polish authorities.

On the two other points raised by my right hon. Friend, we think that it is deplorable that Mr. Onyskiewicz cannot visit his wife's family in the United Kingdom. We have urged the Polish authorities many times to restore his passport. Indeed, that matter was raised during Professor Orzechowski's visit. I very much hope for an early response. My right hon. Friend also raised the issue of the Polish Socialist party. I understand that a meeting in November to revive the old Polish Socialist party was broken up by the police. That is a regrettable example of the lack of freedom of expression in Poland and of the restrictions on genuine pluralism.

In the limited time available to me, I conclude by asking, what are the prospects for our bilateral relations with Poland, and for Poland itself? The external environment for our relations with Poland, as with the other east European countries, has undoubtedly taken a turn for the better with the recent improvement in the overall East-West climate. That presents opportunities that we do not want to miss, but our relations with individual countries still depend crucially on how those countries conduct their domestic affairs as well as their foreign policies.

When my right hon. and learned Friend the Foreign Secretary met General Jaruzelski in 1985 he enjoined him to take meaningful steps towards not only economic, but political, reform. General Jaruzelski and his colleagues have now begun to show that they appreciate the importance of both sides of this equation. It is significant that in the recent referendum the Polish population was asked to express a view, not only on economic, but on political, reform. Naturally, the authorities intend such reforms to take place strictly within a framework which they will choose, but the message which Professor Orzechowski sought to give us last month was, clearly, that the Polish authorities regard the result of the referendum as positive and intend to press ahead with further measures at both the political and economic level.

That is welcome news, but it leaves many questions unanswered, such as the extent of economic reform, the programme involved, and the political dimension. How real will any new processes of consultation with the Polish people be? Will they provide for genuine freedom of association and trade union organisation? If not, how will the public react?

Those questions are vital to Poland's success and stability. They not only affect the prospects for trade and other aspects of relations between Britain and Poland, but could have a bearing on the future course of East-West relations. My right hon. Friend the Prime Minister will be pursuing these with General Jaruzelski during her visit. Meanwhile, the message that we shall continue to give to the Polish authorities is that we value our relationship with Poland and wish it to prosper, but political and economic reform remain vital if the relationship is to be as healthy and productive as we and the people of Poland would wish. We want to see progress on all those matters.

Question put and agreed to.

Adjourned accordingly at one minute past Eleven o'clock.

House of Commons

Tuesday 12 January 1988

The House met at half-past Two o'clock

PRAYERS

[MR. SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

PRIVATE BUSINESS

CORN EXCHANGE BILL *[Lords]*

Read a Second time, and committed.

CONTINGENCIES FUND 1986-87

Ordered,

That there be laid before this House Accounts of the Contingencies Fund, 1986-87 showing the receipts and payments in connection with the Fund in the year ended 31st March 1987 and the distribution of the capital of the Fund at the commencement and close of the year; with the Report of the Comptroller and Auditor General thereon.—*[Mr. Norman Lamont.]*

Oral Answers to Questions

SOCIAL SERVICES

Torbay

1. **Mr. Steen:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will arrange to meet the chairman of Torbay health authority to discuss health services in Torbay.

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Health and Social Security (Mrs. Edwina Currie): I am hoping to visit Devon later this year, but details have not yet been finalised.

Mr. Steen: When my hon. Friend goes to Torbay, will she congratulate the chairman of Torbay health authority, which has one of the highest bed occupancies in the country? The average length of in-patient stay is one of the shortest, and the cost is among the lowest in Britain. Will my hon. Friend also explain to the chairman how he is supposed to manage to run the health authority when the increase in funding this year has been 6·8 per cent., whereas the national wage increase has already been agreed at 8·4 per cent.? The authority cannot make ends meet.

Mrs. Currie: I understand that Torbay has one of the highest growth rates in allocation of money in the region. I note my hon. Friend's comments and will bear them in mind. However, I would say that the authority is showing other health authorities how to make ends meet. Results are what matter. I note with interest, for example, that the waiting time for hip joint replacement operations is 22 weeks in Torbay and six weeks in Newton Abbot.

Mr. Marlow: On her way to Torbay, I wonder whether my hon. Friend will——

Mr. Speaker: Order. I think not today.

North West Regional Health Authority

2. **Mr. Litherland:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services when he last met the chairman of the North West regional health authority; what matters were discussed; and if he will make a statement.

The Minister for Health (Mr. Tony Newton): My right hon. Friend last met Sir John Page during a visit to the regional health authority headquarters in Manchester on 30 October 1987. He was told of the progress being made in improving patient services within the region.

Mr. Litherland: Is the Minister aware that, if that visit had taken place just before Christmas, they could have discussed—or indeed witnessed—engineers coming in to cut off the oxygen supply to the incubators for premature babies at St. Mary's hospital; and that, if it had taken place last week, they could have discussed with nurses why they were forced to strike? Do not those conditions show that the National Health Service is in the throes of a terminal disease for which the Government are not offering a remedy?

Mr. Newton: I am even more aware that, had my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State visited Manchester in the week before Christmas, he would have been able to point to the substantial additional funds that I had just made available to the North West regional health authority.

Dame Elaine Kellett-Bowman: Has my right hon. Friend seen the excellent report from Sir John Page, which landed on our desks today, in which he points out the many savings being made in the region—particularly in purchasing policy — the vast increase in building of which my hon. Friend saw an example a few months ago, and the vast increase in patient care? That does not mean that we do not want more in Lancaster, we do. Nevertheless, it is doing very nicely.

Mr. Newton: I have not yet had the pleasure of seeing the report to which my hon. Friend referred, but I remember with pleasure my visit to her area to open some large new hospital facilities there.

Mr. Orme: When the meeting took place, was the crisis in the Salford area health authority discussed? Was there a discussion of the four wards that will have to close? Was it mentioned that the health authority must find £2 million per year into the 1990s, and that the money that has been allocated on a one-yearly basis is entirely unsatisfactory? What is the Minister going to do about the crisis in the inner cities—not least in Salford?

Mr. Newton: Among other things, we are seeking to improve the quality of primary care services in the inner cities, and that is an important part of the mix as a whole. With regard to my right hon. Friend's visit, of course the concerns that were expressed then were taken into account when we made substantial money available this year and an extra £700 million for the hospital and community health services, including those in the north-west, next year.

Preventive Medicine

3. **Mr. Patnick:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what measures he intends to make health promotion and the prevention of ill health a central function of general medical practice.

The Secretary of State for Social Services (Mr. John Moore): Our plans are set out in the recently published White Paper "Promoting Better Health". Major changes are to be made in the system of payment to doctors to encourage them to provide a range of health promotion and preventive activities; for example, the introduction of incentive payments for reaching target levels of population cover for vaccination, immunisation and cancer screening and new payments for arranging and providing regular health promotion sessions for patients. The family doctors' contract with the National Health Service will be amended to make health promotion and the prevention of disease a specific part of their terms of service.

Mr. Patnick: I thank my right hon. Friend for his reply, but I am sure that people in Sheffield would appreciate more detail. Will he give more details?

Mr. Moore: I appreciate my hon. Friend's comment. The first negotiating meeting with the General Medical Services Committee will take place this week on 14 January. We will discuss details with the profession. We hope to provide incentives for doctors to reach targets, as I have said, and we will pay a fee to encourage doctors to provide an initial clinical assessment for patients registering for the first time with an NHS doctor. We will also introduce sessional fees for doctors who run health promotion clinics. In addition, we will seek to negotiate the payment of the basic practice allowances depending on a doctor carrying out health promotion and prevention of ill-health activities.

Rev. Martin Smyth: While I welcome the Minister's statement about screening, will he accept that restricting free eye-testing will hinder detection, as optometrists detect what ophthalmologists diagnose, and that it will cost the Health Service more in the long run to end the free eye test?

Mr. Moore: I do not accept that any of our evidence suggests that in the long run charges deter people from seeking treatment. I hope the hon. Gentleman recognises what we are seeking to achieve in addition to the very substantial increases in moneys going into primary health care. That will enable us to increase resources, especially for inner city and rural areas.

Mr. Michael McNair-Wilson: As regular check-ups are so much a part of private medicine, may I assume from the words "health promotion" that my right hon. Friend is now extending that service to the National Health Service so that the "fit person" medical will become part and parcel of the health of this country?

Mr. Moore: My hon. Friend is right. We are trying to ensure that we are as concerned with the promotion of good health as with simply eradicating sickness. To that extent, my hon. Friend will watch with interest, as I will, our negotiations with the medical profession to see that contracts reflect that.

Mr. Grocott: Is it not a fact that among the many causes of ill health have been the increases in unemployment, increases in homelessness and the abolition of nutritional standards for school meals? Is it not absolute hypocrisy for the Government to say that they are concerned about preventive medicine when they have allowed all those things to grow under their jurisdiction? Is it not the simple truth that the Government are making the country sick?

Mr. Moore: Most rational people who try the health of the nation with a sense of ra balance will understand the political hypocris question. Happily, the reality is that, Governments since the second world war, o over the past 40-plus years seen a patte improvement. We are now trying to supple adding to the promotion of good hea prevention of ill-health.

Mr. Maxwell-Hyslop: Did my right hon. out, before issuing his White Paper on primar as accurate as possible an assessment of the that will fall on family practitioner committe to have to process the immense number of it claims? What financial provision will be ma them to fulfil their function?

Mr. Moore: My hon. Friend has made point. Within the White Paper, which promoting health, we are seeking to responsibilities of the family practitioner co that extent we are committed to givi negotiation, additional resources to those co will allow them to carry out increased dutie

NHS Patients (Private Care)

4. **Mr. Fearn:** To ask the Secretary of St Services what is his policy towards contractin of National Health Service patients to the p sector on a commercial basis.

Mrs. Currie: In 1986, private hospitals p for over 41,000 NHS cases. This demonstr of partnership between the sectors, and we en local arrangements.

Mr. Fearn: Will the Minister confirm that for the sale of hospital land to American con in Britain are going ahead? Will those contr clause about contracting-out services?

Mrs. Currie: I am in some difficulty as I to which particular contracts the hon. Gent but if he tells me I shall give him more in them.

Mr. Page: Is my hon. Friend aware t exception of Belgium, Britain has the lowest from the private health sector as a percen national product of any other country? Wi right hon. Friend the Secretary of State hav our right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the see what can be done to encourage the pri make a greater effort in the health serv releasing funds for our National Health Se

Mrs. Currie: I am sure that my right ho take note of the points that have been made harness all available resources for the provi care. Some hon. Members insist that health entirely publicly funded. That is a dogmatic minded approach to a most important prob

Mr. Robin Cook: Does the Minister November her department released £250,00 midlands on the express condition that it sh on private operations? Is she aware that, o west midlands authority discovered that pri

were charging £400 more for a hysterectomy and £700 more for a hip replacement than was being charged in its own hospitals? In the meantime, Wolverhampton has suspended all hip operations for the financial year. As it is clear from that experience that the NHS gives better value for money, why does the Minister leave its operating theatres empty while filling the pockets of commercial medicine?

Mrs. Currie: I take exception to the hon. Gentleman's synthetic indignation. The west midlands experience shows that it is important, right from the start, properly to negotiate cost-effective terms with the private sector, or indeed with anybody else. Our view is that the only question that matters is whether it helps the patient, as we expect cost effectiveness in all services.

Income-related Benefits

5. **Mr. Gerald Bowden:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what recognition the new system of income-related benefits will give to the needs of families on low incomes.

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Health and Social Security (Mr. Michael Portillo): Lower-paid working families will receive more help through family credit, which we expect to be received by over twice the number presently receiving family income supplement, at an extra cost of around £200 million; and we shall be spending around £100 million extra on families in income support, which replaces supplementary benefit.

Mr. Bowden: I am reassured by my hon. Friend's reply and I applaud the principle that the greatest help should be given to those in greatest need. Can he give actual figures of the families who will be receiving family credit in future, and can he say how those who are in need and are entitled to claim will be informed and encouraged to claim that entitlement?

Mr. Portillo: The total number of families should be about 470,000 compared with 200,000 who are receiving FIS today. We will launch a promotional campaign, on which we are spending £3 million.

Mr. Campbell-Savours: Would the £50 or £60 that a child has saved in a building society out of weekly pocket money be taken into account for the assessment of supplementary benefit for the parents?

Mr. Portillo: The new rules refer to the resources of adults and exclude them from income support at £6,000, as opposed to £3,000 at present.

Mr. Roger King: Does my hon. Friend agree that we will be spending more on low-income families as a result of our social security reviews than has been the case until recently, and more than we would be spending if benefits such as child benefit had been index related?

Mr. Portillo: Yes. Even allowing for the changes in housing benefit, the extra money going to families is of the order of £200 million. That is nearly double the amount that would be required to uprate child benefits.

Mrs. Margaret Ewing: Is the Minister aware that, under proposed changes in legislation, an unemployed head of the household who decides to undertake full-time education to increase his employment opportunities will lose out on benefits, including housing benefit, w be counter-productive to any scheme to encoura to undertake training?

Mr. Portillo: The provision for education is a matter from income support, which is there for t are available for work. The two are different mai systems.

In-patients (Statistics)

6. **Mr. Carttiss:** To ask the Secretary of State Services how many in-patient cases were treate Anglia in 1986 and 1978.

Mr. Newton: There were 195,628 in-pati treated in 1978 and 253,124 cases in 1986. T increase of 29·4 per cent. over the period.

Mr. Carttiss: Will my right hon. Friend con the RHA and the districts, in particular t Yarmouth and Waveney district, on achiev impressive improvement? Will he confirm that success could be recorded for out-patients and treatment?

Mr. Newton: Yes, indeed. The increase in ou was just under one quarter and in day cases no one half. That is a striking achievement and I a to pay tribute to the RHA and my hon. Friend health authority.

Sir Anthony Grant: Is not the result in East An more commendable when one reflects that the f which its funding is based are some five years old Huntingdonshire and, to some extent, Cambridg the fastest growing areas in the country? If th ludicrous state of affairs is the case, are not some are not so fast-growing doing very well indeed?

Mr. Newton: My hon. Friend will be aware increase that I announced just before Christma year for the East Anglian regional health au among the highest in the country and reflects t population. We are always anxious to ensure method for distributing money reflects such fac up-to-date a way as possible.

Thames Regional Health Authorities

7. **Mr. Simon Hughes:** To ask the Secretary of Social Services what is the percentage ch expenditure on hospital and community health s real terms, respectively, using the National Healt pay and prices deflator, in the four Thames regio authorities in total, between 1981-82 and the mo year for which figures are available.

Mr. Moore: Between 1981-82 and 1986- revenue expenditure in the four Thames region 29·4 per cent. Compared with the rise in general this represents a real terms increase of 1·2 National Health Service pay and price infla comparatively high across this period. Compa that measure Thames regions' expenditure dro some 2·8 per cent., although this was more than increased efficiency. Taking this into acco purchasing power of the Thames regions rose in r by 2 per cent., and, most important, the number treated in all specialties rose between 1982 and 19 per cent. in Greater London.

Mr. Hughes: I am grateful for those figures, but if we look at them carefully do they not confirm that the most crucial part of the answer is that, as we have suspected for a long time, over the last five years in the south-east of England and the Thames regions there has been a cut in real terms in expenditure in the Health Service? Will the Secretary of State confirm that the Health Service is in such difficulties in the south-east, putting aside efficiency improvements and the rest, because the double effect of RAWP on inner London and south-east of England health districts means that they have suffered most from cuts? The consequences that we now see, in bed closures and the like, are the result of those figures, which have hit this part of Britain worse than any other.

Mr. Moore: First, let me remind the hon. Gentleman that, as I said, there has been a real terms increase. He will want to look at the figures with care, and I explained them with care. Secondly, he will not want to deny what his right hon. Friend the Member for Plymouth, Devonport (Dr. Owen) did when he was involved in government, which was agreed by all parts of the House, when the RAWP process was introduced in 1977. Like the hon. Gentleman, I represent a London area constituency, so I am conscious of the Thames regions' position on RAWP. The reality for 10 years has been that, despite the increase to which I referred, and despite the happy increase in patient activity, London's population has fallen and its relative overprovision, as seen by the then Labour Government, has produced a pattern of acute bed reductions, which has continued ever since that period on roughly the same basis. But—this is the curcial point for hon. Members who represent London areas—in 1993, at the end of the strategic planning period, London will still have more beds per head of population than the national average.

Miss Widdecombe: Will the Minister consider urging one of those Thames authorities, namely, South East Thames—in the interests of efficiency and of increasing its income, on which expenditure depends—urgently to start realising the income from the numerous empty properties throughout the region for which it has no further use?

Mr. Moore: I bow to my hon. Friend's distinguished past and detailed knowledge of these matters. As she will know, in the new Health and Medicines Bill we are specifically encouraging the generation of income from health authorities' resources. I shall draw the attention of the region and the area to her remarks.

Mr. Leighton: Is it the Government's policy to starve the National Health Service of resources to bring about a crisis so that they can introduce new proposals for other methods of funding and thus undermine the principles of the NHS?

Mr. Moore: Such political partisan nonsense does the House and the country no service at all. The resources that have gone into the National Health Service over the past eight years have been immense. The essence of the question related to the nature of patients served.

It is interesting to note that between 1974 and 1979 in the area in question—the Thames region—the increase in acute patients and in-patients treated was 4 per cent., whereas since 1979 acute patient activity has increased by 15 per cent. That is the measure of real care about which we are concerned.

Mr. McCrindle: I have listened ca
hon. Friend's remarks and, as he will r
this matter with him in the past. How
that if, as is alleged, 1,400 fewer beds
Thames regions this year than were
there is at least the implication of a th
in patient care in constituencies in tho
not mean that we should at least spee
RAWP, which, I remind my right
predecessor promised in October 1986

Mr. Moore: Like me, my hon. F
Thames region health authority area.
know from the facts that I have given
term pattern of acute bed decline since
RAWP in 1977 has proceeded apace si
reduction in patient activity—indeed,
The RAWP review is very near compl
hon. Friend, I look forward to the advic
in it.

Mr. Cohen: The Minister claims th
happy position. If that is so, can he ex
Cross hospital in my constituency is
which means that patients cannot ge
That is a scandal, and the state of re
persist throughout the winter, which
happy state of affairs for that hospital

Mr. Moore: Unlike the hon. Gentl
House in the winter of 1978-79 and I
what happened in London hospitals
Having said that, I again remind the ho
no one denies the constant and gro
Health Service. The question is how
needs and create good patient care.

Mr. Malins: Will my right hon. F
example of Mayday hospital in Croy
Thames region? Whatever Opposition
hospital has had a magnificent record
over the years. It treated about 27,500
and thousands more day patients. In
more and more patients are treated in t
my right hon. Friend knows so well.

Mr. Moore: My hon. Friend is ab
knows Mayday hospital in his constitu
a good constituency Member of Parl
aware of the reality of increased patien
what all of us in the House should be

Day Nurseries

8. **Mr. Allen:** To ask the Secretary
Services what assistance is given by
local authorities for establishing day n
has any plans to increase it.

Mrs. Currie: The answers are non
right hon. Friend has no power to mak
local authorities to provide day nurse
are provided by local authorities in the
priorities and resources and their viev
local children.

Mr. Allen: The Prime Minister has
public relations play of her concern abo
in my shire—Nottinghamshire—the
550 day nursery places for an under-

30,000 children. When will the Government start to put their money where the Prime Minister's mouth is and allow Nottinghamshire county council to give a day-care place to every child who needs it?

Mrs. Currie: I can confirm that the number of day nursery places provided by Nottinghamshire county council in 1986 was 555. In fact, it was Nottinghamshire county council that cut the number of places from 585 in 1984. However, the total number of day nursery places provided in that county council area has risen from 1,013 to 1,057 because the local authority is now relying far more heavily on private nursery places. If we bear in mind that Nottinghamshire county council has spent more on day nurseries in real terms and that their day nurseries are cheaper on average, that means that Nottinghamshire thinks that the private sector provides value for money in child care. I commend that attitude to the House.

Mr. Tom Clarke: Does the Minister recall that although the population of children under five between 1981 and 1985 increased by 141,000, only 500 extra places were made available? In view of the genuine concern about family poverty, which the hon. Lady should not dismiss, and the national debate reflecting people's concern about child welfare, is it not a matter of great urgency that local authorities—not just Nottinghamshire—are forced into making a choice between, for example, providing library facilities or day-care facilities? In view, also, of the great tragedies that have been discussed, especially in recent weeks, does the Minister accept that the Government have a responsibility, including a responsibility to improve vital resources?

Mrs. Currie: We have some old-fashioned views on that on this side of the House. We think that it is the parents' responsibility to care for their children. However, we recognise that day nurseries can help children in certain circumstances. Since the Government have been in power the total net spending by local authorities on all services has increased by 18 per cent. in real terms and has increased nearly twice as fast, by 35 per cent., on personal social services. If local authorities choose to spend that money, not on day nurseries but on peace committees and gay rights committees, that is their business.

Mr. Key: I should like to say how strongly I agree with my hon. Friend about the primary responsibility for young children being that of the parents. Therefore, may I ask my hon. Friend to continue to ensure that that kind of care facility is available only to those whose need is the greatest?

Mrs. Currie: Yes, I have a lot of sympathy with that view. It is worth putting the number of day nursery places into context. There are about 30,000 local authority day nursery places, nearly the same number in private and voluntary day nurseries, and about 250,000 children currently attend nursery classes in local authority schools. There are also child minders and play groups. Therefore, we are talking about a great deal of child care, most of which is provided by the parents themselves.

St. Paul's Eye Hospital

9. **Mr. Loyden:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will make a statement on the future of St. Paul's eye hospital, Liverpool.

Mr. Newton: As part of its strategic
improving the pattern of acute hospita
Liverpool, the Liverpool health authority
plans to transfer to the Royal Liverp
Liverpool Royal infirmary site, ophthalm
present provided by St. Paul's eye hospital.

Mr. Loyden: The population of Me
indeed, of the north-west region will regard
remarks this afternoon as an absolute disgra
patient care. The hospital has a national re
has served the region for many years. T
remarks are indicative of the way in
Government are treating the National He
They give assurances about the service bein
hands, but the reality is that people are dy
and beds are closing and people are waiting
treatment. That is how the Government tre
Service that was built up by the Labour Go

Mr. Newton: The hon. Gentleman's orig
was about St. Paul's eye hospital. That is an
built in 1912, with no scope for further deve
in rather poor condition, and the heal
proposes to re-provide all the beds in
facilities.

Mr. Nicholas Winterton: Representing
constituency within Merseyside RHA, an
mind the answer that my right hon. Frien
original question, may I ask him whether it
Liverpool has more hospital beds per
population than any other district in th
region?

Mr. Newton: That seems possible. In
other regions, one of the difficulties that Me
is that of ensuring a proper distribution o
That is something that we have tried to
through the so-called bridging fund.

Mr. Skinner: If these buildings in Liverpo
Paul's eye hospital, have to be pulled down
have been up for a long time, when will the
on this place?

NHS Recruitment

10. **Mr. Watts:** To ask the Secretary of S
Services if he will propose measures to tackl
problems in the National Health Service;
make a statement.

Mr. Moore: Since 1978, direct care sta
have increased by 76,000. Nevertheless, the
is not immune to the recruitment difficultie
by many large employers, particularly in Lo
south-east, and faces the same declining po
qualified school leavers as they do. No si
exists to this problem, but we have recently
range of initiatives designed to improve rec
retention, on accommodation, grading
training.

Mr. Watts: Is my right hon. Friend aware
new facilities at Wexham Park hospital in my
that are not fully used because of difficulties
sufficient numbers of suitably qualified nur
the high cost of housing in east Berkshire
principal reasons for those recruitment diffic

consider moving away from national rates of pay to allow the payment of premium rates in areas of high housing costs to help overcome some of these recruiting difficulties?

Mr. Moore: I know of my hon. Friend's connection with Wexham Park hospital, and that a modest improvement in recruiting is taking place there. He will be pleased to know that, already, several Whitley council management sides are seeking to negotiate, with our support, pay and grading structures that will enable the NHS to use staff more flexibly and take account of factors such as skill shortages and the pay rates needed to recruit and train staff in local labour markets. I know that my hon. Friend and the staff will welcome that.

Mr. Galbraith: Does the Secretary of State agree that the greatest barrier to recruitment in the National Health Service today is the low morale of its staff, and that that low morale is based on their belief that the Government are not committed to the Health Service? What does the right hon. Gentleman propose to do to improve the morale of staff in the service?

Mr. Moore: Like the hon. Gentleman, who served the National Health Service well for many years, I gather—*[Interruption.]* I fully accept that he did. Like him, I recognise the problem of morale. However, I genuinely ask him and hon. Members on both sides of the House whether the morale of the service, which has existed for 40 years, and into which vast amounts of money have been placed, and continue to be placed, will be improved by the quality of debate that we have been having in the last few minutes. I doubt it.

I shall seek to do what I said I would do earlier—to encourage health authorities to improve recruitment by, for example, increasing male recruitment and by making greater efforts to attract and recruit mature entrants. Many of the things that health authorities are now doing, as well as the large resources that are being put into the NHS, will make people realise the Government's commitment to it.

Mr. Hanley: Does my right hon. Friend intend to tackle the two great problems that exist in the north-west Thames area in particular, as well as in the south-west Thames area, of a declining percentage of those leaving school choosing to go into the nursing profession and the fact that, at the same time, there are declining school rolls?

Mr. Moore: My hon. Friend is absolutely right. The change in demography is one of the fundamental problems that we face. We are considering very carefully the UKCC project 2000 proposals, which is looking at ways of widening the entry gate for nurses as well as encouraging qualified staff to return to nursing. Obviously, at this time, it is important that we do all that we can to encourage that.

Mr. Robin Cook: Will the Secretary of State express a view on whether the new subsistence payments will increase or reduce his recruitment problems? Is he aware, with the blood transfusion service, that that new arrangement will result in a cut of more than £10 a week for staff who are paid less than £100 a week? If that is so, is the right hon. Gentleman really surprised that the result of that arrangement has been to provoke outrage among those penalised? Will he reconsider this arrangement, which is patently unjust and is hitting hardest those who are lowest paid?

Mr. Moore: I am delighted that t
raised that point. The changes i
subsistence, over which there has
action, formed part of an agreement
freely by the staff side. Nevertheless
has today made it clear that it is will
further if the staff side so wish. I
exactly what the hon. Gentleman i
hope that the staff will accept th
management has requested, take
prevent further industrial action in

Mr. Sims: My right hon. Friend
high proportion of qualified and tra
a period of service to marry and
satisfied that the NHS, in the sam
sector, offers re-employment con
ficiently flexible to attract nurses
raised a family?

Mr. Moore: My hon. Friend is c
point—the key issue of trying to
who wish to come back into the NH
know—as hon. Members on both
that 7,100 such nurses did come
1986-87. Clearly, I am not satisfied
incentives and sufficient flexibility w
structure to ensure that a larger nu
trained nurses is attracted back into

Benefits (Disabled Cl

11. **Mr. Wareing:** To ask the S
Social Services what further protec
disabled claimants who will have a
April.

**The Minister for Social Security
Nicholas Scott):** Existing claimant
transitional protection and thus no
next April. We are addressing the pr
number of severely disabled people
dent living, who claim after nex
considering a long-term solution on
of Sir Roy Griffiths on his over
community and the results of th
disability. In the meantime, I am co
find an interim solution with the h
sector.

Mr. Wareing: Does the Minis
prevarication on the part of the G
tremendous anxiety among severely
stand to lose £50 or even more co
anxiety is manifest in a mass petition
getting up to present to Parliament.
the severely disabled to be sacrifi
uncaring Thatcherism?

Mr. Scott: In the first place, no c
We have until next April to produce
is no prevarication. I am determined
will be produced and I believe that it
get it right than to meet some artifi

Mr. Holt: Would my hon. Frien
length of time that elapses between
in a claim and the result of that cla
or two appeals? At the moment th

system works militates against the severely disabled, and it would be in everyone's interest if someone got his finger out.

Mr. Scott: I am as anxious as anyone, and certainly as anxious as my hon. Friend, to make sure that the procedures are dealt with speedily and completed. I believe that it is more important that we should get the answer right than meet artificial deadlines.

Mr. Wigley: Does the Minister accept that this problem has existed for months and that if he is to introduce an interim solution surely he should be in a position to do so by now? Therefore, can the Minister give a categorical assurance that the interim solution will be in place and effective by 1 April?

Mr. Scott: It is certainly my clear intention that that should be so. If, by any chance, it were not in effect by 1 April, I would consider the matter carefully to ensure that any subsequent claims were back-dated to 1 April, but I intend to meet the needs of this small group of people in a flexible way by 1 April.

Mrs. Beckett: Does the Minister not realise that, since the problem was identified in 1985, a whole variety of solutions have been put forward and that every time they have fallen because of the Government's unwillingness to put in further resources? How do they square that with the claim that these so-called reforms will target help on those in greatest need, when the biggest single losers will be the most severely disabled?

Mr. Scott: The hon. Lady should give us credit for the extra resources going in next April to cope with the problems of the disabled as a whole. Over £60 million extra is going in to cope with the needs of the disabled. Give us credit for that. There is a small group of people who, because of the complexities of the existing system, will not be dealt with in the same way from April. I am determined to find a solution to that and I hope that I shall have the hon. Lady's support.

PRIME MINISTER

Engagements

Q1. **Mr. Yeo:** To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 12 January.

The Prime Minister (Mrs. Margaret Thatcher): This morning I had meetings with ministerial colleagues and others. In addition to my duties in the House, I shall be having further meetings later today.

Mr. Yeo: Does my right hon. Friend agree that the continuing strength of British industry not only reflects the success of her Government's economic policies but generates the resources that enable tax to be cut at the same time as spending on public services is being increased?

The Prime Minister: Yes. The Government's policies of sound finance and incentives for enterprise have led to seven years of successive growth and, now, falling unemployment. The prospects for the coming year, with the continuation of the same policies, are good.

Mr. Kinnock: When consultants in every area of medicine report that they are failing to meet urgent patient need, and when parents in so many cases are desperate because of the delays in urgent treatment children, will the Prime Minister tell us wh that the crisis of underfunding in the N Service is now over?

The Prime Minister: As the right hon aware, an extra £100 million was announ Christmas, which brings the extra spendin about £870 million, and there will be spending on the Health Service next ye Service on the whole has had greatly expa Indeed, it has expanded by 30 per cent. inflation during the lifetime of the Gover

Mr. Kinnock: Life or death operat postponed, staff levels are dangerously lo and beds and theatres are being closed. W with this woman—*[Interruption.]*—tha make the response that is necessary f children and patients of this country? Minister not see, or will she not see, that absolutely useless to parents who are distu at having to wait for urgent treatment fo I ask her now whether she will commi necessary to clear the deficit this year to next year. Does she not care that people pain without hope and without help?

The Prime Minister: The Health Servi with extra resources, over 30 per cent. inflation. The medical staff is expanding i number of patients treated is expanding. treatments is expanding. Operations are ta would have been impossible in the past right hon. Gentleman is referring to probl midlands. He will have seen that a special put out this afternoon by the chairman of authority. May I also remind the right h that the resources provided in his constitu greatly increased during the lifetime of th Government.

Sir Bernard Braine: Has my right attention been drawn to the appalling re press that certain doctors have been taki Asian women in order to carry out tests sex of the child, and, if it is a girl, arrangi While this is undoubtedly illegal, does Friend agree that revolting practices of th are close to abortion on demand, should

The Prime Minister: As my right hon. F the Abortion Act does not permit abortions of the sex of the foetus alone. Any eviden my right hon. Friend should go to the Sec for Social Services. It will be examined a because allegations of this kind are and mus seriously indeed.

Q2. **Mrs. Mahon:** To ask the Prime Mi list her official engagements for Tuesday 1

The Prime Minister: I refer the hon. La that I gave some moments ago.

Mrs. Mahon: How does the Prime Minis fact that, according to official statistics country, alone of all European countries increase in infant deaths?

The Prime Minister: That is correct, up to the first year. There has been an enormous increase in the number of babies saved immediately at birth and during the first month after birth. We do not know the reason for that particular figure. It may well be that it is a statistical error. If the hon. Lady will look at the report of the Health Service, she will find a fantastic number of improvements in the Health Service that have taken place over this period.

Q3. **Mr. Baldry:** To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 12 January.

The Prime Minister: I refer my hon. Friend to the reply that I gave some moments ago.

Mr. Baldry: Will my right hon. Friend confirm that all the signs are that in 1987 Britain was top of the growth league among major economies and that a recent poll showed that 97 per cent. of leading industrialists believe that the Government's policies will lead to continuing economic improvement? If we continue to grasp the excalibur of enterprise, can we not continue to be one of the most successful economies in the world, with all the attendant political influence that that gives to the country?

The Prime Minister: I agree with my hon. Friend that our policies have gained the confidence not only of domestic investors but of overseas investors, who are anxious to come to the country. The growth, and the way in which we have tackled our problems, have meant that we have had far more influence abroad since the Government has been in power. It will continue to increase because of the way in which we have tackled our problems at home.

Dr. Thomas: Does the Prime Minister recollect that in March last year she officially opened the Ysbyty Gwynedd, albeit the hospital had already been opened three years previously? Is she now aware that the authority is labouring under an accumulated underfunding of £2 million? What is she telling us, as Members of Parliament for that authority, to tell the people of Gwynedd, who are faced with substantially reduced services under the control of her Welsh Office?

The Prime Minister: I remember the visit very well. The hospital was working extremely well and both patients and medical staff were extremely happy with it. I do not recognise what the hon. Member is saying. Vastly increased resources for the Health Service have been provided for Wales, because under the policies of the Government we have had growth which has enabled us to have both tax cuts and increased resources for the Health Service.

Q4. **Mr. Tim Smith:** To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 12 January.

The Prime Minister: I refer my hon. Friend to the reply that I gave some moments ago.

Mr. Smith: I refer my right hon. Friend again to the Ministerial and Other Salaries Order 1987, which took effect on 1 January. In view of the disgraceful scenes in the House yesterday and the continuing inability of the Opposition Chief Whip to——

Mr. Speaker: Order. That is not the responsibility of the Prime Minister.

Mr. Smith: In view of the——

Hon. Members: Name him.

Mr. Speaker: Order. The hon. Member cannot ask a question about the actions of the Opposition Chief Whip.

Mr. Smith: May I ask my right hon. Friend whether she believes, in the light of what occurred yesterday afternoon, that the salaries payable under the order can possibly be justified?

The Prime Minister: The salaries under the order have passed through the House and no one has any power, short of there being another motion, to change them. I agree with the spirit behind my hon. Friend's question. As this is the mother of Parliaments, we in this House have a very heavy responsibility for the way in which we conduct our proceedings, and a heavy responsibility always to support Mr. Speaker in the excellent way that he carries out his task.

5. **Mr. Livingstone:** To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 12 January.

The Prime Minister: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the reply that I gave some moments ago.

Mr. Livingstone: Will the Prime Minister take time in what remains of today to consider whether her Ministers may have inadvertently misled Parliament in 1982 when they reported to the House that the inquiry by Sir George Terry in relation to the Kincora boys' home would be fair and impartial? In order to do so, will she ask to see the confidential Sussex police files concerning investigated allegations linking Anthony Blunt with several promiment figures in Northern Ireland, who escaped prosecution for their crimes because, had a prosecution been brought, it would have revealed the immunity granted to Anthony Blunt? Were her Ministers aware when they appointed Sir George Terry, who was chief constable of Sussex, that his officers had been involved in this cover-up?

The Prime Minister: Prosecution is not a matter for me. It is a matter for the prosecuting authorities. If the hon. Gentleman has any new evidence, he should present it to them.

Mr. Nicholas Baker: In the light of the many cases of alleged child abuse, will my right hon. Friend base her social policies firmly on the need to strengthen family life and to educate young people for parenthood, rather than give greater control of children to social workers and doctors? While retaining penalties for those who mistreat children, will my right hon. Friend recognise that the upbringing of children is a matter for parents?

The Prime Minister: I agree with my hon. Friend about the importance of family life and the lessons that are learnt at home. He links his question to child abuse, but he will be the first to know that this presents very sensitive problems to social workers and other people who have to decide when to go into a home because they think that a child is being abused, neglected or ill-treated. It is not an easy question for anyone to answer, but it is supremely important and involves social workers, legislators and neighbours.

Q6. **Ms. Armstrong:** To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 12 January.

The Prime Minister: I refer the hon. Lady to the reply that I gave some moments ago.

Ms. Armstrong: I am sure that the Prime Minister will want to assure the House that she is concerned about the protection of public health standards, particularly in relation to the prevention of AIDS and cervical cancer. Will she therefore assure us that she will not allow the back-door privatisation of pathology laboratories in order to save money, and that she will make sure that the protection of standards is the most important, indeed the only, issue that she is prepared to consider?

The Prime Minister: The protection of standards applies equally to the public and private sectors. It is the protection of standards that is important, not whether things are carried out in the public or private sector. If they can be carried out with better value for money in the private sector, that releases more money for more health care.

Sir Antony Buck: During the course of the day, will my right hon. Friend take time to consider material that she will have gathered from her highly successful tour of Africa? Is she aware that the vibes coming to those of us who recently visited Kenya suggest that it was an enormously valuable visit in assisting President Moi to deal with the difficult problems of containing racism and tribalism?

The Prime Minister: I am grateful to my hon. and learned Friend. It was an extremely interesting and valuable visit. Kenya and this country have a very friendly relationship. We give considerable aid to Kenya, something of the order of £50 million. One was able to see the excellent use to which that was put and the very good way in which that country is run.

Newport, West

Q7. **Mr. Flynn:** To ask the Prime Minister whether she has any plans to pay a further visit to Newport, West.

The Prime Minister: I have at present no plans to do so.

Mr. Flynn: Is the Prime Minister aware of the deep public anxiety felt by the people of Newport, West about the possibility of a new nuclear power station being added to the most crowded nuclear park in Europe, with eight nuclear reactors within a 25-mile radius of 2¼ million people? Is the Prime Minister aware of a statutory instrument which was introduced on the final sitting day before Christmas which will severely restrict the ability of the 8,000 protestors to present their case as fully and fairly as they could have done in the past? What action will the Prime Minister take to guarantee the right of protestors to present their case without obstacle or obstruction and with sufficient time?

The Prime Minister: I think that the rights of protestors at any planning inquiry in this country exceed those in almost any other country. They are considerable. Any difficulty or protest should be presented either to the inquiry or to my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State.

Department of Trade and Industry

3.31 pm

The Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister of Trade and Industry (Mr. Kenneth Clarke): With permission, Mr. Speaker, I will make a statement about major changes in the role of the Department of Trade and Industry and its policies.

My right hon. and noble Friend Lord Young and I have been engaged in a major review of the main activities and organisation of DTI. Our decisions are set out in the White Paper entitled "DTI — the department for Enterprise" which will be laid before the House later today.

We conducted this review building on the new objectives for the DTI which we published on 13 October last year. In our opinion, considerable changes in the Government's support to industry will be required to face the challenges of 1992 and to succeed against ever increasing international competition.

In an economy with a GDP of some £400 billion, the main role of DTI, with its budget of £1 billion, must be, in conjunction with other Departments, to influence attitudes and to encourage open markets in order to promote enterprise and prosperity.

We will start by helping young people to learn about business and enterprise. We will work with employers with the aim of giving one teacher in 10 each year some personal experience of the world of business. We will further aim to ensure that every young person will have at least two weeks' work experience before leaving school as part of his or her preparation for employment.

We will help young people to become more knowledgeable about new technology. We shall increase our support for computer aided design and other advanced technologies in schools, further education and teacher training colleges.

We will work in partnership with commerce and industry to improve management education and development and spread awareness of best practices in new technologies. These are essential to the competitiveness of British industry and commerce.

We will help small and medium size firms to improve their performance in marketing, design, quality and advanced manufacturing methods. We are putting in hand forthwith a major new initiative to encourage firms with fewer than 500 employees to take expert consultancy advice in these key management functions. We will extend the programmes in April to cover business planning and financial and information systems. We will provide more than £50 million in the next financial year and some £250 million in total in the three years to 1991 to encourage firms to take advantage of this initiative.

In 1992 the single European market will be completed, ending most barriers to trade within the EC. The opening of the Channel tunnel in 1993 will make us physically a part of this much bigger market for all our goods and services. We will therefore make it a priority to help business prepare for, and benefit from, this great extension of the market within which we must compete.

The need to open up competitive markets is an essential strand in DTI's policies. Competition policy is the key element in that process.

As a result of the review which my right hon. Friend the then Secretary of State for Trade and Industry announced in the House in June 1986, we propose a fundamental overhaul of the Restrictive Trade Practices Act. It has been proved increasingly ineffective in controlling damaging illegal cartels. The new legislation which we are considering would prohibit agreements with anti-competitive effects. It would be backed by stronger investigative powers and effective penalties. A detailed Green Paper on this will be issued shortly.

The review also covered mergers. The main but not exclusive consideration in mergers policy will continue to be the need to maintain competitive market conditions. We are proposing two principal changes to speed up the decisions on whether individual mergers can go ahead. The first would be a new formal, but voluntary, procedure for giving advance notice of prospective mergers. This would give automatic clearance for simple cases within four weeks. The second proposal would give more flexibility in dealing with possible competition problems. The Director General of Fair Trading would have the power to obtain legally binding undertakings from the parties to a merger over such issues as agreed divestment as an alternative to a reference to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission.

We are particularly concerned to encourage enterprise in the less prosperous areas of the country and in the inner cities—*[Interruption.]*—and we are having great success in doing so. We shall therefore be increasing and strengthening DTI's regional office network and expanding its role. The new consultancy initiatives which I have just announced will offer higher levels of grant both in the assisted areas and in urban programme areas outside the assisted areas. Consultancy projects will receive support of two thirds of the cost in those areas compared with 50 per cent. in the rest of the country.

New incentives will be introduced from April this year to encourage the growth and development of small firms in development areas. Their growth will help the full revival of regional economies, which is the aim of our policy. Firms with fewer than 25 employees will be able to apply for investment grants of 15 per cent. towards the cost of fixed assets and innovation grants of 50 per cent. for product and process development. We shall be targeting our help on those firms at a critical stage of their development, those which may not yet have developed the key management skills needed to survive and compete. Our policies are designed to encourage self-generated business development in the regions, both in manufacturing and in services, so that there is a broader, lasting base for economic growth.

Regional selective assistance will remain available in the development and intermediate areas. Unlike regional development grant, regional selective assistance requires companies to show that they genuinely need public money in order to proceed, and that their projects are viable and will produce identifiable and significant benefits. Internationally mobile projects, for example, will therefore be able to benefit from regional selective assistance as before.

We have concluded that this approach to business development will do more to strengthen regional economies than an automatic subsidy to all capital investment. A Bill will therefore be introduced today to end the RDG scheme. No new applications for grant will be accepted after 31 March this year. The Bill will provide for transitional arrangements. These changes will apply in Scotland and Wales as well as in England, and I am speaking on behalf of my right hon. Friends the respective Secretaries of State for those territories. Regional policy

will remain based on the existing regional map. Let me make it clear that we are not proposing any reduction in the Government's total regional spending, but we believe that existing resources can be spent more effectively than hitherto.

Inner cities will be benefit from the higher level of grant for the consultancy initiatives. The Government will be publishing a review of their policies for the inner cities in due course and will be taking steps to encourage more private sector involvement in urban regeneration.

We have also reviewed our Department's policy on civil research and development. In future we shall concentrate our help on collaborative research projects and the transfer of technology which would otherwise not take place. The White Paper announces our support for new collaborative programmes in both information technology and superconductivity. Research and development which is at the stage of commercial exploitation should be the responsibility of the private sector. The general schemes of single-company support for innovation are therefore being ended today. We believe that our spending on research and development will be more effectively used in collaborative research bringing different companies and the academic world much closer together.

DTI will be a catalyst for enterprise, innovation and change. But enterprising attitudes will develop only in open markets. We will therefore continue our efforts to cut red tape so that business can concentrate on its primary task of creating the wealth on which society depends.

The proposed changes in policies which I have announced will result in an increase in spending by DTI over the provision that was planned last year. Our proposed expenditure on regional programmes in Great Britain represents an increase over earlier plans. We will also increase previously planned expenditure and support for collaborative research, technology transfer and small business innovation.

The White Paper also announces changes in the organisation of DTI which will enable it to be more effective in the delivery of its services. The enterprise initiative will be marketed clearly and strongly so that business is aware of the potential for action through self-help, and the expansion of our regional network will enable us to get closer to our customers where they live and work.

Furthermore, industry divisions in DTI, which up to now have been seen as sponsoring specific industries, will be replaced by market divisions which focus on the markets for a range of goods and services rather than specific supplier industries. Emphasis will be given in our work to issues which span all industry and commerce, especially in technology.

The changes which are announced in the White Paper are very comprehensive, and reflect the objectives which we set for DTI last year. Real change, to give Britain a lasting basis for prosperity, requires individuals to alter the way in which they manage their businesses and approach their work. The best way to accomplish this is to influence people's attitudes, to help them acquire the skills and information which they need to compete effectively and to give them the scope and opportunity in open markets to compete. The White Paper policies which I have outlined today represent this consistent and co-ordinated strategy for enterprise. DTI—the Department for enterprise—will now carry this enterprise strategy forward.

Mr. Tony Blair (Sedgefield): This is obviously a statement of major importance for the regions and industry of our country, and we trust that there will be a full debate on it before too long. Our view is that it represents the culmination of a process that, stripped of its pretensions, ends today in the effective abandonment of the regional policy of successive Governments over 25 years. Whatever the rhetoric, the reality of these proposals will be devastating in its consequences for the unity of the country and the vitality of our industry.

Will the Minister agree with me that the whole credibility of his package hangs on his pledge to maintain funding? Will he admit that the principal part of regional aid is regional development grant, which is now to be cut, that from 1979 to 1986 a £300 million cut in regional grant occurred, that this year there is a projected further cut of £300 million and that now regional development grant is to be abandoned altogether? Is it surprising that we regard this pledge as an empty promise signifying nothing?

Does the Minister agree with the survey made by his own Department, that regional development grant has saved or created some 600,000 jobs over the past few years — 40,000 in the past year alone? Now that regional development grant is to be abandoned, leaving only regional selective assistance, is he seriously telling us that he expects, if funding is to remain level, a fivefold increase in successful applications for regional selective assistance? How many capital projects will now have to be abandoned? How many small firms entitled to automatic help will now no longer get it? The main reason why regional development grant is important is that it provides certainty, stability and international capital—and our own capital demands that.

We welcome any proposal that assists small businesses and any new grants that help them, but why does help for small businesses have to come at the expense of help for large ones? Is not the truth of the matter, as any industrialist will tell us, that regions need small and large businesses to succeed?

The Minister talked about his new business consultancy centres. Will he tell us whether the funds for those centres will be on top of the existing programmes or will come out of that money? He talked of a one-stop shop. We in the north-east have been asking for a one-stop shop for years: it is called the northern development agency. Will we obtain that under his proposals?

The truth is that many of the proposals will cover a wide range of matters, and will require careful scrutiny. Let me pick the Minister up on one in particular—the Government's competition policy. I welcome the implicit recognition that competition policy under the present Government has been a lamentable failure. If the Minister wishes to examine the ways in which he can open up competition policy, he might start with his own privatised industries, British Airways and British Petroleum.

I also ask the Minister — *[Interruption.]* — With respect, this was a detailed statement, and we are entitled to make a detailed reply.

What is surprising about this document is what it omits, as well as what it puts in. Where is there any recognition from the "Department of enterprise" that we have one of the largest balance of trade deficits in manufacturing industry? Where is the acknowledgment that we are falling behind in science and technology? Why is the only

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proposal on research and development to chop one part of it? Where are the bold new initiatives, the new seizing of opportunities?

Ultimately, the proposals are nothing but philosophy without cash. Why cannot the Minister understand that what industry wants is not the absence of Government, but their presence in partnership; not a retreat into the attitudes of the 19th century, but a willingness to meet the challenges of the 21st?

Mr. Clarke: My right hon and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Scotland, my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Wales, my right hon. and noble Friend the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry and every other member of the Government, including myself, are not going to abandon regional policy. We are, however, changing it drastically, because we think that we can make it more effective. The hon. Gentleman had plainly prepared the section of his questions dealing with regional policy before he listened to the statement, and did not follow the statement when I made it.

Certainly regional development grants will be cut. We prefer to concentrate on regional selective assistance, new investment grants for small companies in the development areas and preferential rates of grants for new consultancy services, which will strengthen the quality of businesses in the regions — particularly small and medium size businesses — to ensure that they are genuine, lasting, successful businesses and not just branch-line enterprises.

The hon. Gentleman was right to say that, in the past, we have made claims for the regional development grant, which was a very useful instrument of regional policy. However, we are now changing the nature of the grant because of the change in economic circumstances. Most notably, a huge increase in investment is going ahead in the regions, and unemployment is now falling faster there than in the rest of the United Kingdom. The time has therefore come for a system that gives a grant to any applicant for any capital investment, regardless of whether that grant is needed to make a project go ahead, and regardless of any tests of the viability or commercial desirability of what is proposed.

We shall be able to make use of selective assistance to assist projects which would not go ahead without Government aid, and which are of demonstrated commerical value to the region, as well as introducing the new grants for smaller firms and the new advisory services on preferential terms in the assisted areas.

The Labour party's commitment to the regions is obviously based on being wedded to the traditional policies, come what may. Labour Members do not acknowledge that the Government are making more sensible use of an increased sum over the next three years, compared with published plans, in the light of the improved economic climate.

I am delighted by what I took to be a welcome for the enterprise initiative—the new advisory services for small business. At this late stage, I will not invite the hon. Gentleman to join me and my colleagues on the platform as we launch the enterprise initiative across the country. However, as he supports improved services for small businesses and the strength of small business, I am sure that he will continue to give support to and approv what we do as we develop and promote the new p that we are proposing for customers in business.

I did not quite understand the hon. Gentle comments on total spending. If he examines the Paper to be published shortly by my right hon. Frie Chancellor of the Exchequer, he will find that, com with what was planned in previous years, DTI spen increased for the next few years concentrating on re and development and regional policy of the kind have described.

I am sure that those who examine competition in more depth than the hon. Gentleman will find th proposal is an improvement on the present position will rebut the hon. Gentleman's general economic He referred to industrial policy in an industrial ec that is now the most successful in western Euro referred to changes in policy that I believe will supp continued revival of the British economy, particul the regions, and the continued fall in unemployme

Sir William Clark (Croydon, South): My right ho learned Friend should ignore the Opposition's c criticism because under no circumstances can any his right mind say that the economy today is not in shape than it was when we took it over, with prod up and borrowing down.

My right hon. and learned Friend's statement welcomed warmly, particularly by business. The in ment of the education system with the business should have happened years ago. Is my right ho learned Friend aware that we welcome the change has suggested in mergers and the competitiven British industry, which is increasing?

The Government have got it absolutely Unemployment will fall only if we have more businesses. Unemployment will be reduced as a re the emphasis on small business and through the gra will be given to small business—*[Interruption.]*

Mr. Speaker: Order. I apologise for stopping th Gentleman, but many right hon. and hon. Membe to participate. Hon. Members must ask questions a make speeches.

Mr. Clarke: I thank my hon. Friend and I agr it is essential that we continue to improve the links b industry and schools. Pupils and parents want the links between business and industry to prepare people for employment. A great deal is already bein but we have set ourselves ambitious targets to impr contact of teachers and pupils with industry. We the co-operation of industry and the employers provide that contact.

I entirely agree with my right hon. Friend's co about the key nature of small and medium size b The growth in employment in the economy ha spectacular over the past few years, and almost all growth has arisen in the small and medium size b sector. We must concentrate on strengthening further.

Mr. Tony Benn (Chesterfield): I have only just opportunity to look through the statement. W Minister tell the House what references there are trade unions in the document?

Mr. Clarke: The right hon. Gentleman need disadvantaged. The hon. Member for Sedgefiel

Blair), the Opposition Front Bench spokesman, was present but did not listen to the statement. Therefore, the right hon. Gentleman starts from the same point as his colleague.

There is no mention of the trade unions in the document, but all trade unionists who wish to see a strengthening of the economy and growing prospects for employment will, I believe, support our objectives.

Mr. Leon Brittan (Richmond, Yorks): Will my right hon. and learned Friend accept that the vast majority of his proposals will be welcomed as being imaginative and constructive? Will he also accept that, in spite of the fact that economic growth is proceeding in all the regions, the discrepancy in the levels of employment between the different regions means that an active and vigorous regional policy should remain a top priority of the Government?

Will my right hon. and learned Friend also accept that, although there is nothing sacrosanct about previous methods of assistance, there were real advantages in a system whereby a business man was aware that, if he satisfied a published criterion, he was entitled as of right to regional assistance instead of having to go cap in hand to civil servants or Ministers asking for discretion to be exercised?

Does my right hon. and learned Friend therefore agree that if the Government are to have the necessary support to show that this policy is an improvement in regional policy and not a cut, they will, above all, have to satisfy the country that when all the proposals have been implemented the amount of money being spent on regional policy in real terms is at least as much as it is today?

Mr. Clarke: I took pleasure a moment ago in the rapidly falling rate of unemployment in the regions of Britain. I agree with my right hon. and learned Friend that the discrepancies are still excessive. As we change regional policy, we want to ensure that it continues to be effective, and to operate policies which reduce those discrepancies.

My right hon. and learned Friend is right in saying that the regional development grant carried with it an element of certainty. However, that certainty came from the fact that, whenever investment took place at the right place on the map, after the investment decision had been taken, it was possible for any investor to get a public sector contribution, whether or not he needed it, to go ahead with that investment. The time has come, when the economy is doing so well and when so much investment has been spontaneously generated, for us to look at ways of using that money more effectively in the regions, and it is important that we do that.

Particularly valuable are those parts of the policy that concentrate on strengthening the quality of management and business performance in the regions. The regions do not want second-class small and medium size businesses. They do not want an economy dominated by manufacturing at the expense of services. They want an economy as effective as that in the south, and of the same type as that in the south. Moving towards that, the support that we are giving to improving management, quality, design and financial control at preferential rates in the development areas will be of particular value. We must make sure that our policies support the continued improvement of the regions vis-a-vis the rest of the United Kingdom.

Mr. Malcolm Bruce (Gordon): Will the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster accept that there will be considerable dismay in the regions of England, Scotland and Wales that the proposals represent an extension of the stranglehold of central Government on the administering of regional funds? Would it not be more appropriate if the regions were given more discretion and control to determine their own priorities?

Will the right hon. and learned Gentleman accept that one of the problems facing Britain today is the imbalance between the south of England and the rest of the country in terms of control and ownership of enterprise and industry, and that there is nothing in the White Paper to reverse that process? Will he accept that, in spite of his assurances about small businesses, in reality it will be the biggest firms that will have the slickest presentation and will secure a greater share of the grants than is now the case? If he really wishes to help small businesses, will he assist them in their role as unpaid tax collectors and administrators for central Government, as many of them would welcome that?

The Minister's conversion on competition policy will be welcomed on these Benches, but it is regarded, after eight years, as rather late, in view of the Government's record in creating some of the biggest centralist cartels and monopolies in the world, such as British Telecom and British Gas, and his total failure to stand up to the takeover of British Caledonian by British Airways. Will he tell the House—*[Interruption.]* The hon. Member for Sedgefield (Mr. Blair) gave a detailed response to the statement. I shall do the same. Will the Minister tell the House what is to happen to the regulation of competition provided by those companies in future? There is an urgent need for a parliamentary debate on that matter. There is a great deal in the White Paper and the Government should provide time to ensure that it is fully and properly discussed.

The Minister has not shown that he understands the needs of the regions, or of competition and enterprise.

Mr. Clarke: I certainly do not think that the White Paper represents any extension of centralised control. I share the reservations expressed by many hon. Members about over-centralised administration by government in London over the rest of the country. I have announced today—I referred to it twice in the statement—that we are greatly extending the regional network of the DTI and getting closer to our customers, who are the managers of business and commerce in the regions, and we will be shifting the balance of our work to the regions to deliver the new policies. Nothing that I and my right hon. and noble Friend are proposing will intrude on the considerable amount of devolved power that is already exercised by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Scotland. The Scottish Development Agency will be used as the agency for a large part of the policy north of the border.

With regard to large companies taking advantage of the proposals that we have announced, the hon. Gentleman will see that the emphasis is in completely the opposite direction. The new grants in the development areas are concentrated on the smallest firms with up to 25 employees. The new enterprise initiative is aimed at small and medium size businesses across Great Britain with up

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to 500 employees. Therefore, we are looking in the direction of helping small and medium size businesses in particular.

The hon. Gentleman talked about businesses as tax collectors. Deregulation and the cutting of red tape is also an important part of our policy to help small companies.

On competition, I advise the hon. Gentleman to await our Green Paper on restrictive trade practices and to look in detail at our proposed reforms of competition policy. We are strengthening and modernising that area of policy, and our aim is to make open, competitive markets, which means guarding against monopoly and unfair cartels.

Several Hon. Members *rose*—

Mr. Speaker: Order. I heard the Minister say that a Bill was to be introduced which will allow a debate on the matter. Therefore, I ask hon. Members to confine themselves to short rather than long and rambling questions.

Mr. Norman Tebbit (Chingford): Is my right hon. and learned Friend aware that the general thrust of moving away from automatic grants paid regardless of need or the viability of a scheme will be welcomed, but will he explain how the placing of an excessive load on applicants will be avoided, and, similarly, how he will avoid officials becoming unduly embroiled in taking commercial decisions on behalf of businesses?

Mr. Clarke: I welcome my right hon. Friend's support for the abolition of automatic regional development grant. Having been in the Department of Trade and Industry, he will appreciate that if one is against automatic regional development grant, any type of grant that is retained will be selective and some process must be applied. I assure him that we appreciate the need to make sure that that process does not become bureaucratic, onerous for the applicant or gives too much arbitrary power to those administering it. We shall obviously be relying on the Industrial Development Advisory Board, which is composed of senior outside industrialists appointed to advise us on the commercial appraisal of projects, and many outside secondees with industrial and commercial experience who move in and out of the Department are helping us to appraise projects.

We shall be concentrating on the key test, not just rewriting the business plans of an applicant. We shall make sure that so-called additionality—the requirement for grant in order to enable a project to go ahead—will be the key point on which we concentrate. For the smaller firms, all that can be too onerous and that is why we have proposed a special scheme for the development areas. Grants for companies under the ceiling of 25 employees will be operated in a much more streamlined way with just a check to make sure that there is commercial viability. *[Interruption.]*

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Members on both sides of the House should not shout across the Chamber. The hon. Member for Langbaurgh (Mr. Holt) did so once before, and I did not like it.

Mr. Barry Jones (Alyn and Deeside): The right hon. and learned Gentleman's statement is nowhere near as good as he makes out because it completely ignores the real terms cuts in regional aid since 1979. Does he guarantee that large British companies seeking and expand in Wales will not be worse off as a the statement? Is it not the case that the Secretar for Scotland and Wales fiercely resisted the pr abolish regional development grants? Is no statement a real body blow to the hopes of Wale on the ashes of unemployment and to mak economy?

Mr. Clarke: In making the comparison with hon. Gentleman is going back to the first stages o development grant when grant was paid auto regardless of its effect in creating jobs. Sometim were given to huge capital intensive investme replaced employees in firms receiving the gran why when we moved, I think three years ago, to t stage of regional development grant, makin subject to a cost per job limit and linking them intensive parts of the economy, it was generally v That inevitably resulted in some worthwhile s public expenditure because the money expended was not going on the chosen object certainly not true to say that there has competition between the territorial Departments hon. Friends the Secretaries of State for Sco Wales agreed with the policy and will derive be it.

On regional development grant and regiona assistance alone this year, the Department of Industry looks like spending £254 million comp a planned spend in last year's White Paper of £2 By 1990-91 that will have gone up to £26 compared with the figure of £232 million based White Paper. Therefore, there is an increase in ex on previous years' approved plans. However, it level of expenditure in which I really take comfo more intelligent and sophisticated use of the mo bears more relation to today's economic circum growth, expansion and rising employment in t already.

Mr. Michael Heseltine (Henley): Will my righ learned Friend accept that we support his at obtain better value for money from the existin programme, but will he recognise that overlyin policy and far more damaging to the regio present tax regimes which have the effect, thr capital nature, of destroying family busine through the subsidies that flow to the pension financial institutions, of draining far more mo the regions than any other regional policy replace? Will my right hon. and learned Friend right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequ we can try to introduce some fiscal neutrality b regions and the centre which could enable small to grow in the provinces and remain locally controlled there?

Mr. Clarke: I shall certainly consult my Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer, who is on the Front Bench. I think that my right hon. Member for Henley (Mr. Heseltine) will conce Government have made great advances in burden of capital taxes on small businesses, ar start-ups in particular. We now have the low corporate taxation in the EC, an important business and to profitable business in par

addition, I cannot help mentioning that the unified business rate will bring enormous advantages to the north of England in particular and will represent a massive shift of public resources from the south of England to the north when it takes full effect in 1990.

Mr. Ernie Ross (Dundee, West): Since Ford's decision to locate in Dundee would not have been made without regional development grants, can the Minister assure us that the one-door approach used by the Scottish Development Agency, Dundee district council and Tayside regional council to attract industry to Dundee will not be affected by the changes that he has announced this afternoon?

Mr. Clarke: I will refer the hon. Gentleman's point about Dundee to my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Scotland. I think that he is telling me that it will not be affected.

I agree that regional development grant has played a major part in getting us to where we are now, but I am now explaining the need for change to make better use of the sums of money about which we are talking. We have the support, for example, of the Scottish Council (Development and Industry), which recently reported to my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Scotland on enterprise development—the next stage in the evolution of regional policy. Section 3(5) on page 4 said:

> "Despite the division of opinion on direct intervention in investment decisions the balance of opinion favours some form of grant aid, albeit on a selective rather than automatic basis."

That is the position that we are now contemplating.

Mr. Kenneth Warren (Hastings and Rye): While I applaud my right hon. and learned Friend's initiative in seeking to link Government sponsorship of research with market opportunities, may I ask him if he will extend that initiative and examine the opportunity that presents itself for the Government to examine their own position as a customer in the market place and to try to co-ordinate some of their public purchasing policies to achieve a stimulus of research in return? In that context, will he comment on his further views of the Alvey follow-on programme and the space programme?

Mr. Clarke: I thank my hon. Friend for his opening comments on research and development. We need to examine how we can use Government money most effectively in those areas. By and large, we seek to improve the climate so that industry itself can put more of its resources into research and development. Industry is likely to do that when projects are nearing the market place. That is why we are concentrating on collaborative research bringing together universities, higher education institutions and industry at an earlier stage.

On public procurement policy, we certainly look at the impact that we have on British industry and we shall continue to follow those policies. Today's White Paper includes the announcement of some further help for the information technology industry, although not in the previous Alvey form. The time has come to move on from that very successful policy. If my hon. Friend studies the White Paper, he will find that we have chosen objectives that will further collaborative research, bringing together partners who cannot be expected to come together without the stimulus of Government money. Other companies proceed on their own on the basis of what they h already derived from the Alvey initiative.

Our present commitment to the space programme the substantial expenditure that we incur on it continue and we shall remain full members of European Space Agency. So far, however, we h declined to take part in optional programmes in wh British participation would have been minimal and wh scientific and commercial advantage to this country not justify the expenditure proposed.

Mr. Bruce Millan (Glasgow, Govan): Is the Mini aware that the abandonment of regional developm grants will be disastrous for industry in Scotland similar areas? Is he further aware that anyone who kn anything about regional policy will not believe for moment that his proposals can possibly maintain exis expenditure on the regions, even at its consider reduced level following Government cuts in recent ye Expenditure is bound to decrease and there is not a si figure in the White Paper to sustain the Minister's cl This is bad news for Scotland and for every other reg

Mr. Clarke: I hear what the right hon. Gentleman about regional policy, given that he has consider standing and experience in these matters. With respect is concentrating on the ending of one form of grant is failing to take on board the substantial new measu and the change in emphasis in our policies. The right h Gentleman's views are not shared by the Scottish Cou or the Scottish CBI, which supports our proposal. I only repeat that the sums in this White Paper substantially higher than those in the 1987 White Pa The figures do not anticipate a fall in expenditure over next three years—quite the reverse in the near term. debate on that can be continued more sensibly when White Paper is published shortly and the figures available.

Mr. Michael Grylls (Surrey, North-West): Does right hon. and learned Friend accept that the move aw from excessive paternalism and automatic grants welcome and that his determination to achieve value money spent in the regions will be popular? Very people accept that we have had good value for money fr all that we have spent on the regions over the years. right hon. and learned Friend's determination to h small and medium size firms will be widely welcome particularly the toughening up of anti-competi practices laws, which most people accept have been v weak. Such firms need a fair market in which to oper successfully and, as my right hon. and learned Friend sa they will bring wealth and jobs to the regions.

Mr. Clarke: I am grateful for my hon. Friend's rema about automatic grants, and plainly I agree with them. hon. Friend is something of a specialist on small fir policy and I am grateful for his support of our moves offer consultancy services to small firms to improve th performance in key areas of business such as desi marketing and financial control.

I agree with my hon. Friend that the time has come overhaul the law on restrictive trade practices, which proving ineffective. No doubt in due course we shall he my hon. Friend's contribution on the Green Paper whi

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will contain proposals as to how we might make the present rules more effective to give better protection to small firms suffering from unfair practices.

Mr. Eric S. Heffer (Liverpool, Walton): Is it not clear that, without the regional policies pursued by every previous Government, unemployment in the regions would have been much higher than it is now? Is it not clear that all previous Governments have been presented with proposals for selective assistance but that for very practical reasons — some of them explained by Conservative Members—such proposals have been rejected? Is it not clear that the present proposals represent the abandonment of all previous Governments' regional policies, which will not help to solve the problem of unemployment in the regions in the long run? The proposals will have the opposite effect from that which the Government believe that they will have and the Government's policy will end in disaster for those in the regions.

Mr. Clarke: The hon. Gentleman makes an extraordinarily broad-brush point in claiming that previous Governments have abandoned the principle of selective assistance altogether and always had automatic grants. Until now we have had both selective assistance and automatic grants and we now propose to end automatic grants and give greater emphasis to selective grants. Regional selective assistance has been with us for a long time; it is quite venerable. I am sure that if one examined the record of the previous Labour Government one would find that their regional selective assistance, combined with their selective assistance under section 8 of the Industry Act, amounted to a greater use of selectivity in grant giving than the present Government propose. Therefore, the hon. Gentleman's broad argument cannot be sustained.

Sir Raymond Gower (Vale of Glamorgan): Can my right hon. and learned Friend confirm that in Wales the cumulative effect of the changes could mean greater flexibility for the Secretary of State for Wales without the diminution of resources? Can he assure us that nothing in the proposed changes will handicap the Secretary of State or the Welsh Development Agency in assembling a package to attract companies from abroad?

Mr. Clarke: I can give my hon. Friend all those assurances quite straightforwardly. I am confident that my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Wales, too, will give those assurances emphatically and will act upon them.

Mr. John D. Taylor (Strangford): What are the implications of the proposals for changes in Government support for the regions for the operation of the European social fund and the European regional development fund? Under the proposals to change the assisted areas boundaries, will not some firms which qualify for fund support from Europe at present cease to qualify?

Mr. Clarke: I think that my statement made that clear, but the right hon. Gentleman may not have been able to hear me. We are not changing the boundaries of the assisted areas. One reason for that is that it is inevitably a protracted process involving consultation on either side of the border. Such a change also has to be cleared with the European Community because it has implications for European Community grants. When we embark on that process, it takes up to two and half years for the map to be fully reviewed. Therefore, entitlement grants will not be affected by the announce is being undertaken in the European Co moment to examine the future of the soci will settle matters, including the eligibility c next period of the fund.

Sir Peter Blaker (Blackpool, South): My learned Friend's statement contained n proposals, but is he aware that it is regre Government have not set under way a boundaries of assisted areas? For example, the Fylde, which lost its assisted area statu its access to the European regional develo 1984, now has an unemployment rate average for all the intermediate areas. Ha come to set such a review under way?

Mr. Clarke: My right hon. Friend advocate of the case for Blackpool regain area status that it had until three years reasons that I have just given, a full boundaries is not a straightforward proces It involves full consultation with all those w their status—whether in a development a to an intermediate area or an intermediate to any other area. Such a process must consent of the European Community.

For that reason, it was simply not fe embark on such a review comparatively so one, and certainly not since the last electio hon. and noble Friend and I have been at t We do not intend to embark on that, at le see how the new policies settle down.

Mr. Stan Crowther (Rotherham): Do agree that some of the worst levels of une found not in the inner cities but in manufacturing towns and colliery villages areas such as the Rotherham and Mexbo work area which, according to the Gov fiddled figures, already has 20 per cent. o of work? The Minister has assured the H will not be a reduction in total Governm regional policy, but will he assure us that a cut in aid to any individual developme Rotherham and Mexborough?

Mr. Clarke: In future, our aid will be selective assistance to those firms that c that they need the grant to go ahead in s the new grant for small firms in developm the consultancy services and the busine initiatives that I have announced which, the quality of business throughout the U and especially in the assisted areas, beca a higher level of grant for that consultanc areas and in the urban programme areas

As I have said, our published plans fo increased expenditure compared with wha 1987. We intend to maintain the level regions. As some of the measures that I will depend very much on demand, on forward with applications for selective a small firms responding to the opportun presenting in the business initiatives, it i guarantee the level of spend in any partic

planned expenditure is what we are aiming at. That is why we will market our policies so heavily to those who we believe will benefit from them. *[Interruption.]* I hope that the hon. Member for Rotherham (Mr. Crowther) will restrain some of his hon. Friends from denouncing the fact that we spend money on letting the businesses in his constituency know what we have on offer.

Mr. Allan Stewart (Eastwood): I congratulate my right hon. and learned Friend on a sensible and imaginative package of changes to regional policy. Further to the point made by the hon. Member for Dundee, West (Mr. Ross), will my right hon. and learned Friend assure the House that under the revised system it will be possible for us to offer competitive financial packages to internationally mobile projects? Does my right hon. and learned Friend agree that a major factor influencing such decisions is the quality of suppliers and, therefore, his moves to improve that will not only enhance the performance of our regions but improve their attractiveness to inward investment?

Mr. Clarke: I am grateful to my hon. Friend for his comments and agree that a key part of our policy is that Great Britain—Scotland, England and Wales—should be able to offer competitive packages of assistance to inward investors in the case of those genuinely mobile projects which, if we were unable to offer a package, might be tempted to France, Ireland or somewhere else. Therefore, we have made sure that that is retained in our package.

As my hon. Friend said, we do not attract investors to this country just by offering them good packages of grants. A growing level of inward investment comes to this country because of the general economic state of the country, the feeling that the quality of component suppliers and support industries is good and because industrial relations are better than they used to be. Our package will help to produce quality in small and medium size companies so that they will give the good quality components to Japanese, American and other businesses which will help to draw more of them here.

Mr. Alex Salmond (Banff and Buchan): Given that the Secretary of State for Scotland, the Walter Mitty of Scottish politics, seems to believe that he is in charge of regional policy in Scotland, would it not have been diplomatic for the Minister to have allowed his right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State to read even one sentence of the statement? Given that total regional spending in Scotland has fallen by more than half—from £525 million to £242 million—during the past 10 years, what credibility can we invest in assurances that the budget will not be squeezed further? Given that the Minister has selectively and disgracefully quoted the Scottish Council (Development and Industry), is he aware that that body has been among the most trenchant critics of the Government's dismantling of regional policy?

Mr. Clarke: If the hon. Gentleman, who represents the Scottish National party, is going to criticise the division of responsibilities between English and Scottish Ministers, with respect I advise him to discover what those responsibilities are now. The Department of Trade and Industry is and always has been the lead Department for regional policies. On the other hand, my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Scotland has considerable devolved powers which he exercises through the Scottish Development Agency and other bod is no doubt that details of regional policy re responsibility and this policy does not change t

I have already given reassurances about the fi suggest only that the hon. Gentleman raises the s during the debate on the Autumn Statement and when he sees the White Paper on public spendi will confirm what I have said about spending in of the United Kingdom.

Mr. Robert Hicks (Cornwall, South-East): A welcome the retention of the Plymouth trave area as an assisted area, will my right hon. an Friend consider allowing that intermediate ar eligible for the business improvement services s view of the impending significant loss of jo Devonport dockyard? Will he elaborate on the cr can be described as being "identifiable and s benefits" for eligibility for the regional selective grant in the future?

Mr. Clarke: The existing business improveme is a European Community-inspired arrangement largely aimed at former steel, shipbuilding and ot It was a great success and was heavily over-subs some places. We have drawn extensively on our e of that in producing the domestic programme have announced today. Large parts of the busi enterprise initiative that I have announced, which support to small and medium size firms, are v drawn from the business improvement scheme. Friend's constituency will be one part of the cou will be eligible for the higher rate of grant companies that wish to have access to the initiative—*[Interruption.]* I shall not give in criteria for RSA now because if I do I shall be a filibustering by the hon. Member for Bolso Skinner).

We are not changing the essential criteri statutory basis for regional selective assistance shall put emphasis on additionality and making i provision for RSA because we believe that som who did not previously apply will apply now bec regional development grant is not available.

Mr. Giles Radice (Durham, North): Is the aware that Opposition Members remain deeply about the Government's commitment to retain amount of money that is given to regional a because the Government have already cut region £300 million, as the Minister has admitted, and, s because changing to aid on a selective basis en Government to cut by administrative fiat?

We have heard about the problems of the lar but there are also problems for smaller firms Minister aware that, despite his profession of Gov support for small firms, the abolition of automati will be a body blow to small firms because they have the knowhow or the time to apply for grants?

Mr. Clarke: I note the hon. Gentleman's sc about our commitment to the regions. I think th being over-cautious about a change in the natur support given to the regions. I do not know whe Labour party, which continually cites figures fro wishes to return to regional policy exactly as it wa

[Mr. Clarke]

return to increased spending on all projects regardless of cost per job limits. A huge amount of money went into Sullom Voe. That was a desirable investment, conducted by oil companies, at the edge of the Shetlands and employing only a few people permanently, but it was put there because oil was there. The Labour Government's regional policy made a major contribution to that investment to the great benefit of the oil companies but not of the hon. Gentleman's constituency.

Small firms that are disadvantaged by applying for selective assistance are catered for in our White Paper to a considerable extent by the fact that the new grants that have been announced for the development areas will make it easy for firms with up to 25 employees to receive the grants that I announced for investment and innovation. The simplicity of the scheme aims, in part, at meeting the hon. Gentleman's point that it can sometimes be difficult for the smallest firms to go through the machinery of selective application.

Sir Anthony Grant (Cambridgeshire, South-West): Can my right hon. and learned Friend confirm that the effect of his new regional policy will be to stem the migration of people from the assisted areas into high growth areas such as Cambridgeshire, where the pressures have become intolerable?

With regard to the welcome new initiative of linking small firms with the universities, will my right hon. and learned Friend please study the important initiatives of the company Cambridge Robotics, which have been referred to his Department and which are extremely interesting in this respect?

Mr. Clarke: For my own reasons, which coincide in part with those of my hon. Friend—I do not represent an East Anglian constituency, so our reasons are not wholly the same—I want a south to north flow of business and jobs, and therefore of people, if that reduces pressures on land prices, house values and planning applications in my hon. Friend's part of the country and in many others. To do that, we must encourage the continued growth of the northern economy and strengthen its quality of management, to ensure that the north performs at the best levels of marketing, quality, design and the other things that I have already mentioned. I trust that this policy will have the effect that my hon. Friend wants.

I shall certainly examine the case that my hon. Friend cited as an example of good links between industry and the universities. Cambridge science park and most things around Cambridge university are excellent examples of how British universities can catch up with the American practice of forging such links.

Mr. Joseph Ashton (Bassetlaw): Does the Minister agree that anyone with £100,000 to invest three or four years ago would have been better off buying a house in London, watching its value double, and getting a tax incentive to do so? Why do the farmers in the fat south receive protection and subsidies, and the defence industries get handouts; yet when it comes to northern industries, all they get is a dab of lipstick on the face and their crutches kicked away?

Mr. Clarke: The answer could lie in the late 1970s, when northern and midlands industries found that they were surviving on nothing but a diet subsidies and handouts. That did not turn o and I do not think that that was an alter which we are likely to return.

Mr. Michael Fallon (Darlington): Doe and learned Friend agree that industrial the north-east has been fossilised by pu grants that have gone to the same old comp year—companies that have been sheddi recruiting labour? Does he accept that sm the north will be cheering his announcem

Will my right hon. and learned Friend c general effect of his proposals will be to re between assisted and non-assisted areas, areas, between development areas and inte

Mr. Clarke: I agree entirely with my analysis. As he said, some firms bec obtaining grant because they knew it wa locality, and some larger firms relied open consultants, or their own employees, we working the system and obtaining grants. use of the money in the most effective fa

As regards distortions, there will b distinction between development areas, int and the rest, but the abolition of region grant for example, will, to some extent, re as between intermediate and developmen

Mr. Jack Thompson (Wansbeck): In t Minister took to present his statement, di he extended the division between the nort significantly? Does he recognise that, pa north of England, there is a dearth of s When he talks of improving small business does he accept that greater incentives tha has suggested are needed? There is also a r for larger industries in the north.

I was interested to hear the Minister links between industries and schools. smack a little of a risk of returning to th 1920s and 1930s, when industries were clo schools. The coal owners in my constit school governors, and if children did not industry their parents lost their houses a became almost industrial clones. Ther possibility of that happening again.

Does the Minister recognise that, in r the closure of Ashington colliery by the e mean 350 jobs coming off the market? W proposals, will compensate for the loss o

Mr. Clarke: I agree with part of the h analysis of the differences between the south. It is true, in economic and employ the north still does not have a high enou people working in small and medium si that the start-up rate of small busine adequate in the north. There is a need to small and medium size industry that i excellent standards of management of all strong to survive and not only a bran successful staff. All the policies that I today are aimed in that direction.

Larger industries will also benefit. Th subsidies as much, and they do not ne

support. They have spare management capacity to look after their own marketing, design and exporting, but the climate is made more attractive for large firms if there is a good network of high-quality component suppliers. That, as my hon. Friend the Member for Eastwood (Mr. Stewart) said a moment ago, is what we are trying to develop in Scotland. I do not think that coal owners are likely to return to school governing boards.

As far as the loss of jobs in the hon. Gentleman's constituency is concerned, the continued success of the British economy, our ability to stimulate the creation of more small companies, to strengthen small companies that already exist and to carry on building on the success of the enterprise economy that we have already achieved is the best hope for those facing economic changes in his constituency.

Mr. Bill Walker (Tayside, North): Does my right hon. and learned Friend agree that one of the great achievements of the Government has been the reduction —indeed, the virtual removal—of restrictive practices in the unions and the skullduggery associated with them? Can he confirm that his proposed measures will have the same effect in the City? If so, will he confirm that the effect in Scotland will be to the benefit of Scottish-based companies?

Mr. Clarke: I agree with my hon. Friend that the improved climate of industrial relations and the fact that we now have the lowest number of strikes for 50 years have been important elements in the revival of the British economy. I agree that restrictive practices are undesirable anywhere. We have tackled them in the trade unions and in the City with strong regulatory measures, but restrictive practices between large firms in the market place need to be tackled. That is why our Green Paper would ensure that genuinely competitive conditions were maintained, and I look forward to my hon. Friend's contribution to the consultations on it.

Mr. Geoffrey Lofthouse (Pontefract and Castleford): Does the Minister agree that the reasons the Government gave for not redefining the boundaries of assisted areas were ill-conceived when one considers that the boundaries were fixed only in 1984? Does he realise that, since that time, in areas such as my Castleford travel-to-work area the mining industry has been wiped out with no assistance given? Will he tell the House what assistance there is in the Green Paper for areas such as that, or will Government policy continue to victimise miners and mining communities? Is it not time such victimisation stopped?

Mr. Clarke: I realise that one of the problems with having a map of any kind for regional policy is that there are always difficulties with boundaries. However, a map is essential for a regional policy, so the boundaries must be reviewed from time to time. That is a long and difficult process, involving an examination of the status of each area.

Such status must be cleared with the EEC and should not be embarked upon too readily. It might be regarded as completely fair to keep moving some travel-to-work areas in, and others out, year in year out, but it would create great uncertainty and diminish the effect of the grants that we offer to attract people to these areas.

I can offer a continuation and strengthening of present policy to areas that do not have assisted area status, and what I have announced by way of the business and the strengthening of small firms will make contribution to them.

Mr. Henry Bellingham (Norfolk, North-We right hon. and learned Friend aware that tow King's Lynn in my constituency, and other towns in Norfolk, such as Norwich and Great have consistently suffered as a result of distorti by regional policy? In the worst cases successful even been bribed out of the area. Can he confir statement will prevent such occurrences in the will be welcomed in Norfolk?

Mr. Clarke: There is a downside to regional p of the points of the policy is to attract industry of low unemployment to areas of high unemp do not think I can offer my hon. Friend a reduc effectiveness of regional policy, but I can conditions in Norfolk and in the south-east— a greater extent in the south-east — transformed so that complaints about poachin becoming fewer in the parts of the country fur south in which there are now acute shortages labour, in which costs of all sorts have soared, housing costs are getting out of control. So p problems will become fewer as we continue to m effective regional policy.

Dr. Dafydd Elis Thomas (Merionnydd Nan On a number of occasions the right hon. ar Gentleman has said that he is speaking on be right hon. Friends the Secretaries of State for Sc for Wales. Is it not time that the House put a s departmental arrogance? We should have statem from the Welsh Office and the Scottish Offic such as regional policy that are crucial to the fu economy. Can the Minister tell us whether Paper has the status of a paper that has the fu of the Scottish and Welsh Offices? Is it a policy p those Departments? The Secretary of State for spoken to us via a press release. We certainly w fact that there will be 30 per cent. additional e over planned figures for the Welsh Developme and that, in the coming year, £139 million will b regional policy. However, that is still short o million, which was the value of RDG to Wale

Will the Minister also explain exactly the Gov attitude to regional policy within the E Government have made great play of the fact will mark the advent of the open market. Sur that context, a stronger, rather than a weake policy is required within the United Kingdom Minister assure us that the Government preventing the EEC from allocating additio diture to its social and regional policy funds? W position for intermediate firms? We welcome th for smaller firms, but does the Minister not reali the regional economies of Wales and Scotland, for parts of England, the key sector for devel represented by intermediate firms? Will he assu there will be support for that type of company

Mr. Clarke: It has always been the practi House, where a statement is made on a policy been agreed between the territorial Departm which is to be applied in exactly the same way in

[Mr. Clarke]

Scotland and Wales and where the arguments are exactly the same, that the lead Department makes the statement. Of course, it would be possible for my statement to be followed by a statement by my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Scotland, followed by Scottish questioners, and for my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Wales to make a statement, followed by Welsh questioners. We would all be talking about the same thing. My right hon. Friends prefer to remain within the mainstream of United Kingdom politics and I believe that they are right to do so.

With regard to regional policy within the EEC, we are taking considerable advantage of the social and regional funds. We are engaged in discussions with our partners in the EEC at the moment. We support the continuation of regional policy, but we must ensure that we get our fair share of the funds available and that they are used to good purpose in this country—that remains our main aim.

Mr. Anthony Beaumont-Dark (Birmingham, Selly Oak): Does my right hon. and learned Friend accept that regional aids and industrial development certificates did Birmingham much more harm than good? The new Government scheme has much to recommend it. However, will my right hon. and learned Friend deal in more detail with two important points. Under the present system the Ministry acts as godfather. Under the new system it will act as God. The people involved in my right hon. and learned Friend's Department — wonderful though they are — have precious little industrial experience. Therefore, they will need to call upon outside people for advice and many of those people will be heavily involved in the economy of their own areas. How will we avoid a feeling of "jobs for the boys"? How will we sort things out so that this scheme will be run properly and fairly and the money will be spent in the right areas?

Mr. Clarke: I agree with my hon. Friend's first point. When Labour was in office it acted so that people could not invest in Birmingham and it refused industrial development certificates in the fond belief that that would be benefiting the United Kingdom economy and would drive people north. We have put an end to that and other things.

We are not changing the way in which regional selective assistance is operated. As I explained to my right hon. Friend the Member for Chingford (Mr. Tebbit), we shall continue to depend to a great extent on outside industrialists when appraising selective assistance applications. However, an important point touched upon by my hon. Friend the Member for Birmingham, Selly Oak (Mr. Beaumont-Dark) relates to the business initiative and the provision of consultancies, with 50 per cent. support from the Government, which I have already described. Those business initiatives will be organised and delivered entirely by the private sector. We shall provide the funds, but we shall use contractors to organise the schemes. For example, in the case of design we will use the Design Council and in the case of marketing we will use the Institute of Marketing. The consultants used will be private sector consultants, vetted by those bodies for their effectiveness, and we shall merely contribute to the cost of private sector managers helping other private sector managers to improve the quality of performance in their particular business.

Several Hon. Members *rose*—

Mr. Speaker: Order. I must
business on the Order Paper. I wil
questions to continue for a furth
means that Back Benchers will have
matter. Those hon. Members wh
certainly be borne in mind on later

Mr. Dick Douglas (Dunfermline
can the Minister point to any body
that supports the ending of the aut
regional development grant? Can
indication as to how the proposals
trend of the concentration of small
industries in the south-east and the

On the vital matter of research a
inter-relationship between R and
R and D is extremely important
mentioned anywhere in the White
Government's analysis of the £2 bill
on R and D in defence?

Mr. Clarke: On the hon. Gentle
cite support from the Scottish Co
Confederation of British Industry,
that I made my announcement an
ago. No doubt other bodies of Sco
weigh in in support. I agree that it
into Scotland, with even more suc
been achieved, more small busin
industries to achieve a balanced e
Development Agency has already a
existing measures. Regional selec
available to continue that work.
have announced will be available
development areas and the new b
help to strengthen the quality of
believe that the package is aimed at
hon. Gentleman had in mind.

Mr. Tom Sackville (Bolton, Wes
learned Friend aware that b
constituency who have found them
sides by enterprise zones and deve
delighted to hear about the ending
that large sums of money will not b
do not need that money or simply
being located in Wigan? Is my r
Friend also aware that Bolton,
financial aid from his Department,
industrial and commercial boom?

Mr. Clarke: I agree with my
improved employment prospects f
people in other parts of the countr
on the continuing performance of t
growth, our improved productivity
of our products. Those factors wil
Kingdom.

In so far as we discriminate betw
my hon. Friend that there is no po
a firm that happens to be in Wigan
simply because it is investing in W
against a firm next door in Bolton
give grants to firms that want to
demonstrate that they need selecti
The disparity in the unemploymen

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British economy, its
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We shall continue to
to Wigan and can
assistance to do so.
ecords between most

of the assisted areas and the rest of the United Kingdom is sufficient justification for the continuation of that policy.

Mr. Gerald Bermingham (St. Helens, South): Does the right hon. and learned Gentleman accept that there is a repeated inconsistency in much of what he has said. Let us take a simple example in the St. Helens area. Recently, the Minister's colleague permitted the Warrington urban development corporation to develop 586 acres of Burtonwood, on the edge of St. Helens. St. Helens has an extremely high unemployment rate and yet it is not given any development grant. Am I to understand that St. Helens will get preferential treatment when it comes begging for loans to relieve our unemployment rate? Perhaps, at the same time, the Minister could give an assurance that whoever mans the Manchester office, with responsibility to his Department, will learn to pay the grants on time rather than deluge the small businesses in St. Helens with considerable numbers of forms. When those forms have been sent back that office still wants more information. Does the Minister accept that that practice needs looking at?

Mr. Clarke: I believe that I am correct in saying that St. Helens is an intermediate area. The abolition of regional development grant will have no adverse consequences on the right projects. As an assisted area it will be eligible for the higher rate of grant under the business initiative. I trust that many firms in St. Helens will take advantage of the various initiatives that we shall be promoting through the medium of television, as well as by other means, during the next few weeks. To some extent, therefore, that preferential treatment for St. Helens will help the local economy.

I take note of the hon. Gentleman's points about bureaucracy in our regional offices. We are extending our regional network and creating more regional offices to be close to the businesses concerned, which should help, but we shall certainly continue to ensure that, as in 99 per cent. of the cases, we operate our schemes with minimum bureaucracy and maximum speed.

Mr. Charles Wardle (Bexhill and Battle): Is my right hon. and learned Friend aware that for many years the chorus from a multitude of smaller companies throughout the country has been that they are simply unaware of what the DTI has on offer? Will he therefore step up the communications effort, not only from the centre but from his regional offices, so that more and more companies are aware of the opportunities?

Mr. Clarke: I entirely agree with my hon. Friend. There have been a large number of programmes in the DTI over the years and some have remained a well-kept secret from the outside world. We therefore intend heavily on the programmes identified i initiative. We shall be marketing them ensure that small and medium-sized bus managers are aware of what the Gove offer. I hope that my hon. Friend's sensi listened to carefully by a few people on Front Bench who will no doubt start to c as we let the public know about the designed to help them, through television

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: Order. I am sorry that possible to call all those hon. Members—

Mr. Dennis Skinner (Bolsover): On a Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Order. I am on my feet. names of those hon. Members and I preference on later occasions. Now I sh point of the hon. Member for Bolsover (

Mr. Skinner: On a point of order, Mr. two points. First, you referred to the fairl of questioning of the Minister responsib recall, there was a packed House when many people who were called for disappeared. It is also worth noting tha were Privy Councillors who had their lit they went. I think you ought to bear that i you call people for questions. Some of us end.

Secondly, there is an important responsibility for the tabling of questions statement. It could well be argued that, if removed responsibility away from hims Service——

Mr. Speaker: Order. That is not a matt deal with the hon. Gentleman's first quest he has said. I take into consideration all when calling hon. Members at Questio courtesy of the House that, if one is here Question Time, one should remain.

Mr. Skinner: Further to that point Speaker. You are responsible for the tabli

Mr. Speaker: Order. The hon. Gentlem put a question to the Minister.

Mr. Skinner: No, I am not.

Mr. Speaker: Order. The hon. Gentlem that he wants to put a question to a Mini

Points of Order

Mr. Eric Forth (Mid-Worcestershire): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. Following yesterday's outrageous events in the Chamber, perhaps you heard on the radio yesterday afternoon the hon. Member for Coventry, North-East (Mr. Hughes) saying that, although he had been suspended from the House, he intended to repeat the incident as soon as possible.

Mr. Speaker: Order. This is strictly hypothetical.

Mr. Harry Ewing (Falkirk, East): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. My point of order has nothing to do with the statement or today's questions. I shall raise it now. I gave notice to the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Scotland, the hon. Member for Edinburgh, West (Lord James Douglas-Hamilton), that I was going to raise this point of order because it concerns him. In raising this point of order, I want to make it clear that I cast no aspersions whatsoever on his integrity. I have the highest regard and the greatest respect for him, but last night, in his winding-up speech, he declared an interest in a company. I raised the matter briefly on a point of order. The Minister has an interest in a company called Hamilton and Kinneil Estates Ltd. There is no doubt that that company and other similar companies would benefit when the legislation debated yesterday is enacted. It is unprecedented for a Government Minister to be responsible for legislation——

Mr. Speaker: Order. I heard what the hon. Gentleman said last night. It is not a matter for me; it is a matter for the Select Committee on Members' Interests and for the Committee of Selection.

Mr. D. N. Campbell-Savours (Workington): It is a ministerial rule.

Mr. Speaker: Order. I am not responsible for the ministerial rules. The hon. Gentleman should address his comments to the Select Committee on Members' Interests.

Mr. Tony Marlow (Northampton, North): On a different point of order, Mr. Speaker. As I am sure you are aware, you are held in deep respect by the House, but the House is also of the opinion that, on some occasions, you have a very difficult job to do. Many hon. Members, particularly on the Conservative side of the House, would like to help you in the execution of your duties. With that in mind, I am putting to you this point of order, and am seeking your advice.

Yesterday, an hon. Member—I believe that he is an hon. Member of this House, although, like most other hon. Members, I have never clapped eyes on him before—contrived to get himself suspended from the sitting of the House. It seems that there is a growing band of imitators of that venerated eccentric, the hon. Member for Linlithgow (Mr. Dalyell)——

Mr. Speaker: Order. What can possibly be the point of order for me? The hon. Gentleman started by saying that he would like to be helpful. He is now being most unhelpful.

Mr. Marlow: I am coming to the helpful point. It appears that it is possible for hon. Members to see themselves as martyrs without even having to pay for a box of matches to set the conflagration alight. If hon. Members who were suspended lost their pay——

Mr. Speaker: Order. We cannot go back to what was done yesterday. I say to the hon. Gentleman and to the whole House that I do have a difficult task. It would help me and the whole House enormously if hon. Members stuck strictly to the rules and conventions of this House.

Mr. Tony Benn (Chesterfield): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. Reverting to the point raised by my hon. Friend the Member for Falkirk, East (Mr. Ewing), about a Minister declaring an interest, could I draw your attention to the fact that some time ago I sought permission to place in the Library of the House the rules of procedure for Ministers. They state clearly that Ministers with departmental responsibilities must divest themselves of their financial interest in companies which would benefit from their administration.

At the time, you ruled that it was not in order for that document to be placed in the Library, but I draw the matter to your attention because, with great respect, it is not a matter for the Select Committee on Members' Interests. Under those rules, the Minister quite properly declared an interest. What is at issue is whether the Minister, in having an interest, is in breach of regulations laid down by the Crown through the Prime Minister in respect of the duty of Ministers to Parliament. Would you therefore look back at my earlier submission and consider whether that document, which every Minister receives, ought to be made available to the House so that hon. Members know the rules that govern Ministers in the conduct of financial business in which they have an interest?

Mr. Speaker: Order. I shall certainly do what the right hon. Gentleman said.

Mr. Dennis Skinner (Bolsover): There are nine of them.

Mr. Speaker: Order. I shall certainly do what the right hon. Gentleman has suggested, but I am not responsible for the ministerial rules. They certainly exist and the matter should be taken up with those who are concerned with them.

Mr. Richard Holt (Langbaurgh): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. Just before Christmas, you had the misfortune, in some ways, to apologise to me and I readily accepted that apology. Today I want to apologise to you because I do not feel that it is good for Parliament if hon. Members shout out from sedentary positions, as I did. In that spirit, could you please do something about the hon. Member for Bolsover (Mr. Skinner)?

Mr. Speaker: Order. I thank the hon. Gentleman and can only say that what went on between us was misrepresented in some quarters. Shouted interjections across the Chamber, from whichever side, do not help our proceedings and I hope that, during the remainder of this Session, and of this Parliament, we may continue along the parliamentary lines of good behaviour.

Mr. Dick Douglas (Dunfermline, West): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. I welcome what you said in reply to my right hon. Friend the Member for Chesterfield (Mr. Benn). I crave your assistance because the Committee of Selection will be meeting on the Housing (Scotland) Bill and, due to the lack of Tory Members from Scotland, it is probably inevitable that the Under-Secretary of State for Scotland the hon. Member for Edinburgh, West (Lord James Douglas-Hamilton) will be a member of the

Committee, or will be nominated. I ask for your assurance that no selection will be made for the Committee until you have made a pronouncement on this vexatious matter.

Mr. Speaker: That is not a matter for me. I am not responsible for the Committee of Selection, but I am sure that what the hon. Gentleman has just said will have been heard by the Patronage Secretary.

Mr. Bowen Wells (Hertford and Stortford) *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: I am sorry I did not call the hon. Member to put a question on the statement.

Mr. Wells: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. May I remind you of your words about the frustration of sitting on the Back Benches of Parliament, particularly in this Parliament, and bring to your attention the fact that the frustration could have been mollified a little if hon. Members representing constituencies which paid regional development grants and other imposts had been permitted to take part in the debate on the trade and industry statement made today?

Mr. Speaker: Again I say to the hon. Member that I know it is a life of great frustration on the Back Benches, but what may be a disappointment one day could perhaps be a happiness on another.

Mr. David Winnick (Walsall, North): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. Will you accept that an hon. Member who has broken the rules and has paid the penalty by being suspended should nevertheless have his reputation defended? Will you accept that my hon. Friend the Member for Coventry, North-East (Mr. Hughes) yesterday acted from the highest motives? Is it relevant, in view of some of the remarks that have been made, for the point to be understood that my hon. Friend was concerned about an eight-month-old child who desperately requires open heart surgery?

Mr. Speaker: Order. That is unfair. I have no idea what motives are in the minds of Members when they speak. I regret what happened yesterday. I accept, as the hon. Member has just said, that ours is a life of very great frustration, and frustration takes all kinds of forms.

Mr. Tam Dalyell (Linlithgow): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. Something that you said earlier may be misinterpreted. You said, when my hon. Friend the Member for Falkirk, East (Mr. Ewing) raised the issue of the Under-Secretary of State for Scotland, the hon. Member for Edinburgh, West (Lord James Douglas-Hamilton), serving on the Committee to consider the Housing (Scotland) Bill, that that was not your responsibility. I cast no aspersions, but are you sure that, in that you are responsible for the conduct of the House, you are not concerned as to whether the Committee of Selection chooses people who, very honourably, as in the case of the hon. Member for Edinburgh, West, have declared an interest? Furthermore, should the Crown rules on the conduct of Ministers be made available? The Crown rules have not yet been put in the Library. Should not you, as the Speaker, responsible for the conduct of the House, insist that those rules are put in the Library so that we can know where we are in relation to the hon. Member for Edinburgh, West who is a Government Minister responsible for highly controversial legislation?

Mr. Speaker: Order. I understand the point that has been made. It is not for the Chair to dictate to the Select Committee who should be appointed. I say again that what has been said will undoubtedly have been heard on the Government Front Bench.

Mr. Skinner *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: The hon. Member for Bolsover (Mr. Skinner) is a regular attender here and is called regularly, but it is unfair for him to seek, under the cloak of a point of order, to achieve an answer to a question that he would have wished to put to the Minister. If it is a matter for me, I will deal with it.

Mr. Skinner: If we can clear up the misunderstanding that occurred earlier, Mr. Speaker, I was trying to point out to you that at the end of the day it is a matter for you as to whether parliamentary questions can be laid in the Table Office. That was the point I was trying to establish.

I want to draw to the attention of you and the House that we shall have a new set of rules on grants being made regionally and selectively. If we take a line through the nationalised industries, Ministers are not responsible for day-to-day administration. However, it was possible for any Member of Parliament to put down a question on grants that were obtainable or otherwise in his or her constituency, which would be accepted by the Table Office and the Minister would be responsible. But it is not the same with the day-to-day administration of nationalised industries.

I want to draw to your attention, Mr. Speaker, what may arise out of the changes in the Minister's statement and ask whether it will still be the same. Will hon. Members be able to ask, by a parliamentary question or otherwise, whether some consultancy in their area has obtained a grant or failed to obtain a grant? Will the element of day-to-day administration apply in this case as it does in nationalised industries, or will we have a free run? Many of my hon. Friends fear that the abandonment of the financial guidelines will mean a period of graft, corruption and backhanders.

Mr. Speaker: Order. The hon. Member will have heard, as the whole House heard, that a Bill will be presented today. I have no knowledge of what is in the Bill, but I have no doubt that the matter raised by the hon. Member will be relevant to the debate on it.

BILL PRESENTED

Regional Development Grants (Termination)

Mr. Kenneth Clarke, supported by Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mr. Secretary Walker, Mr. Secretary Ridley, Mr. Secretary Rifkind and Mr. Robert Atkins, presented a Bill to preclude the making of grants under Part II of the Industrial Development Act 1982 after 31 March 1988 unless previously applied for and to restrict payment of such grants in certain cases; and for connected purposes: And the same was read the First time; and ordered to be read a Second time tomorrow and to be printed. [Bill 78.]

Post Office Exclusive Privilege (Extinction) Bill

5.6 pm

Mrs. Teresa Gorman (Billericay): I beg to move,

That leave be given to bring in a Bill to extinguish the Post Office exclusive privilege of conveying letters.

I am not seeking to privatise the Post Office, although that may be no bad thing. I am not seeking to limit or control it. I merely want to see alternative letter deliveries permitted. The Post Office will not lose a single postman or pillar box—all I am asking for is competition. If confession is good for the soul, competition is good for industry.

We should look at what happened when we removed British Telecom's monopoly on the production of telephones. Five years ago we were all using standard telephones, which we stirred up with a finger, however arthritic the finger or however difficult it was for elderly people. Today we are on the brink of having pocket-size, portable, push-button telephones for everyone. That is the kind of magic which competition achieves in industry. It refreshes the parts which monopolies and Socialism do not reach.

The refreshing quality of the Government is their willingness to tackle some of the antique institutions of our economy. The monuments to Herbert Morrison's ghost — the old nationalised industries — are all being modernised and given a shake up. Surely a privilege which was granted by Charles II in the 1660s should not survive into the 1990s.

It is a happy chance that today Lord Young has chosen to define in his White Paper the new focus of his Department's activities for the rest of the Parliament. Paramount among those is to encourage competition and to tackle restrictive practices. I can think of no better or more appropriate starting point than the Post Office. We all know that it is hopelessly flawed.

We are all fond of our local postman who struggles through all kinds of weather and past the dogs to get the letters to our letter boxes, but behind him or her in the sorting office all the old Micky Mouse restrictive practices are going on—the practices which practically brought Fleet street to its knees. That is why our first-class letter post has deteriorated so badly and why we have to endure the annual Christmas threat of a Post Office strike. I am sure that the Post Office management would welcome competition, because it would help to bring its own unruly labour force into line.

A doubt expressed to me on this subject is that if we allowed competition into delivery of letters, urban Britain would get quick and cheap postal services while rural areas and offshore islands would lose out. Let me assure the House that that theory is completely without foundation. The private sector delivers milk and newspapers to the most remote corners of our country without the need for monopoly milkmen or paperboys. Nor do we need to worry about the cost of delivering those letters. The cost of a bar of chocolate is exactly the same in the Orkneys as it is in Orpington. In other words, when the private sector is in charge it is not worth the trouble to make an exception and to charge more for long distances.

Another doubt that is raised is whether the existing commercial delivery services, such as TNT and Postplan plc, are interested in delivering letters. That really does not matter. I do not know whether they are or not. When th was a strike in the Post Office in 1971, within a few d 562 contractors up and down the country had applied licences to deliver letters. With even more remarka speed they formed a network that they called association of mail services, and they covered the wh country. That happened despite the fact that competit had been suppressed for more than 300 years.

I believe that the Government have the power under Post Office Act 1969 to suspend the Post Office monop or reduce the minimum charge currently imposed by from £1 to say 5p. No special legislation is needed to that.

All hon. Members are in the House as a result o competitive process. Democracy involves alternatives, all hon. Members nominally support the right of the pu to political choice. A monopoly such as the Post Offic an exclusive privilege to supply a service with competition and is therefore undemocratic.

If the Labour party is opposed to deregulation of post, is it also opposed to competition in other areas wh we take competition for granted? Would it approve o state monopoly in the provision of shoes, trous biscuits, cars or other types of service? The Socialists not dare to reveal their true colours on this issue beca if they did, they would face public ridicule and electo humiliation. Instead, they seek to defend the remain pockets of monopoly trades union privilege on the ord of their trades union paymasters. That is the only poss reason for opposing my Bill.

Mr. Dave Nellist (Coventry, South-East): In oppos the Bill, I wish to begin by placing on record my tha for the help that has been given to me by my comrade, hon. Friend the Member for Falkirk, East (Mr. Ewi and to say at the outset that we intend to divide the Ho I also thank my right hon. Friend the Member Chesterfield (Mr. Benn), a former Postmaster-General, his assistance.

The Post Office letter monopoly has existed for alm 400 years. Recently it was confirmed in Telecommunications Act 1984, which set a lower limi £1 per letter on the charge for private delivery. operation of a national planned and co-ordinated ser with universal rates of delivery has made British po services the envy of the world. That was admitted by Institute of Economic Affairs, one of the organisati which briefed the hon. Member for Billericay (M Gorman). That is a Right-wing body, which rece confirmed that the Post Office comes out well international comparison.

The Post Office has been profitable for at least 10 ye It has contributed £400 million to the Treasury during period and its after-tax profits to April 1987 were £ million, not least because of the work and effort put in postal workers throughout the country, as a result which productivity has risen by 20 per cent. over the five years. That is why the fat cats in the City of Lon and the so-called learned institutes such as IEA and Adam Smith Institute are awaiting with glee the picki from the next round of the Prime Minister's sale of century, which is being trailed today by the hon. Mem for Billericay.

A year ago, the Right-wing Centre for Policy Stu advocated the phased privatisation of the Post Of Since then, the Post Office has been split and reorgani

into four separate businesses, resulting in managers being bigger fish in smaller ponds. The eyes of the Right are firmly on Girobank and the counter services, not only because those businesses are worth £86,000 million, but because the counter services occupy valuable and profitable high street sites in every town and city in the country.

Despite the Prime Minister's election promises that the royal mail was safe from privatisation, the pressure is clearly building up from the Right wing, and it will have to be met by a national campaign by postal workers, supported by other trade unionists inside and outside the industry, to defend our publicly-owned service from the privateers and the vultures of the Right of society.

The Post Office has 100,000 letter boxes, 28,000 vans, and 45,000 delivery staff on our streets every morning. In the few days before Christmas they delivered 100 million items each day, which is more than twice as much as all its competitors deliver in a year. There has been an enormous growth in the past five years in the delivery of mail — about 25 per cent. since 1982. Sir Bryan Nicholson predicts a further 6·5 per cent. growth in this financial year. The fact that there were 91 strikes between April and November last year is the result of continued attacks by management on all aspects of the working conditions of postal staff. In my view, and in the view of other London Members, postal staff were justified in campaigning before Christmas for a reduction in their 43-hour working week; it was done not only for their own benefit but to increase the number of full-time staff, to reduce the number of casual staff and to make a dent in the horrific levels of mass unemployment that we have had in the past nine years under a Tory Government.

The Bill is about lifting the letter monopoly. It would have dramatic effects on rural communities. In my view —I suspect it is the view of most hon. Members—mail is a social service, especially in this era of divided and elderly families. Servicing rural areas, particularly the outlying areas, is inherently unprofitable at 18p a letter. The present inter-city traffic subsidises letters between smaller towns and villages and outlying areas to the tune of £130 million a year which is the cost of subsidisation; that is 6 per cent. of the turnover of the royal mail. If the letter monopoly went, the universal post and stamp would inevitably go. Letters to people living outside cities would cost as much as three or four times the present rate. The 75p letter could become a reality. The Tories prate on about the supposed benefits of competitive pressures. Those pressures would inevitably force the abandonment of door-to-door delivery for all areas and the introduction of collection boxes in small towns, and villages, and on the high streets. The cities would not be immune either. Even in central London, without the Post Office letter monopoly, the level of competition facing the Post Office would mean that it would need the same number of offices and delivery staff to provide its services. But if the volume of traffic went down, the pressure would force charges to rise.

The gainers would be the Rupert Murdochs of this world, with his firm TNT. They wait like vultures for the pickings of big business and the big City trade. The losers would be the millions who do not live in urban areas, and the thousands of postal workers, whose jobs would be put in jeopardy.

The hon. Member for Billericay says that rural postal services would not suffer. But higher postal charges for those living outside the big cities would act like an additional local tax. The Right wing that supports the arguments of the hon. Member for Billericay, such as the Institute of Economic Affairs, argues that people living in rural areas should not expect to have better treatment than those who live in cities. It says that people choose whether to live in rural areas, with long drives to their doors, or to live in accessible urban blocks of flats. Some commuters who live 20 or 30 miles from London may take that decision. I thought until today that the Tory argument was in favour of the preservation of rural communities, and not only because most of their seats are in those areas. The pressure that will be put on those who do not live in rural areas by choice but were born and brought up there will be the responsibility of those who vote for the Bill.

According to *The Economist*, courier services are springing up in London like weeds. There is Postplan, Link Up, Business Post Ltd. and Metro Associates. In November I drew to the attention of the House the fact that there is now one in Coventry called Coventry Couriers. On 10 November I asked for a statement from the Department of Trade and Industry. I have waited in deafening silence for that statement. Coventry Couriers is a cowboy business which charges 10p an item, breaking the 1981 legal monopoly under which such letters should not be delivered for a charge of less than £1 per item. The firm charges £1 but offers a 90 per cent. discount if people pay their bills straightaway. It is operating under that margin of legality under this so-called law and order Government.

I have here some letters delivered by that firm. One about immunisation was delivered to my two-year-old daughter, Charlotte, from the area health authority in Coventry on 12 December. I have letters from various local firms such as estate agents and stationers. The franking is designed to look exactly like Post Office franking so as to give a veneer of respectability to the service. That firm is living like a leech off the pressure on the area health authority to cut its costs because of the £1·5 million cut in its budget.

If this is a Government of law and order, what action is the Department of Trade and Industry taking about these illegal operations? Why have there not been prosecutions? Why does the DTI not stop these people breaking the Tories' own rules? The Tories seem to have a pathological hatred of publicly-owned industries. They denigrate them. Then, after privatisation—and it takes a warped imagination to come out with such a phrase—we are all expected to believe that BT is now magic; those were the words of the hon. Member for Billericay.

The Tories feed on the fact that nationalised industries in the last 40 years were saddled with debts and lavish compensation payments. Because all the old managers were still in charge, the miners said in the late '40s, "We are a new broom with old bristles." Nationalised industries may be state owned, but they are still managed by people who are inherently against public ownership. I believe that Sir Bryan Nicholson falls into that category. Such people are not there to defend publicly owned industries and to extend them but to prepare them for privatisation. Those industries have failed in private hands, as we saw in the case of power, coal, steel and transport. Yet we, the taxpayers and the working people, are being saddled with their debts and compensation payments.

There is an alternative. We could restore the image of nationalised industries and give credence to our

[Mr. Dave Nellist]

forefathers and mothers who campaigned in the Labour movement for public ownership by having genuine public ownership. Those who work in the Post Office and in other nationalised industries, together with the trade union movement representing the wider population and the Government, should organise the industries on a tripartite basis to provide not for the pirates and the privateers whom the hon. Member for Billericay represents, but for the whole population, including the rural communities which my hon. Friends and I represent. I urge the House to reject the Bill.

Question put, pursuant to Standing Order No. 19 (Motions for leave to bring in Bills and nomination of Select Committees at commencement of public business):—

The House divided: Ayes 118, Noes 202.

Division No. 128] **[5.23 pm**

AYES

Aitken, Jonathan
Alexander, Richard
Alison, Rt Hon Michael
Amos, Alan
Arbuthnot, James
Ashby, David
Atkinson, David
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Banks, Robert *(Harrogate)*
Beaumont-Dark, Anthony
Bellingham, Henry
Bennett, Nicholas *(Pembroke)*
Bevan, David Gilroy
Blackburn, Dr John G.
Body, Sir Richard
Bonsor, Sir Nicholas
Boswell, Tim
Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Boyson, Rt Hon Dr Sir Rhodes
Braine, Rt Hon Sir Bernard
Brandon-Bravo, Martin
Brown, Michael *(Brigg & Cl't's)*
Bruce, Ian *(Dorset South)*
Buck, Sir Antony
Budgen, Nicholas
Burns, Simon
Carlisle, John, *(Luton N)*
Chapman, Sydney
Clark, Dr Michael *(Rochford)*
Clark, Sir W. *(Croydon S)*
Conway, Derek
Coombs, Anthony *(Wyre F'rest)*
Coombs, Simon *(Swindon)*
Curry, David
Davis, David *(Boothferry)*
Day, Stephen
Devlin, Tim
Dickens, Geoffrey
Dicks, Terry
Dover, Den
Fallon, Michael
Fookes, Miss Janet
Forth, Eric
French, Douglas
Gale, Roger
Gardiner, George
Gill, Christopher
Glyn, Dr Alan
Gorman, Mrs Teresa
Gow, Ian
Gower, Sir Raymond
Grant, Sir Anthony *(CambsSW)*
Greenway, Harry *(Ealing N)*
Grylls, Michael
Hayes, Jerry
Hicks, Mrs Maureen *(Wolv' NE)*
Holt, Richard
Howell, Rt Hon David *(G'dford)*
Hughes, Robert G. *(Harrow W)*
Janman, Timothy
Jones, Gwilym *(Cardiff N)*
Jones, Robert B *(Herts W)*
King, Roger *(B'ham N'thfield)*
Knight, Greg *(Derby North)*
Knowles, Michael
Lawrence, Ivan
Lloyd, Sir Ian *(Havant)*
Lord, Michael
McCrindle, Robert
Macfarlane, Sir Neil
MacKay, Andrew *(E Berkshire)*
McLoughlin, Patrick
McNair-Wilson, M. *(Newbury)*
Marland, Paul
Marshall, John *(Hendon S)*
Marshall, Michael *(Arundel)*
Meyer, Sir Anthony
Miller, Hal
Mills, Iain
Montgomery, Sir Fergus
Mudd, David
Nelson, Anthony
Paice, James
Pattie, Rt Hon Sir Geoffrey
Porter, David *(Waveney)*
Powell, William *(Corby)*
Raffan, Keith
Raison, Rt Hon Timothy
Redwood, John
Rhodes James, Robert
Riddick, Graham
Rost, Peter
Rowe, Andrew
Sackville, Hon Tom
Sayeed, Jonathan
Shelton, William *(Streatham)*
Shepherd, Richard *(Aldridge)*
Sims, Roger
Smith, Tim *(Beaconsfield)*
Spicer, Sir Jim *(Dorset W)*
Stewart, Allan *(Eastwood)*
Tapsell, Sir Peter
Taylor, Ian *(Esher)*
Taylor, John M *(Solihull)*
Thorne, Neil
Townend, John *(Bridlington)*
Townsend, Cyril D. *(B'heath)*
Tracey, Richard
Vaughan, Sir Gerard
Walker, Bill *(T'side North)*
Ward, John
Watts, John
Wheeler, John
Widdecombe, Miss Ann
Wiggin, Jerry
Winterton, Nicholas
Woodcock, Mike
Yeo, Tim

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. David Wilshire
Mr. David Evans.

NOES

Adams, Allen *(Paisley N)*
Allen, Graham
Alton, David
Anderson, Donald
Archer, Rt Hon Peter
Armstrong, Ms Hilary
Ashdown, Paddy
Ashton, Joe
Barnes, Harry *(Derbyshire NE)*
Barron, Kevin
Battle, John
Beckett, Margaret
Beggs, Roy
Benn, Rt Hon Tony
Bennett, A. F. *(D'nt'n & R'dish)*
Bermingham, Gerald
Bidwell, Sydney
Blair, Tony
Blunkett, David
Boyes, Roland
Bradley, Keith
Brown, Nicholas *(Newcastle E)*
Bruce, Malcolm *(Gordon)*
Buchan, Norman
Buckley, George
Caborn, Richard
Callaghan, Jim
Campbell, Menzies *(Fife NE)*
Canavan, Dennis
Carlile, Alex *(Mont'g)*
Clarke, Tom *(Monklands W)*
Clay, Bob
Clelland, David
Clwyd, Mrs Ann
Cohen, Harry
Cook, Frank *(Stockton N)*
Cook, Robin *(Livingston)*
Corbett, Robin
Cousins, Jim
Cox, Tom
Crowther, Stan
Cryer, Bob
Cummings, J.
Cunliffe, Lawrence
Dalyell, Tam
Darling, Alastair
Davies, Ron *(Caerphilly)*
Davis, Terry *(B'ham Hodge H'l)*
Dewar, Donald
Dixon, Don
Dobson, Frank
Doran, Frank
Douglas, Dick
Dunnachie, James
Dunwoody, Hon Mrs Gwyneth
Eadie, Alexander
Eastham, Ken
Evans, John *(St Helens N)*
Fatchett, Derek
Faulds, Andrew
Fearn, Ronald
Field, Frank *(Birkenhead)*
Fields, Terry *(L'pool B G'n)*
Fisher, Mark
Flannery, Martin
Flynn, Paul
Forsythe, Clifford *(Antrim S)*
Foster, Derek
Fraser, John
Fyfe, Mrs Maria
Galbraith, Samuel
Galloway, George
Garrett, John *(Norwich South)*
Garrett, Ted *(Wallsend)*
Godman, Dr Norman A
Golding, Mrs Llin
Gordon, Ms Mildred
Grant, Bernie *(Tottenh)*
Griffiths, Win *(Bridgend)*
Grocott, Bruce
Harman, Ms Harriet
Hattersley, Rt Hon Roy
Haynes, Frank
Heffer, Eric S.
Hinchliffe, David
Hogg, N. *(C'nauld & K)*
Holland, Stuart
Home Robertson, John
Hood, James
Howarth, George *(Kno)*
Howell, Rt Hon D. *(S'h)*
Howells, Geraint
Hoyle, Doug
Hughes, Robert *(Aber)*
Hughes, Sean *(Knowsl)*
Hughes, Simon *(South)*
Hume, John
Illsley, Eric
Ingram, Adam
Jones, Barry *(Alyn & D)*
Jones, Ieuan *(Ynys Mo)*
Jones, Martyn *(Clwyd)*
Kaufman, Rt Hon Gera
Kilfedder, James
Kinnock, Rt Hon Neil
Kirkwood, Archy
Lambie, David
Lamond, James
Leadbitter, Ted
Leighton, Ron
Lewis, Terry
Litherland, Robert
Livingstone, Ken
Lofthouse, Geoffrey
Loyden, Eddie
McAllion, John
McAvoy, Tom
McCartney, Ian
Macdonald, Calum
McFall, John
McKay, Allen *(Penisto)*
McKelvey, William
McLeish, Henry
McNamara, Kevin
McTaggart, Bob
McWilliam, John
Madden, Max
Mahon, Mrs Alice
Marek, Dr John
Marshall, David *(Shet)*
Marshall, Jim *(Leices)*
Martin, Michael *(Spri)*
Martlew, Eric
Maxton, John
Meacher, Michael
Meale, Alan
Michael, Alun
Michie, Bill *(Sheffield)*
Michie, Mrs Ray *(Arg)*
Millan, Rt Hon Bruce
Mitchell, Austin *(G't G)*
Molyneaux, Rt Hon Ja
Moonie, Dr Lewis
Morgan, Rhodri
Morley, Elliott
Mowlam, Mrs Marjori

Mullin, Chris	Spearing, Nigel
Murphy, Paul	Steinberg, Gerald
Nicholson, Miss E. *(Devon W)*	Stott, Roger
O'Brien, William	Straw, Jack
O'Neill, Martin	Taylor, Mrs Ann *(Dewsbury)*
Orme, Rt Hon Stanley	Taylor, Rt Hon J. D. *(S'ford)*
Patchett, Terry	Taylor, Matthew *(Truro)*
Pike, Peter	Thomas, Dafydd Elis
Powell, Ray *(Ogmore)*	Thompson, Jack *(Wansbeck)*
Primarolo, Ms Dawn	Turner, Dennis
Quin, Ms Joyce	Vaz, Keith
Randall, Stuart	Wall, Pat
Redmond, Martin	Wallace, James
Rees, Rt Hon Merlyn	Waller, Gary
Reid, John	Walley, Ms Joan
Robertson, George	Wareing, Robert N.
Robinson, Geoffrey	Welsh, Michael *(Doncaster N)*
Ross, Ernie *(Dundee W)*	Wigley, Dafydd
Rowlands, Ted	Williams, Rt Hon A. J.
Ruddock, Ms Joan	Williams, Alan W. *(Carm'then)*
Sedgemore, Brian	Wilson, Brian
Sheerman, Barry	Winnick, David
Sheldon, Rt Hon Robert	Wise, Mrs Audrey
Skinner, Dennis	Worthington, Anthony
Smith, Andrew *(Oxford E)*	Wray, James
Smith, C. *(Isl'ton & F'bury)*	Young, David *(Bolton SE)*
Smith, Rt Hon J. *(Monk'ds E)*	
Snape, Peter	Tellers for the Noes:
Soames, Hon Nicholas	Mr. Harry Ewing and
Soley, Clive	Mr. Dave Nellist.

Question accordingly negatived.

Orders of the Day

Social Security Bill

As amended (in the Standing Committee), considered.

New Clause 5

UP-RATING ORDERS

'(1) It is hereby declared that the orders to which section applies were validly made and that the Secretary State is under no duty to revoke them.

(2) The orders to which this section applies are—

(a) the Social Security Benefits Up-rating (No. 2) O 1987;

(b) the Occupational Pensions (Revaluation) O 1987.'—*[Mr. Scott.]*

Brought up, and read the First time.

5.34 pm

The Minister for Social Security and the Disabled (Nicholas Scott): I beg to move, That the clause be rea Second time.

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Mr. Harold Walker): With th will be convenient to consider Government amendm Nos. 19 to 21.

Mr. Scott: The amendments are consequential on new clause.

The House knows that the error in the calculatio the retail price index has had an effect on the level social security benefits. Indeed, in the statement th made to the House on 18 December I set out our plan special payments and we are pressing ahead with t arrangements. I made clear our full recognition of moral obligation in the matter and that we were d something about it, but the House has recognised tha were not bound legally to make these payments, and we acted in good faith in basing the benefit rate payment on the RPI as published.

Nevertheless, we believe that it is desirable to intro an amendment to the Bill to put beyond doubt the vali of the levels set out in the uprating order which will c into effect in April. That will be the effect of the clause, and it is because we want to do it at the ear opportunity that we are introducing it on Report.

Similar considerations apply to the Occupati Pensions (Revaluation) Order, which likewise require increase in line with prices.

I believe that the reasons for the new clause are understood and I commend it to the House.

Question put and agreed to.

Clause read a Second time, and added to the Bill.

New Clause 1

INDEXING OF CHILD BENEFIT

'In section 63(3) of the Social Security Act 1986, fo *(d)*" there shall be substituted", *(d)* or *(f)*".'—*[Mr. Cook.]*

Brought up, and read the First time.

Mr. Robin Cook (Livingston): I beg to move, That clause be read a Second time.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: With this it will be convenie consider new clause 4—*Uprating of Child Benefit—*

[Mr. Deputy Speaker]

'In paragraph *(b)* of subsection (3) of Section 63 of the Social Security Act 1986 leave out:—

"*(c)*or *(d)* above" and insert:—

"*(c)*, *(d)* or, in any Order having effect on or after 10th April 1989, *(f)*, (child benefit), above.".'.

Mr. Cook: The effect of the new clause may not be immediately apparent, but I am advised that it will correctly give effect to our intention, which is to include child benefit among those benefits which are automatically index-linked under the 1986 Act and to prevent it from suffering the fate of benefits that are not automatically index-linked, such as the death grant, which was allowed to wither until it was of such insignificance that the Government were able to move in and kill it off.

The hon. Member for Kensington (Sir B. Rhys Williams) has tabled the similar new clause 4. I note that the hon. Gentleman has been heavily briefing the press that our new clause would take immediate effect whereas his would not take effect until next year. I would not be unhappy if my new clause had the effect of forcing an increase in child benefit this April, but I would be somewhat surprised if it had that effect since we have already passed the Up-rating (No. 2) Order, which gives effect to increases this April. I rather suspect that the effect of the hon. Gentleman's new clause and mine would be identical, although the wording may be different.

For the avoidance of doubt, I assure the hon. Gentleman that I shall be voting for both new clauses and, as they both achieve identical objectives, it would be strange to differentiate between them. I appreciate that some Conservative Members may, for political reasons, wish to vote for his new clause rather than mine. I only urge them all to agree to vote for the same one, to maintain voting strength.

Sir Brandon Rhys Williams (Kensington): I am grateful to the hon. Gentleman for allowing me to interrupt him so early in his speech. I felt that it might help the House if I were to explain. I was advised that if the remaining stages of this Bill were completed quickly and his new clause were adopted, it would be possible for the uprating called for to be implemented in time for the coming April. So there would be a difference in meaning between my new clause 4 and his new clause 1, in the unlikely event that the Bill completed all its stages within, say, the next three or four weeks.

Mr. Cook: I should regard such an outcome as delightful, but perhaps I could put it to the Minister that we are willing to compromise on this point and if that is what would oblige him to resist our new clause, I am willing to come or go with him about April.

Our new clause is prompted by the recent history of child benefit which twice in the past three years has not been uprated in line with inflation. As a result, mothers in Britain now lose £30 per child per year that they would have received had the benefit been uprated to its value in 1979. The sum of £30 is significant to a mother operating on a tight budget; it is the equivalent of a good winter coat or two new pairs of shoes. It would be sufficient to keep a child well shod throughout the year.

If that is not bad enough, it is clear that the new Secretary of State for Social Services has what can only be described as a vigorous distaste for child benefit which he has hinted at on a number of occasions. In reply to a number of my hon. Friends in November, he assu that child benefit under this Government would "under constant review", which many people ou House and some Opposition Members not unre interpreted as meaning that child benefit would constant threat.

That statement has been made by the Governm the election. It contrasts markedly with stateme by the Conservative party at election time. It possible to fill a slim dictionary of quotati expressions of support for child benefit by Co Members around polling day. Those quotations the statement by the Prime Minister in 1979, whe that the Conservatives were impatient to imple child benefit system, to the statement by the curr Secretary to the Treasury when he was the M State, Department of Health and Social Security during the last general election that child bene continue as a non-means-tested universal paymen the mother and tax-free. He said that there ough question about that.

It is my objective to maximise cross-party su child benefit. I will, therefore, spare the House m about that commitment being consigned to oubliette Central Office maintains for manifesto ments. Instead, I want to undertake the perhaps duty for an Opposition Member of urging Co Members to recognise that their manifesto was c to stick with it.

I begin that task by reminding those Mem child benefit replaced a tax allowance. It may to like child benefit if they think of it as a tax a Had it remained a tax allowance, it would almos have done better under this Government than i cash benefit. Personal tax allowances have gone this Government by some 15 per cent. By co child benefit has gone down by 3 per cent. Th strikingly odd result that the tax allowance to man, which is supposed to assist him with th maintaining a wife, has increased in real value cash benefit offered to him towards the cost of m his children has gone down.

5.45 pm

Most critics of child benefit persist in misunde it. They treat it solely as a means of helping the the main function of child benefit is to redistri not from the rich to the poor, but from the c families with children, and that is an objective nearly every civilised country has some mecha only do they all provide help with the cost of chi overwhelmingly, the countries of western Euro more help than we do.

The income figures for households with chil how right those countries are. Two thirds of h with children have an average income below th average; two thirds of households without chi an average income above the national avera figures demonstrate what we all know from experience, which is that the period of raising a period of double pressure, when households fa income and at the same time higher costs.

That brings me to the second reason why I b Conservative Members should wish to mainta value of child benefit. I note that the buzz w Administration in social security is "targ

targeting is the criterion by which we are to judge child benefit, we are obliged to award it an alpha plus. If the objective is to help with the costs of children, child benefit hits 100 per cent. of its targets. Its take-up is absolute; it is simple; it is easy to understand; and it is well known. It is a universal benefit and there is, therefore, no stigma in claiming it. Collecting it can be done with dignity because it is part of one entitlement as a citizen.

Better still, the benefit goes to the mother and, in practice, it is the mother who still, in nine cases out of ten, pays for the grocery basket. It is interesting that a survey by the Child Poverty Action Group discovered that 95 per cent. of mothers claiming child benefit said that they at least sometimes used that benefit to pay for children's clothing. One is six said that they always used it to pay for clothing. It is clear that those mothers were using child benefit as the means by which they ensured that their children were decently clad. For women unable to work because they have young children, child benefit provides the only income that they can call their own and on which they can depend weekly.

This is one of the occasions when the decision of the House may be affected by the lopsided male bias in our representation in the Chamber. If the composition of the Chamber remotely approached a fair representation of the proportion of women in our society, I do not believe that there would be a hope of our tolerating the freezing of child benefit.

So far, I have argued that it is important to maintain child benefit because it redistributes income from the childless to families with children and because, within households with children, it redistributes spending power from the male to the mother. But it is also important in helping families out of the poverty trap, and it may be worth recalling that the benefit was brought in to replace a tax allowance precisely because a cash benefit gives greater help to low-income families who may often be too poor to pay tax. Even today, 1·3 million families in receipt of child benefit pay no income tax. For them, the introduction of child benefit was a progressive measure which has given them help that they would otherwise not have received.

There is another subsidiary role of child benefit in helping families out of poverty. The aspect that makes it possible to help families out of poverty is precisely that feature which its critics most object to. It is a flat-rate benefit which is not means-tested and so it does not penalise the families whose father betters himself by getting that bit extra in income. The Government appear determined to push more and more families on to means-tested benefits. The decision to freeze child benefit last November makes another 15,000 households liable to means-tested benfits by leaving them with an income below the entitlement level of means-tested benefits.

The problem is not only that we are ending up with more households on means-tested benefits, but that, at the same time, the Government are sharply accelerating the rate at which those means-tested benefits taper off. Thus, housing benefit, as from next April, will taper off at the rate of 85p for every additional pound in net income. The new family credit will taper off at 70p for every additional pound in income. Many families, as a result, will end up with a marginal rate of taxation of 90 per cent. — a higher rate than is paid by the wealthiest family in the land, but which on this occasion will be met by some of the poorest households in the land.

Child benefit is one of the last surviving wa softening that ferocious marginal rate of taxation, gives families an incentive to struggle out of the p trap. Its value is dramatically illustrated if we cons family of four in which both parents are out of While child benefit exists, one of those parents ne obtain a job with a wage of only £130 a week to lea family 10 per cent. better off than they are whil parent is unemployed. If child benefit were not the parent would need to land a job paying £190 a w achieve the same effect. That is a difference of appreciate that there is at present no proposal to r child benefit in its entirety, but the longer that child b is frozen, the higher the parent must jump in starting to escape the poverty trap.

That is an argument which weighs with Oppo Members. I am bound to say, however, that it ou weigh all the more heavily with Conservative Me who belong to a party which readily talks the langu incentives, independence and self-reliance. If the sincere in seeking to achieve a society that represents values, they ought to cherish child benefit, rathe allowing its value to decline in relation to means- benefits.

Most hon. Members will have received a briefing the organisation "Save Child Benefit", and I am sur they have diligently read the text of that memora However, in case they omitted to do so, I invite th look at the last page, which lists the 50 members of Child Benefit". It is an exalted collection of memb the poverty lobby and the women's movement includes some remarkable establishment names, su the Church of England Children's Society, the M Union, the National Federation of Women's Inst the Royal Scottish Society for Prevention of Cru Children and the Salvation Army.

Those are not front organisations for the L movement. I am not aware that we are affiliated Mothers Union, or that it is affiliated to our consti parties. That is not the radical end, the extremist fri the feminist movement, but the establishment i women's movement. It is, in a sense, rooted i backyards of Conservative Members, and my new is rooted in their own history.

Leafing through past debates on the issue which s back for more than a decade, I was delighted to not when child benefit was introduced in 1975 Conservative party tabled an amendment to th seeking to provide for the regular indexing of child b with inflation. Indeed, the amendment was moved Minister of Trade and Industry, who has just announcing to the House the abolition of a large p his Department's function. His amendment was militant than mine: it attempted to provide for inde of child benefit every six months, and I cheerfully co to the Minister that that goes rather further than prepared to go.

My new clause is more modest and moderate, and only an annual uprating of the value of child b However, the case for that uprating is made a stronger because, since 1975, we have experience effect of the Rooker-Wise amendment to the Finan of 1977, which provided for annual uprating c thresholds. Now, nearly every other significant long national insurance benefit is uprated annually, as

[Mr. Cook]

the tax thresholds. Child benefit, however, is conspicuously subject to the vagaries of the Government and what the current Secretary of State for Social Services can persuade the Chancellor of the Exchequer to disgorge.

There is another instructive parallel with the Rooker-Wise amendment. The amendment was carried by support from Government Back Benchers who voted with the Opposition. Together, Opposition and Government Back Benchers were able to force the Government of the day to do what was right. If all those who have expressed support in the past for the uprating of child benefit, and all Conservative Members who are known to have made strong statements of support for it retention, were to vote with us tonight, we should achieve the same historic victory. All that is required is for them to show the same courage and join us in the Lobbies to protect and give a guaranteed future to the one benefit that mothers can claim as their own.

Sir Brandon Rhys Williams: I am glad to have the opportunity to commend my new clause 4 to the House. I trust that my right hon. and hon. Friends will shortly make known that they have decided to accept it, because there are many very good reasons for their doing so, many of which have been put to the House ably and, in my opinion, convincingly by the hon. Member for Livingston (Mr. Cook), who has just spoken for the Opposition.

As the hon. Gentleman pointed out, the difficulty in which the House finds itself is really because of the confused history of child benefits, which many people have forgotten. They have forgotten that such benefits emanated from the old child tax allowances. It is only some 10 years since the old tax allowance for children was done away with, and child benefit was put in its stead. But that has already been forgotten, so people do not realise that their child benefit is the way in which the Government reduce the burden of taxation for families.

Equally, of course, child benefits grew out of the family allowances that were brought in in 1945, with all-party agreement. Family allowances, because they were not taxed and did not arise from contributions, did not become part of the national insurance system either. They were a very popular benefit from the start, always very cheap to administer and always with a very high take-up. That remains the case, although the name has now been changed to child benefit. However, because they have never quite belonged in any of the major parts of the redistribution of income system, nobody quite understands where child benefits now fit into the general structure of welfare and family income support.

There are some people—I do not personally think that there are very many, but I know that there are some in this House, and there may be a certain number outside — who feel embarrassed about claiming their child benefit, because they have forgotten the history, and do not understand where the money is coming from and why they should be entitled to it. They feel that it is money for nothing, and that they have not done anything to deserve it. I personally think that mothers deserve credit for the work that they undertake on behalf of the nation, and that we should not be stingy with mothers who have children to support.

But there is also a kind of snobbery, which is unattractive, in the mouths of people who say that they do not need child benefit. They are implying t two nations, and that they belong to the su the country which is able to look after itself a and does not need help from anyone. The course, that there is also the subsidiary s people who cannot manage and have to b although it is no doubt humiliating for ther

I absolutely reject that type of approach it is quite wrong for the Conservative party o of it to slip into that attitude. The people wh would accept a tax cut because they woul some way it was their own money coming Equally, they would draw their nation pensions because they would not feel asha something to which they felt that they had co to which they were therefore entitled. How not quite understand child benefit, so they l very clear that they are embarrassed by it an not need it.

6 pm

There is also, I am afraid, still a degree resentment because of the fact that the chil direct to the mother. The men probably c complain outright that that is the root of th but we recall the difficulties that the Labou years ago when it was decided that the ta which of course were for the benefit of the should be done away with and that the mo made good instead to the same family, but a direct credit to the mother. There was a p the Labour party over the "wallet to hand Now, unfortunately, we find that Con divided on similar lines where they see tha being transferred from the taxpayer to his

I think that we can rise above those misu This debate gives us the opportunity to loo I am grateful to those hon. Members who h new clause 4. I trust that the Department Social Security has taken note of all the argu have been advancing in recent weeks. Som that it would be better just to pay child be of need because that would target the b people who really need help. That inde happening in the Bill, where we are mo unpopular family income supplement to the — but, I think, still defective — family explain why I do not think that that form the right form of targeting.

In 1977 the number of supplementary be was under 3 million. At the end of 1987, claimants had risen to more than 5 mill significant social change and a significant number of people obliged to go to the DH have enough money to maintain themse families above the poverty line. If we loo than the claimants and take in the whole numbers are much more serious and in Looking at the total number of people in means-tested benefits of one kind or an including supplementary benefit, housing b family income supplement, the number w 14 million. That is a serious figure. By 19 up to 16 million.

But worse than that, from a parliament I received in the past few weeks, it seems

another 4 million or 6 million people who are entitled to means-tested benefit, but who do not claim it either because they do not understand that they are entitled or because they are too proud to claim — which is very often the reason. It is particularly important not to drive those people down, as they see it, to become second-rate citizens. That surely should be a Conservative principle. Indeed, I know that my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Social Services has embraced the idea of helping people out of dependency. He made it known that that was one of his particular targets when he took over the job. Yet he is going about it in precisely the wrong way.

I think that we ought not to be increasing the numbers. Quite apart from the social factors, looking at the workings of the economy, it is wrong to put people in a position where they are not supposed to be working because they are in receipt of benefit. What we do by that is to add to the numbers of people who are in the inert sector of the economy and have to be supported by other people's efforts rather than belonging to the dynamic sector where people work and save to make the economy work. It is bad economics and bad social policy to add to the number of people on means-tested benefits.

Let us suppose that child benefit continues to diminish in real value as it is diminishing as a result of the decision that the Department has announced for the current year. That is a drop of about 4 per cent. in the real value. That would mean that there would be still more people on the means test. Simultaneously, we are proposing to add substantially to the number of people on the means test by the introduction of the community charge. I do not want to debate the merits of that measure, but we have recognised that the community charge will be more than people who earn very low incomes or who have no incomes at all can pay. They will be shovelled on to the means test as well. If more than 20 million are already entitled and we are to add a whole lot more, targeting on the basis of the means test has got to stop—otherwise we will have more have-nots in the country than haves. The dynamics of the economy will go quite wrong.

The decision not to uprate the child benefit this year, with only a 4 per cent. difference—I agree that that is not a great figure — is important. From another parliamentary answer, I learned that 15,000 more families with 30,000 dependent children are expected to become entitled to income-related benefits. We do not know exactly what number that means, but it must be at least another 50,000 people who will be thrown on to the heap by the Department's decision just on this matter of uprating child benefit in this one year.

I think that it was a step in the wrong direction for several reasons. Perhaps there is something that will appeal to Conservative Members. In the Conservative manifesto, they will see that we said:

"Child benefit will continue to be paid as now."

It is possible to read into that a double meaning, I suppose. If people were relying on its real value continuing in the light of that commitment, it has already been proved that they read it wrong. It has already ceased to be true that child benefit will continue to be paid as it was at the time of the general election. It has fallen to what it was, less 4 per cent. I do not think that my right hon. Friends should invite their supporters on the Conservative Benches to play a trick such as that on 10,000 mothers in every average-sized parliamentary constituency. More than 6·5 million mothers draw this benefit and many will have no was said about child benefit at the time of the because they value it.

We are being invited now to play a trick mothers and say, "Aha, you have got it wrong. sentence really meant was that it would remain at arithmetical figure, regardless of its real value." in business in the private sector, one cannot affo tricks like that on one's customers, or one will n business for long. I do not believe that we should million mothers in that way either. That is my point of view.

There is a fundamental reason for giving sp to families. I do not want to take up too m particularly as we were late starting on th However, this is an important opportunity to g ground, and many people are involved in what t is going to decide about this matter.

A breadwinner with children and a sing without dependants get the same rate for the job work. The employer is not called on, and c expected, to differentiate between the needs o person and the needs of a breadwinner with a n dependants. The employer cannot make that d but the tax collector can. That was how it was d long ago as the end of the 18th century, when th tax system was brought in. William Pitt dec someone with children to support should be e claim a child allowance so that he did not pay as as someone with only a wife and himself, or hims to support.

That principle was the right one. It wa discontinued, I believe, for a time during the 19t and reinstated again in the tax system early in century. I think that we should stick to it, but not everyone is in the range of tax liability.

Mr. John Greenway (Ryedale): Will my ho accept that there are many single people on lo paying tax and that if we continue with his pr they will be contributing through the tax syste increased child benefit to couples with substantia who do not need them? Surely it is better for the available to be targeted on the growing number to whom my hon. Friend has referred. My hon. F elucidated that the number is growing; surel evidence that the Government's policy is wor evidence that we should be going in the opposite

Sir Brandon Rhys Williams: I do not think w that the Government's policy of freeing peo dependency is working. There has been a signi in the number of people who are dependent o tested benefit. More than that, single people wh pay tax should recognise that their tax goes into t and that part of the benefit goes to married cou children. But someone brought up those sing They should be willing to contribute to bringi next generation in their turn, even though the married and do not have children of their own. W to a continuing society and those who have had t of being brought up in Britain must recognise have a duty to those who will be brought up in future.

Mr. Frank Field (Birkenhead): Is not another the hon. Member for Kensington (Sir B. Rhys

[Mr. Frank Field]

to his hon. Friend the Member for Ryedale (Mr. Greenway) that he is mistaking where we should be making cuts so that we can reduce the rate of taxation? We should not be deploying that argument. We should not be comparing a low-waged single person with a well-off family. We should be looking at the whole range of tax allowances and phasing them out so that we can have tax rates of something like 13p in the pound. That would meet the point about increasing child benefit.

Sir Brandon Rhys Williams: We should sit in the House until midnight if I were to start again on the campaign for tax credit. We may touch on it on another occasion; I have not changed my views about it.

People who are not in the tax system cannot get a differentiation in their spending power because they have family responsibilities. As long ago as the end of the 18th century that problem was also recognised. It is nothing new. The magistrates in Speenhamland decided that they would use parish funds to subsidise poor families with children. Many people have laughed at them, and, because of the effect of its intervention in the labour market, the system had to be wound up.

The repeal of the Corn Laws in 1846 was a measure primarily to help large families, because they were the people who were most affected by the high prices of food. Free public education was established in 1870, with a similar effect. The 20th century saw the beginning of the national insurance system for dependants. In the 1940s the National Health Service was set up, which was to be of more use to a large family group than to a smaller one. In 1945 family allowances were introduced, and in the 1970s there was the family income supplement. Now, in 1988, we are embarking on family credit.

We recognise the value of all those measures, because we know that nutritional standards, a good environment, reasonable clothing and stable and secure family life are very important in the upbringing of the citizens of the next generation. Wherever the money comes from, the income of families with children should not be reduced. I regret the fact that this 4 per cent. reduction is on the programme for the coming year.

Is all this means testing the right way to help? More than half the mothers who claim child benefit are in families which pay more tax than the value of their benefits. Since we have dismantled child tax allowances, bringing that system back would be an administrative nightmare and would complicate PAYE for employers in a way that we cannot contemplate. The same applies to the ridiculous suggestion of bringing child benefit back into the tax system. That would be a clear example of churning and double counting. It is not a helpful suggestion.

For taxpayers, child benefit is their tax cut. If taxes are to be reduced this year, let them be targeted on families this time, by increasing child benefit rather than by releasing the money preferentially to single people, as happened in 1987. By his welcome and well-received tax cut of 2 per cent., the Chancellor actually gave more benefit to single people than to married couples, and married couples with children did not receive any particular benefit at all in recognition of their family responsibilities. That was wrong. This year, if tax cuts are again in the pipeline—as we are told—I trust that the Chancellor this time will think seriously about increasing the benefit to families and targeting ben preferentially by increasing child benefits the right way.

What is to be done for people on low i little tax or no tax at all? Do we carry down into dependency and leaving them credit, or do we try to find a way to give help which they can see to be their own m That is really what the Conservative seeking to do. I trust that my right hon. will take that obligation seriously and will have a golden opportunity to reform the not waste time. People should receive m support which they will not lose if they wo to better themselves.

Among the 4 to 6 million non-clai people in Kensington whom I know and because of their determination to keep from the need to apply for means-tes should be encouraging that spirit rathe more and more difficult for such people.

6.15 pm

The right answer is to rescue the na principle and add to the system the ben Pensioners accept their national ins without any humiliation, but people also of years unable to work at the start of should also be a national insurance resp

I agree with Winston Churchill, wh national insurance principle should through which no one can fall but abov rise as high as they are able. We shou principle and put it into effect. Everyon pay tax during their working years shou a member of the national insurance fund national insurance during the years of in themselves over the whole cycle of life, in as in retirement. Insured citizens in Brita above poverty all through life—at the as much as when they come to retire longer able to support themselves bec Under the insurance principle, they contributions during middle life.

We now have a system of contributions and flat-rate benefits that the Conservative party — by my no Joseph, in 1972. It was the right answer. the national insurance fund on a proper but it has not been followed up. This is t do so. I ask my hon. Friend the Minist to the debate to say whether the Govern undertaking to review the national in finances, its operations and its co particular reference to family income plainly the way to liberate millions fro give them back their self-respect.

Mr. Frank Field: I shall be brief, partl two speeches have covered the ground covered. However, I shall pick up one p hon. Friend the Member for Livingston his speech. He very ably drew one experience of the Labour Government i out how important it was for Conservati on their own conscience. Indeed, thin

1974-76 Government, most hon. Members would be hard-pressed to remember who was in that Government, but most hon. Members can remember the Lawson-Rooker-Wise amendment. It seems that the important moral that my hon. Friend was drawing, although he did not trouble to underline it, was that if Governments are to be effective, it is crucial that they should have independent Back Benchers behind them. We have one hon. Member in her place today, who, rightly, is remembered from that Parliament because she voted as she believed it was important to vote. When one is in opposition it is not always that easy to vote against the Whip. It must be many many times more difficult to vote against the Whip in government. During that period of the Labour Government two of my hon. Friends stood out—my hon. Friend the Member for Preston (Mrs. Wise), whose constituency was then Coventry, South-West, and my hon. Friend the Member for Birmingham, Perry Barr (Mr. Rooker).

I hope that tonight Conservative Members will act with similar courage. Time is often taken up, particularly by people in the Press Gallery, debating who will be the next on the Front Bench and who will be moved sideways or down, and that also commands a lot of interest among Members. But that is of momentary importance compared with influencing the course of Government. I am sad to say that the previous Labour Government was usually influenced when Back Benchers rather than Whips won control. I hope in the near future to serve as a Back Bencher when my hon. Friend the Member for Livingston is Secretary of State. I shall do my best to organise votes against him on those matters when, although his heart will be with us, the whipping system will be against us.

In some ways, the debate is simple, but it also has a complexity. When the Secretary of State made his uprating statement, perhaps because he was new in the job, he presented it as though there were clear choices. Today's debate shows that we do not have clear choices. The Government have a number of objectives, some of which can clash.

Some of the objectives touched upon by the hon. Member for Kensington (Sir B. Rhys Williams) are central to the Government's philosophy. It is said that the Government support the family. The hon. Gentleman drew attention to the importance of this benefit going to women as of right. That objective, which the Tory party holds high, is one side of the equation of competing objectives.

The Government also believe in tax equity—that at any one time a balance must be struck between what people contribute, given their different incomes and family responsibilities. It has been the Government's prejudice, with which I agree, that wherever there is doubt one should decide in favour of taxpayers with children and against those without such a responsibility.

That has been the rhetoric, but the sad fact is that the record of Budgets since 1979 shows that, despite what they say, the Government have weighted the tax system in favour of single people and childless couples and against those with children. Again, this is a chance for Tory Back Benchers to assert principles on which many of them have been elected during the past three years.

The hon. Member for Ryedale (Mr. Greenway) made a valid point in an intervention when he asked how we can defend the payment of child benefit to our constituents on £20,000 a year when many of our constituents pay tax on low incomes and are single. Can we defend su from single people on low incomes to those v on higher incomes?

I was not commending the ideas of the h for Kensington on tax credit when I interv proposing a much simpler scheme. Given tha time the Chancellor has forgone taxing 50 personal income—the present cost of all the and concessions that we give—if we ar about meeting the tax equity point for pe incomes, we should be looking at ways of those tax benefits so that we can massively re of tax. That is the right course to take to m made by the hon. Member for Ryedale. A per income would not then be making such a That is the proper way to deal with the mat proper to take away from people with childre meet the point. The tax equity point is on t of the equation when Government Back Be about this issue.

Mr. John Greenway: I am grateful Gentleman for his comments and for the point has been taken on board. However, do that when the House divides later this eveni so against the background of the existing ta not what might be produced at some future

Mr. Field: Just as my hon. Friends the Perry Barr and for Preston could vote only before them and made a big difference, so to vote only on the amendment that we are deba when we discuss the Budget we can return t and be more ambitious in our targets.

Another issue which clearly comes down the Government's wish to tackle poverty. H choice between a benefit that we know everyb up, including those who are poor, and a tar that the Government are now proudly claimi cent. will take up, although many Conservat must know that if over 60 per cent. do so they well.

There is a real trade-off there on which Members can make a decision. Which is the advance? There is the certainty of making families benefit, although some would argu families do not need the money—I hope dealt with that argument—or a targeted ap result of which even on the Government's they are not worried at the moment because have to face questions about what is happe the scheme is not in existence—some poor not pick up the benefit to which they are en we see the beginning of the trade-off which sh issue is not as simple as the Secretary of St when introducing his uprating statement.

The last point, which I hope will bring h down firmly in favour of the new cl Government's wish to increase people's inde we in the House were serious about that, looking at changes in our tax system which the money, not to increase child benefit by the small amount over which we are squab —but by a substantial amount. If we co revenue to double the real value of child bene transform the welfare role. Most single m

[Mr. Field]

throw their books in. The opportunity to build on a part-time income and to conduct their lives without officials poking their sticky fingers into their private lives is one at which most people would jump.

We are talking about whether we should move to an incentive-based society in which all can participate, or whether we should continue in an incentive-based society which excludes that growing under-class which all hon. Members are witnessing in their constituencies, whether we represent prosperous or less prosperous areas.

This is not a clear issue with everything in favour of the argument on one side and everything opposing it on the other. When any political decision is made, a balance must be struck, but I hope that the three speeches that have been made so far tonight have shown overwhelmingly what that balance must be. I hope that tonight Conservative Members will have the courage to make an advance such as we saw in 1975 when, in a small but important way, we began to change our tax system. That change came about as a result of the courage of Back Benchers to take on their Government and I wish hon. Members such success tonight.

Mr. Timothy Raison (Aylesbury): Those hon. Members who have already spoken have carefully set out a compelling case. Reference has already been made to the words in last year's Conservative manifesto:

"Child benefit will continue to be paid as now, and direct to the mother."

As has been said, it is possible to interpret those words as meaning merely that child benefit will go on. Nevertheless, the vast bulk of the population who thought about the matter would have assumed that the system was to go on as it is at present; in other words, that uprating would continue to be built into it. To back away from that would be to adopt a weasly interpretation of those words in the manifesto.

Hon. Members have set out clearly the argument in favour of continuing uprating and the arguments in favour of child benefit as a mechanism. There is not much that I can add to that, but I want briefly to go over the important points.

One important point, as has been said already, is that when child benefit was introduced in 1977 it replaced the child tax and family allowances with a universal benefit. The aim was to extend the child tax allowance to all children. That aim was right. It was accepted at the time and has been accepted since.

As the House knows, child tax allowance has long been a part of our history. It goes back to the days of William Pitt in 1796. Pitt said:

"Let us make relief in cases where there are a number of children a matter of right and a matter of honour."

It runs against that philosophy not to uprate child benefit.

6.30 pm

We accept the notion that tax allowances should increase in line with inflation which, as the House has heard, is exactly what has been happening. Tax allowances have risen with inflation thanks to the Rooker-Wise-Lawson amendment and they will continue to do so. If we do not allow child benefit to increase with inflation, we shall be negating part of the essence of the reform introduced in 1977. In a sense, it was a deal. The two old benefits—child tax allowance and family allowance—went and child benefit was introduced in their place. It was clearly understood that child benefit would rise in the same way as tax allowances had risen. Since then, we have witnessed the institutionalisation and legalisation of the fact that tax allowances rise with inflation. To let child benefit stand still is to backtrack on history. My hon. Friend the Member for Ryedale (Mr. Greenway) made a relevant point when he asked why poorish taxpayers' money should go to those who are palpably better off. It is because of the history of the arrangements as well as because of the general advantages of child benefit that it is right to continue with the uprating process that has become a familiar part of the system over the past decade.

We know the other arguments in favour of child benefit. It is a secure and uncontested source of help and regular income to those who have to bear the extra cost of bringing up children. William Pitt recognised that extra cost, which is just as real today as it was then. Child benefit implies a regular commitment to the family; surely our party has always stood for trying to help the family and those with children. To backtrack on it would be a very unwelcome move. Child benefit goes to the mother, which is important. It is especially important that it goes to the mother who stays at home and looks after her children, as she does not share the opportunities of working mothers who have their own money in their pockets. Child benefit helps to offset the poverty trap. Its universality, which has been criticised, contains a significant merit: child benefit increases but it does not promote the poverty trap at the same time.

If child benefit is pegged, as the Government intend, we shall hit perhaps not the poorest families—my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State and my hon. Friend the Minister pointed out that there are other ways of helping the very poorest—but those who are not quite so poor, whose income falls just above the level at which they can claim selective benefits. It must be said that one or two of our other policies also tend to hit that group. I refer to the poll tax and to the introduction of capital limits on housing benefits. It would be a great mistake to go in for a policy that would make life more difficult for those in that group.

I do not understand why the Government have had this change of heart. In the Green Paper on the reform of social security in 1985, the Government said:

"The case for changing it"—

child benefit—

"has not been made out. The Government do not therefore propose to alter its basis or structure."

Although I acknowledge that it has not been sanctified in statute, I believe that regular uprating has been part of the basis of child benefit. Finally, there is the 1987 manifesto commitment, which there is no need to repeat.

Let me finish with one other quotation. Speaking on 28 July 1980, the then Secretary of State for Social Services said:

"it is our intention, subject to economic and other circumstances, to uprate child benefit each year to maintain its value."—[*Official Report*, 28 July 1980; Vol. 989, c. 1063.]

Of course, economic circumstances have changed since 1980—for the better. The Government are more able to maintain the uprating than they were in 1980. If one looks at the picture with any sense of humanity, one can see that the right policy is to continue regularly to uprate child benefit.

Mr. Ronnie Fearn (Southport): We had a long debate on this subject in the Standing Committee. Therefore, I propose to put my comments in a nutshell. Nevertheless, they are most sincere. I shall support new clause 1 and I see great merit in new clause 4, too.

The effect of the new clause would be to halt the relative decline in the tax-free income of families with children compared with that of single and childless people. Since 1979, the real level of the single person's tax allowance has risen by 14 per cent. and of the married man's tax allowance by 17 per cent.

Mr. Tim Boswell (Daventry): My memory is obviously failing me. Perhaps the hon. Gentleman will be kind enough to refer us to the discussion in the Standing Committee. As I remember it, the Liberal spokesman was absent on a number of occasions. When he was present, he voted consistently with the Labour Opposition. I can remember no debate on child benefit, although some of us might have wished to take part in such a debate.

Mr. Fearn: I remember that the majority of Conservative Members took no part whatever in the debate.

Since 1979 the real level of the married man's tax allowance has risen by 17 per cent., whereas child benefit's real value has declined by 3 per cent. As child benefit replaced the old child tax allowance as well as the family allowance, it is now the only means in the tax and benefit system of achieving some degree of equity between those with, and those without, children. In the run-up to a Budget that is likely to include further cuts in taxation, it seems appropriate to voice the widespread view that increases in child benefit's real value should be seen as a form of tax cut targeted on families with children.

Child benefit can also be seen as an efficient means of redistributing income over a family's life cycle to the point at which it is most needed. Individuals pay national insurance contributions and draw the benefits when they are needed. Similarly, child benefit, paid for through taxation, targets resources to the stage in a family's life at which, whatever its income, needs are greater and that income is usually lower. I maintain that we must retain the true value of child benefit.

Mr. John Maples (Lewisham, West): Essentially, the five speeches that we have heard so far have been pleas for universal, as opposed to means-tested, benefits. Those pleas have been made eloquently, both by my hon. Friends and by Opposition Members. However, hon. Members have not extended the logic of the argument to other benefits or pointed out that such arrangements are a recipe for high taxation. I shall return to the argument about universal benefits, because that subject is raised very precisely by this debate.

First, let me reflect that this debate arises because the Government did not uprate child benefit last year. One fact that has emerged, which many people have not realised, is that 3 million of the 12 million who benefit —the 3 million poorest—would not have benefited from an uprating. The failure to uprate has enabled the Secretary of State to direct the additional money to the poorest children as child benefit could never have done. Perhaps we should be grateful that the whole question of how families in need should be helped has been raised.

We spend more than £4·5 billion on child benefit, paying it to nearly 7 million families. Of those 7 million, two thirds — 4·75 million — pay more tax than they receive in child benefit. That is an incredibly inefficient way of helping the poor and raises three aspects which one might, in the nicest possible way, call nonsense. The hon. Member for Livingston (Mr. Cook) referred to one of them, although he thought that it was a good aspect of child benefit that it transferred income from husbands to wives. It is no function of the state to have one of its agencies, the Inland Revenue, taxing husbands, and another, the Department of Health and Social Security, paying the money over to their wives. We should leave families who are not beneficiaries of child benefit or of the system for helping families with children to look after themselves.

Secondly, it seems nonsense to tax families and to pay them benefits. There are not just transfers from husband to wife; family units pay tax to one agency of the state and receive the same or less money back from another agency of the state. That is an extraordinarily inefficient way of helping the poor and a bad way for the state to interfere in people's lives.

Sir Brandon Rhys Williams *rose*——

Mr. Maples: If I may just make my third point, I shall, of course, give way to my hon. Friend.

Thirdly — this point has been made by my hon. Friend the Member for Ryedale (Mr. Greenway) — it seems wrong to tax people who are low earners but who do not happen to have children, and to pay child benefit to people who are often on above-average earnings. One can take as an example a young single person who might be a shop assistant earning about £100 a week. Why should he or she pay tax to help finance the child benefit that is paid to people who may receive one and a half, two or even three times average earnings?

Sir Brandon Rhys Williams: On my hon. Friend's argument, it would be wrong for a pensioner to draw his national insurance pension and to pay tax at the same time. He ought to renounce his pension.

Mr. Maples: With the greatest respect to my hon. Friend, old-age pensions are paid from national insurance contributions. People who draw pensions have paid the contributions to finance them. Benefits that are paid for on a contributory basis are entirely different from benefits that are financed out of general taxation. Child benefit is financed out of general taxation; pensions are not.

Mr. Frank Field: Will the hon. Gentleman ask his right hon. and hon. Friends on the Front Bench the size that the pension would be if it were paid out on contributions only? Most people's old-age pensions are not paid because they have built up a contribution record but because of the amount of money that we pay in in the current week.

Mr. Maples: I do not know the precise calculations. However, I do know that one cannot draw the old-age pension without having paid national insurance contributions for a long time. However, one can draw child benefit without ever having paid any tax or national insurance contributions.

To return to my three points relating to the transfers of money from husbands to wives, from families to the Inland Revenue, to the Department of Health and Social Security and back to the families and from low-income earners to high-income earners, it seems to me that we have devised a most inefficient way of helping the poor

[Mr. Maples]

and one which involves great expense. It should not be beyond human ingenuity to devise a way of helping poor families. Indeed, I think that we should do so more generously. If, to help poor families, we have to help rich ones also, it is, incredibly expensive. We should try to devise a method of giving such help rather more generously than we do to people who really need it.

All hon. Members who have spoken have made eloquent pleas for universal, as opposed to means-tested, benefits. The ultimate extension of that would be for the state to take 90 per cent. or 100 per cent. of a person's income and to pay 90 per cent. or 100 per cent. back in benefit. I remind my hon. Friends that that is a wholly Socialist idea. It was articulated eloquently and at great length in Anthony Crosland's book, "The Future of Socialism", the overwhelming theme of which is the plea that the Government should raise a large amount of money in taxation. Indeed, eight years after reading it, that is the only thing that I remember clearly about it—*[Interruption.]* The hon. Member for Birkenhead (Mr. Field) may have been there; I do not know. The overwhelming theme was that the Government should raise large amounts of money in taxation and then give universal benefits, at a high level.

The hon. Members who have spoken have prayed that argument in aid of the present system of child benefit. They did not say that it could perfectly logically be extended to all sorts of other benefits, and that the price that we must pay for it is high taxation such as we saw under the previous Labour Government. That is not the state's business. Its business is raising as little money as it needs to perform its proper functions and to discharge its proper responsibilities. The state should raise as little tax as it possible can to do so. Clearly, one of the state's responsibilities is to help families with children who would otherwise be in need. I would suggest—I feel strongly about this—that it is not the state's business to raise large amounts of taxation to help those families who are not in need, but that is the system we have.

I accept the criticism mentioned by those hon. Members who argued for universal benefits, that means-tested benefits accentuate the poverty trap. That is true.

Sir Ian Gilmour (Chesham and Amersham) *rose*——

6.45 pm

Mr. Maples: I shall give way to my right hon. Friend once I have dealt with the question of the poverty trap.

The new social security system which I believe will be introduced this year and in which family credit, income support and housing benefit will be related to after-tax income, will go a long way to ameliorating what has been the worst aspect of the——

Mr. Frank Field: It is tiny.

Mr. Maples: The hon. Gentleman says, "It is tiny," but the poverty trap used to be able to reach effective levels of withdrawal of over 100 per cent.—indeed, of 130 per cent. or 135 per cent. As I understand it, under the new system it will never be able to reach 100 per cent.—*[Interruption.]* There must be a withdrawal rate of means-tested benefit. I do not see anything wrong with that. I do not think that it is the same as taxing people.

To say that giving a person a benefit because they would otherwise be in poverty and in need and then withdrawing it as they get wealthier is the same as imposing a level of income tax on them is to turn the definitions of tax and benefit on their heads. I accept that there must be a withdrawal rate. The steepness of the taper will reflect what the Government feel they can afford at any given time and their policy and priorities. It seems perfectly reasonable that there should be a taper. That is not the same as a marginal tax rate——

Mr. Robin Cook *rose*——

Sir Ian Gilmour *rose*——

Mr. Maples: I give way to my right hon. Friend.

Sir Ian Gilmour: The bias of my hon. Friend's argument seems to be that there should be no differentiation in the tax system between families with children and single persons or couples without children. Is that right?

Mr. Maples: No, not entirely, because we have a married man's tax allowance which benefits married men who do not have children. In general, I believe that those people, whether single, married or with children, who have adequate incomes with which to look after themselves and their own affairs should be left to do so. Those who do not should be helped. It may have been forced out of me, but that is a clearer statement of what I think. We should be looking—I hope that my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State is doing so—for a more effective way of helping families with children who are in need and who would otherwise be in poverty instead of raising £4·6 billion from 7 million families and giving it back to those 7 million when only 2·5 million of the 7 million actually benefit.

Mrs. Audrey Wise (Preston): The hon. Member for Lewisham, West (Mr. Maples) has just spoken about inefficiency, but the fact is that he has been unable to suggest any method of giving assistance to families such as he has described which does not involve the most incredibly complicated bureaucracy. It is a characteristic of means-tested benefits that they involve complicated assessments, a large bureaucracy, reviews and, whether we like it or not, stigma and gross interference in the lives of people on low incomes. That may not be of any concern to Conservative Members, but it does concern many people in this country.

There is nothing efficient about means-tested benefits. They fail to carry out the targeting function placed on them. In contrast, universal benefits have the advantages of being cheap to collect. They do not involve complicated reviews, tribunals or assessment officers. They are simply paid to those who qualify by means of a simple fact—in this case that there are children of the relevant age. The present system is an efficient way of paying money and of targeting. It is a fact that at any given level of income people with children are in a worse financial position than people without children at the same level of income, and it is a fact that most of the people who are in poverty in this country have children.

If it were simple to direct means-tested benefits so that they do reach their targets, poor children would have been lifted out of poverty long ago. We have had eight years of a Government who have told us on every conceivable occasion that they are trying to lift poor families out of their poverty. However, they have manifestly failed to do so.

Those hon. Members who have referred to the tax allowance system and who directed our minds back to the

origins of child benefit were on absolutely the right lines. For many years after the introduction of the family allowance system in, I believe, 1948, we had a dual system. With family allowances, a poor level of money was paid universally. Child tax allowances were more valuable but did not cover the whole population, because they did not include those who were too poor to pay tax. Those two systems continued in tandem, but the position was uneasy and unsatisfactory. Many of us were pleased when the Labour Government decided that the system should be abandoned and child tax allowances should be switched so that we paid child benefit instead.

The hon. Member for Kensington (Sir B. Rhys Williams) reminded the House that people forget that child benefit stands in place of child tax allowances, and he did us a favour in so doing. It is important not to forget that child benefit did not drop from heaven; it stands in place of child tax allowances. Families who previously received child tax allowances were deprived of those allowances because they were being replaced by something that we thought would be better. So the deprivation was in name and not in fact. We favoured child benefit because we truly believed it would benefit children. That it does so has already been pointed out, and I shall not labour the point unduly, but, in view of the speech made by the hon. Member for Lewisham, West, it is important to point out that it benefits children because it goes to families who are too low paid to pay tax, and it benefits mothers. Those are substantial advantages.

However, an unexpected result arose from the Government's peculiar method of accounting. I am not making a party political point. I am sure that hon. Members on both sides find it as incomprehensible as I do that child or any other tax allowances are not regarded as a public expense, but child benefit is. Even if the amount paid had been left at exactly the same level as it was when under the heading of child tax allowance, the latter was not counted as public expenditure, but as soon as it was labelled child benefit it became so counted. That is a peculiarity of the Treasury, and it is no justification for taking it out on kids.

When discussing labels and benefits, we must not lose sight of the main fact, which is that we want child benefit to be preserved — nay, increased — in value because families need the money. At any given level of income, childless people are better off than people with children. There is no justification for that. Our society needs children; we need to replace ourselves. We need people to be the future workers who will look after us in our old age, whether they be our own children or those of the community. Children are a benefit, a blessing and a necessity to society, and it is up to us to ensure that they live in families with the necessary financial resources to keep them well, happy and in good order. That is what child benefit is about.

It costs a lot of money to bring up children, and it is perfectly justifiable for single people to pay taxes to help with the care of children. It astonishes me that when hon. Members adduce examples, they always choose the low-paid single person and the wealthy parent. Most parents are not wealthy. If one has children, regardless of whether the mother goes out to work, the family income suffers. Obviously, it suffers most during the time when she stays at home. Most mothers stay at home for considerable periods of time. Clearly, that does tremendous damage to the family income, but when the mother returns to work, the family income does not suddenly leap to what it would have been. She will probably have lost an opportunity to enhance her income. If one has children, one's expenses when working are higher. Child care must be paid for, and more has to be spent on domestic equipment and all sorts of things to help with the running of the house. Even two-income families with children find it harder going than two-income families without. These are simple matters, and everyone outside understands them now.

There was a time when Governments were nervous about family allowances and child benefits — and certainly about abolishing child tax allowances. The hon. Member for Kensington is right. The Labour Government found this a difficult problem and had to be constantly reminded—especially by their Back Benchers—that most of the electorate were women. Governments of any colour make a great mistake when they feel nervous of the voters because they see them as irate males resenting the transfer from their wallets to the handbags. But the handbags are held by more hands than are the wallets.

Because we realised these straightforward facts, we were able to persuade the Labour Government to stick to their guns and go ahead and transfer to child benefit, but we never anticipated that the new device would be used by Governments in the future as an easy way of freezing the benefit or allowing it to be eroded. That was a wholly unexpected side effect. I feel like a doctor who has administered a drug to someone in good faith and then discovers a completely unexpected side effect.

The Government would not dare freeze child tax allowances if they still existed. After the amendment to which copious reference has been made this evening, it has been established that the tax threshold must rise at least in line with prices. That is now the received orthodoxy. The whole establishment has now followed the former rebels. The Government would not have dared to allow child tax allowance values to be eroded. So it is up to all of us who favoured the change to child benefit — not only Opposition Members — to prevent the side effect from continuing. It should be as unthinkable to allow child benefit value to be eroded as to allow tax thresholds to be eroded.

I join my hon. Friends who have called on Conservative Members to act in accordance with their consciences. I give Conservative Members some advice straight from the shoulder. The Government will not harm the Opposition if they resist the new clause. We shall not suffer. Listening to the long list of organisations read out by my hon. Friend the Member for Livingston (Mr. Cook), one knows that the Opposition have, behind and alongside them, many people of all sorts, incomes and constituencies. We shall not be harmed by our stand tonight. The Government and children will be harmed. Sometimes it is up to Government Back Benchers to defend their Government and compel them to act in the better interests of their party. It does not matter to me if the Conservative Government harm themselves. If that were all that was at stake, I would say, "Go ahead; carry on; we will make the most of it," but I would much rather we did not have to receive any credit for standing firm against the Government tonight, because of the harm that will be done by them to children, families and mothers.

When Conservative Members go into the Lobby tonight they should bear in mind that if they vote in favour of the amendments they will be defending their manifesto. They should remember that, in the end, it is the

[Mrs. Audrey Wise]

Government in power who get the credit for any improvement in benefits. The Opposition will not get the credit even if the amendments are accepted—the credit will go to the Government. However, it is the children who will benefit and that is what is important to us.

7 pm

Mr. Robin Squire (Hornchurch): It is a particular pleasure to follow the hon. Member for Preston (Mrs. Wise), who has an honourable record on this issue and one that is recognised as such by hon. Members on both sides of the Chamber.

There have been some interesting suggestions about possible changes in the system of taxation or benefits. However, we come back to the fact that any decision tonight will be based upon our existing tax and credit system. Therefore, I restate what has been stated by many other hon. Members: the most effective way, under our present system, to assist the reduction in family poverty is through the payment of child benefit. There is no argument about that. We can argue among ourselves about the balance of priorities and how we would like to change things so that they could be slightly better, but there can be no argument about the payment of child benefit. Indeed, such a payment may be linked with the view that I believe is held by most hon. Members—the defence of the concept of the family. We should not pay lip service to that concept but should translate it into reality.

For some years there has been a net transfer of resources from families to those without families. We must recognise that and the debate takes place within that context. When we consider that trend and the desire to defend the family we should surely conclude that there is no case for reducing, in real terms, the amount of available credit. There is every case for seeking to start to redress the balance and to give practical assistance to families.

I welcome the assistance that has been given to low-income families as a result of the recent changes announced by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State. However, my right hon. Friend knows better than any of us that, with the most optimistic take-up figures that may be expected, there will still be between one in four and one in five families who will not take up the means-tested benefit. By definition, those families are the poorest in our society. Some of my colleagues imagine that our problems would be solved if we could only remove the rich people from the system and concentrate on paying those on low incomes. However, they should grasp the central fact that the price of that policy would be that many families would simply not receive the support which we believe they should receive and which the state lays down they are entitled to receive. Indeed, it is interesting that, almost unique to this subject—if I may qualify the word unique—the statement "they do not need it" arises. Certain people seem to be able to say of child benefit, "They do not need it". I do not hear such a statement about tax cuts. I did not hear it when we raised the level of mortgage interest relief. On the contrary, many of my hon. Friends said that that increase was overdue and that things were difficult for first time buyers. However, with regard to child benefit, we have reached the stage of being expert at judging what people do or do not need.

The effect of child benefit for those who are pay more tax than they receive in benefit is that of a tax cre albeit through a different financial system—the DH We have not changed that system and we can only w within it; indeed, there is no better way.

I always listen to my hon. Friend the Member Lewisham, West (Mr. Maples) with considerable res as he speaks on financial matters with much authority. almost persuaded me that I had to choose betw universal benefits and means-tested benefits. Howeve am not sure that I have to make that choice. I believe a system solely composed of universal benefits woul so inexplicably and disastrously expensive that it wo rightly, be rejected by all my hon. Friends. Equall system composed solely of means-tested benefit—u whatever system—would cement a two-class syste our country. There would be a permanent under-clas those who had to apply for every element of assista The combination of means-tested and universal ben avoids that dreadful scenario.

I believe that by linking child benefit to the pre system, as proposed in the new clause, we will be abl do something positive for families and especially fam in need.

Miss Emma Nicholson (Torridge and Devon, W For a number of years the Conservative Wom Organisation—it represents more than 500,000 wo throughout the United Kingdom—has made the cer piece of its submission to the Chancellor every Febr before his Budget the retention of child benefit universal benefit, the retention of child benefit as a benefit and the continuing payment of child benefit to mother.

What does the Conservative Women's Organisa mean by a "real benefit?" It means that that benefit sh rise in line with inflation and preferably by more inflation. The meaning of universal benefit is explanatory—it should be paid to everyone irrespe of income and background. It should be paid to who has children—single parents or married people. organisation believes that anyone who has a child sh benefit. The Conservative Women's Organisation beli that that is important, because it believes it is represen the party of the family.

What does the family mean today? It no longer m a married couple with two or three children with one of household working. In the past 20 years, the family changed beyond all recognition. The family now mean sorts of things. It can mean the single parent with a or more than one child. It can mean a married couple one person working, although that represents a s fraction of today's families. It can mean two pa working with children. It can mean two parents ou work with children and, of course, it can mean a ma couple with no children. The modern family is a different animal from the sort of family that we may r if we cast our minds back to the immediate post-war y

These days, I believe that the definition of the fa really means concentrating on helping children. C benefit is unique, in that it does just that. How have Chancellor and the Secretary of State responded to Conservative Women's Organisation's submission year? They have responded with the worst possible an —they have frozen child benefit. That has resulte the wealthy couple, with the non-working wife, contin

to draw child benefit. Indeed, one couple that I know and value draw child benefit for four children. They then take the children out for dinner at an immensely grand restaurant with the bill coming to about £135—and why not? It is their benefit and it is their right.

However, with the freezing of child benefit, the poor, who depend on child benefit to balance their budgets, have suffered drastically. I do not just mean the statutory single parent with children living in an inner-city environment who may be held up as being most at risk as a result of freezing child benefit. I think of the farmer's wife who lives near me at home. She has only 40 cows and, with milk quotas, is having a terrible time making ends meet and tells me that she cannot do without child benefit. She has only two children. It is a very slender input into her family budget in terms of cash value, but, in terms of the proportion of her budget, it matters immensely. The freezing of child benefit has brought her close to the poverty margin. We have got the worst of all worlds by freezing child benefit. A genuine debate on the value of child benefit to our society is long overdue. Indeed, the debate should be even wider and certainly much better attended than it is tonight.

I hope very much that the Minister will spend considerable time this year discussing within his Department and then in the wider context of Parliament what we should do about child benefit. Every year, child benefit comes up rather like a punchball, but we are lucky if child benefit is raised. Other people believe that it is good if it is frozen. Some people would prefer to have it thrown out of the window. Can we not discuss this thoroughly and properly and then have it either thrown aside, modified or firmly linked to our economic structure, so that the people who receive child benefit—the mothers—know exactly where they stand?

This debate spills over inevitably into the reform of personal taxation. The married man's tax allowance has already been mentioned. That was created at a time when married women did not work. In 1936, 6 per cent. of all married women worked. That figure is now 63 per cent. and married women are the fastest growing sector of the working population, so times have changed. The married man's tax allowance was meant as a bolstering operation: to recognise the value of children and the immense drain that they make on a family budget. The married man's tax allowance is now wholly outdated and goes to a large number of people who have no children. With so many working women, it should be cast aside and forgotten. The money should be recycled and used in a different way. Possibly it should be put towards a universal benefit, such as child allowance.

Some hon. Members have mentioned their unhappiness —quite proper in some respects—about wealthy people receiving child benefit. Speaking from the woman's point of view, there are many older non-working women—the younger married women usually tend to work—whose husbands, although receiving large incomes, do not respond as they should and do not give their wives the housekeeping money that they need to support their children. Their wives are relatively poor, and therefore their children are relatively poorer. It is a grave error to think that, because a man is wealthy and because he is a member of that shrinking band of heads of households who are single earners, he will respond as he should to his wife. It is a peculiar aberration among the wealthy that they sometimes think that they are poorer than they are and do not even support their own families.

I cannot offer the perfect solution to this ever-growing and difficult problem. I ask for a firm and genuine commitment from the Minister that he will take seriously to heart the need to solve this problem once and for all. He must support the care and nurture of our children in a much broader and more positive and generous way than our country is historically used to doing. I have long thought that we undervalue children and, as a society, we suffer as a result.

7.15 pm

Mr. Jacques Arnold (Gravesham): I cannot help thinking that in this debate we are perhaps straying a little far from the point. In line with the cost of living increase, the Government were proposing to put, in cash terms, an additional £120 million into child benefit, but have decided not to do so. In taking that decision, they have taken account of the key point. However, by putting an increased amount into child benefit, they are spreading these additional resources indiscriminately among all families with children in this country. It is wholly indiscriminate and ineffectual to fire off these resources at families, regardless of income, as this would include families of hon. Members and families of people better paid than hon. Members.

Sir Brandon Rhys Williams: Would my hon. Friend prefer an untargeted tax cut which would relieve the tax burden of families with and without children and of single people? Does he think that that would be a more acceptable use of resources?

Mr. Arnold: No, I do not. We must consider carefully how that £120 million has been applied. By spreading it over the general population, we shall miss having the maximum effect on the very under-class to which the hon. Member for Birkenhead (Mr. Field) referred. Better-off families will benefit from such an increase in child benefit, but the families about whom we should be concerned—the under-class, containing 3 million children, who are already on benefit — would lose 10p for every 10p increase in child benefit and get a net cash increase of zero.

It seems far wiser to take the path proposed by the Government, to take that £120 million, add to it afresh £80 million and apply that £200 million to the family credit scheme, which is to be introduced in April, over and above the amount currently applied through family income supplement. That targeting is far more relevant. If we care about the children of this country, we should care for the children of parents who can cope and for those children in the greatest need of resources for their development. The Government are concentrating on those children in need, and they have my support.

Mr. Andrew Rowe (Mid-Kent): Almost everything that needs to be said in this debate has been said and I shall be brief. We are debating a balance of pragmatisms. It is wonderful to have theoretical designs and I should love to have such a wonderfully well-integrated tax and benefit system that there was no disincentive for people to go out to work or to catch buses at 6 o'clock in the morning to augment a fully-declared income. These things may one day come about, although I grow increasingly wary of

[Mr. Andrew-Rowe]

them. The cost of moving to a fully integrated tax and benefit system is in the short term horrendous and very few Governments would be able to find the resources to do it.

We are now discussing a balance of practicalities. That balance lies in uprating child benefit. For all the reasons listed in the debate tonight, it is important that families, who notoriously are the least likely to understand a complex system of claiming, should be able to receive benefit as of right, rather than having to go through a series of hoops, many of which are difficult to understand, difficult of access or unattractive to them. It is wholly appropriate that, until the system is running better, we should make it possible for people to have a benefit which retains its value year on year, so that they know that, whatever happens to the economy, that part of their income will be secure.

I am conscious of the fact that Ministers are trying to act from good motives. They are trying to target the poorest and to ensure that the least well off families will benefit. One of the mistakes that they make is that they are having to do it within their DHSS budget.

The issue goes wider than that. I have often heard it said with considerable credibility that one would need fewer social workers if the income of the clients of many social workers were higher, and the incomes of social workers were paid from the same budget within the same Ministry.

Referring to the balance of pragmatisms, we should remember that when the Government were elected in 1979, one of their clearest policy statements was that they would become the Government of a society in which perks were done away with; that everything would become a matter of income and income tax; and it would be very much more straightforward. Of course, practicalities have intervened and we have taken policy decisions, such as not phasing out mortgage relief and continuing to allow tax relief for various business expenses, although gradually the Inland Revenue is putting the squeeze on some of them.

It is because we move in an essentially imperfect world that I support strongly what my right hon. Friend the Member for Aylesbury (Mr. Raison) said. On too many occasions, recent policy decisions have squeezed rather harder than is fair those who are just above the poorest level, as we move towards what I hope will be a better system. If we put the little bits of the jigsaw in first, the wrong people are being damaged. For that reason, I support the intention to uprate child benefit.

Mr. Scott: We have had an excellent debate, with strong feelings arising on this issue. We are touching on familiar ground because in the statement and the order we have discussed this year's uprating. I understand why hon. Members have questioned the attitude of the Government and future Governments to the benefit. In essence, I agree with my hon. Friend the Member for Mid-Kent (Mr. Rowe) in everything except his conclusion. What we are doing essentially is making a pragmatic and balanced judgment, which flows from the decision of the Government not to uprate child benefit this year, about whether it is right to tie the hands of future Ministers on the use of resources that go into uprating child benefit, or whether they should have the opportunity to decide on the use of those resources year by year, in the light of unforeseeable demands which might exist.

Mr. Raison: My intervention is triggered by th "resources". This year, more than other years, there the signs that resources are available.

Mr. Scott: I am not discussing this year; I am about tying th hands of the Government to a resources in uccessive years, ignorant of w resources will b available or, assuming they are, w this is the best way to spend them. The House address that qu tion tonight.

Mr. Frank F ld: Will the Minister bring bef House shortly a oposal for the de-indexation of b and tax allowan so that there will be total free the future?

Mr. Scott: The hon. Gentleman knows better tha I was trying to identify the issue, which I hope the will address before voting tonight and will not be away by some of the arguments and issues raised of which are wider than the pragmatic and ba decision which I hope hon. Members will make. they will make the right decision when I have h chance to seek to persuade them to come in my di rather than that of the majority of voices in the d

The hon. Member for Birkenhead (Mr. Field), n Friend the Member for Kensington (Sir B. Rhys W and others have talked about possible changes pattern of national benefits and insurance in the which we are not addressing today. I am su Ministers, not just those in the Department, will re interest the points made and will take them into a in looking at future policies.

Some hon. Members today have said that the forward to a radical look at child benefit, but that q is not before the House this evening; it is simply w we should index-link the benefit. Listening to some contributions, one would have thought it was a choice between index-linking the benefit or abolis That issue is not before the House.

I understand the depth of feeling on the subjec am sorry, having listened to many of the contrib that I have to ask hon. Members to reject the new I emphasise—I hope this is common ground—th is not because the Government do not take serious any way underestimate the importance of improv help available to families; quite the contrary. Reco has been given by Government and Opposition M to the efforts of the Government on that front. We propose to increase child benefit next April un uprating order, but we are putting far more than it cost to uprate the benefit into help for families. T been acknowledged widely in the debate.

The benefit is unique in that it is paid directly mother. It is worth reminding the House that the credit system, which will replace FIS when it com operation in April, will be paid to the mother. Th Member for Livingston (Mr. Cook) implied that th of the family credit scheme had somehow been erc the Government. The value of family credit for an earner with two children under 11 will be higher terms than it was when we came to office in 1979 Members are familiar with the figures. This year uprating of child benefit has saved around £120 net. From next April we shall spend around £100

extra on family and income support and over £200 million extra on the family credit scheme. That will be paid directly to mothers.

There is no dispute in the House about the importance of help for families. Our calculation of the relative importance in the social security system of help for different groups has resulted in extra help for families in the system we shall introduce in April. I hope that hon. Members will recognise that we shall put more into helping families than would have been provided had we uprated the benefit by 30p.

Mr. Robin Cook: I do not know whether I misunderstood the Minister, but I thought he said that the current level of child benefit is higher than is necessary to maintain the 1979 value. If so, I point him in the direction of the answers he has given me in the past two months, which clearly state that if the 1979 value were maintained child benefit this April would have to be £7·80, not the £7·25 it will be.

Mr. Scott: That value is for two children under 11. I cannot give an answer across the whole range, but that is the answer I can give and I am assured that it is correct.

Mr. Cook: I confess that I am puzzled. Perhaps I am being slow in following what the Minister is saying, and perhaps he can assist me. I cannot understand the distinction that he makes between this benefit and others. The benefit is paid at a flat rate and its value will be maintained for all earners or those who earn nothing. The Minister's answer plainly implied that its value would need to be increased by 55p to restore its purchasing power of 1979.

7.30 pm

Mr. Scott: Perhaps we should pursue the statistics later, but I am advised that from 1979, when the Government came to office, the purchasing power of the benefit has been maintained. We may have opportunities to debate the point but I am assured that before 1979, as compared to the present position, the value is higher.

Before I gave way to the hon. Gentleman, I was saying that the Government judged that it was better to use resources in such a way as to help family credit and income supplement for families with children rather than to uprate benefit by 30p. I do not believe that that option should be taken away from Ministers in future. There is an obvious disagreement about how we should spend these resources. Spending them on a general increase in child benefit would mean that help is spread very thinly to around 7 million families. Most of those families would have little or no real need of the extra 30p, although I do not deny for a moment that they might be very glad to have it.

Another major group of families, the less-well-off, that receives income support and family credit would find an extra 30p important and valuable. But those families would not receive it. If child benefit had been increased they would have lost that money from their other benefits. The point that I am making to the House, therefore, is essentially simple. If we wish to do more to help families in real need, child benefit is not the best-directed way of doing so. The costs are huge. In gross terms, an increase of 10p costs £60 million to implement; in net terms it costs £40 million. Most of the extra money will go to those who do not seriously need it.

The Government have taken the view that it is more sensible this year to direct these resources elsewhere. I believe that that option should be available to fu Governments; not to do that would impose inflexib upon future Ministers, and that would be inappropr

I wish to answer the point that was made by sever my hon. Friends and, indeed, by one or two Opposi Members, that in some way the wording in Conservative party manifesto or ministerial statem imposes a moral obligation on the Government to up child benefit in line with inflation. The words "pai now" have been interpreted to mean that year by year benefit will be index-linked. I do not believe that process can be sustained. The Government have n undertaken to uprate child benefit in line with inflat That is also the case with tax allowances and, indeed, o social security benefits. If previous Ministers had inte to do that, I am quite sure they would have introdu measures to that effect.

Sir Ian Gilmour: Will my right hon. Friend then what the words in the manifesto really did mean?

Mr. Scott: The words say that the benefit would be as a universal benefit, tax-free, and to the mother. undertaking has not been changed by anything in year's uprating. I believe that that obligation was rig am sure, bearing in mind the pattern of linking other so security benefits to the RPI, that had there been intention to link this benefit it would have been inclu in the list by one Government or another.

The other point that I wish to make relates t suggestion by the hon. Member for Livingston. He that by referring to our determination to keep the be under constant review we shall put it under cons threat. I do not believe that he can read that into it. right that this hugely expensive benefit should be under constant review, like all other benefits. That is to say that we plan to change child benefit. It simply that in a modern welfare state we have an obligatio ensure that available resources are used to the very effect.

There has been much discussion today ab universality and means testing. The point has been made in the debate that to go entirely for one or othe those systems is unthinkable, but somehow a pragm judgment must be made as to where benefits are nee and the role of means testing. I do not doubt or criti for a moment the points that have been made afternoon about the benefits that flow from universal c benefit. Of course I recognise that such a benefit help families with children, whatever their other resource know that it represents investment in future generati and that the less-well-off are guaranteed some finan help. I know that it is simple to claim, easy to adminis and has virtually a 100 per cent. take-up. I acknowle all those advantages, but it is only fair to put disadvantages into the scales.

It is an expensive benefit costing £4·6 billion a yea present. Much of it goes to comfortably off families cannot in any sense claim to need it. Extra help is available to go to the most needy because resources could otherwise go to them are tied up. Equal benefit to be paid regardless of need. It does not help the poo who receive income support or family credit, because level of child benefit is taken into account in establish entitlement to those benefits. I am simply saying tha

[Mr. Scott]

balance must be struck. I acknowledge that advantages flow from universality, but there are disadvantages as well. It is right that the House should recognise them.

Mrs. Wise: I have listened to the Minister's list with interest. He has failed notably to grapple with the point that was made on both sides, that child benefit ought to be compared to tax allowances. That is the historic route. Will he now give the House his view about that? Why should tax allowances be index-linked and not child benefit?

Mr. Scott: We have decided to index-link tax allowances as well as some social security benefits. We have not decided to index-link this benefit. I do not believe, as I have said, that we should tie the hands of future Governments about the way in which this resource might be used. I believe that it was right to use the resources this year, for the reasons that I have outlined to the House, for the family credit scheme and as extra help for families with children within the income support scheme, rather than to give a 30p increase across the board.

It would be wrong to listen to the siren voices asking us today to pre-empt decisions for a future that we cannot foresee about the allocation of resources. Therefore, I ask the House to reject the new clause. My hon. Friend the Member for Torridge and Devon, West (Miss Nicholson) asked us to make sure that we got this right for all time and had a comprehensive review. It would be bold to say that we could do that, but we are determined to see that the considerable sums of taxpayers' money that are provided for social security are used increasingly to help those most in need. It would not be serving that aim well if we accepted the new clause tonight.

Mr. Robin Cook: I shall respond briefly to the Minister. I am happy to correct his recollection of the Conservative party manifesto. It says that child benefit will continue to be paid as at present, which is not what he quoted to the House. Apparently, we are now to take that commitment as being strictly literal arithmetically. I think that the Minister would accept that many who read the manifesto would form a quite different conclusion, that it meant that the value of child benefit would be maintained as at present.

We have had an excellent debate. I am confirmed in that view because our side—and by "our side", on this occasion, I include all those who have spoken in support of new clauses 2 and 4—won handsomely. There were nine speeches in favour of one or other of the new clauses, or both of them, and three speeches against them. Therefore, I hope the House will forgive me if I savour the moment when I am winning before the Division bells ring and we are clobbered in the Lobbies.

There was a curious feature to the debate. It was substantially a debate for and against child benefit. Those who are tempted to follow the Minister into the Lobby tonight to vote against both new clauses should reflect that they will find themselves in the company not only of the Minister but of hon. Members who have spoken explicitly against child benefit and who plainly would favour its abolition. Until the Minister spoke, no one spoke in favour of keeping child benefit but not uprating it. I can understand why no hon. Member felt able to commit himself to that proposition because it is no intellectually. There is no point in saying that case for retaining the benefit but that that ca sufficiently strong for the value of the bene maintained.

I admired the speech of the hon. Member for and Devon, West (Miss Nicholson). She mad convincing case which, were I a Conservative, w persuaded me to vote for new clause 4. I indicate of dissent from her proposition. She said that it we had a general debate on child benefit. I an have to say to the hon. Lady that we seem to general debates on child benefit at two-year int some time. It was only in 1984 that the previous of State for Social Services put child benefit melting pot in his review, had an exhaustive exa of it and at the conclusion of that examinatio admittedly through gritted teeth, that child bene a useful function and should be retained. I am that any open, thorough investigation of chi would come to precisely the same conclusion Members have come to in the debate—that it purpose well and there is no more effective way o the cost of children or of breaking the poverty

What was interesting about the debate Conservative Benches, because the debate was on those Benches, was that it turned on the dual with which some Conservative Members appr benefits as distinct from tax allowances. I thou beautifully caught in the intervention of the Member for Chesham and Amersham (Sir I. G the speech of the hon. Member for Lewisham, Maples). After that intervention the hon. M Lewisham, West found it possible to say a f word for the married man's tax allowance.

Perhaps I could advise the House of the c married man's tax allowance, because I nippe checked with the Library. I am advised by the Li in the last financial year, 1986-87, the total co allowance was £4,450 million and in the same total cost of child benefit was £4,550 millio exactly the same. I cannot for the life of me u why it should be regarded by some Conservative as perfectly right and just that through the tax should make available £4,500 million to marri support their wives but wrong that through t system we should make available £4,500 mothers to support their children.

7.45 pm

The argument for the one applies to the Conservative Members do not appear to be sayi married man's tax allowance is not the best way poor men to support their wives, or that it is there should be such a tax allowance because it Duke of Westminster and gives him help which h need to support the Duchess of Westminst arguments are not advanced in relation to th man's tax allowance, yet in effect that allowa progressive than child benefit. At least, child b goes to those who are too poor to pay tax and in the hands of those who fall below the tax th

I make a prediction. Were Conservative Me wish to see the phasing out of child benefit— that not uprating the benefit is the way of pha —successful in securing its abolition it would

matter of time before the Chancellor of the Exchequer was obliged to re-invent child tax allowances. If he did not do so, we would be about the only country in the western world which gave no help through the benefit system or the tax system to people with children.

The moment the Chancellor came back with such a proposal we would once again be faced with a system that would be less equitable than child benefit because it would put money in the hands mostly of those with the highest incomes and would not put money in the hands of those on the lowest incomes who do not pay tax. That would be less satisfactory as a way of supporting the cost of children because, by and large, it would put money in the hands of the male rather than the mother.

Child benefit is much the best way of meeting the cost of children and breaking the poverty trap. We should keep child benefit. Hon. Members who have heard the clear threat to child benefit in the debate would be well advised to join us in the Lobby and make sure——

Sir Brandon Rhys Williams *rose*——

Mr. Cook: No, I am concluding my speech. I am so sorry; I did not see that it was my colleague. Of course, I shall give way.

Sir Brandon Rhys Williams: I have been advised that the effects of new clause 1 and of new clause 4 would be precisely the same. In the circumstances, I think it would not be in the interests of the House, and hon. Members would not thank me, if I insisted on their coming back later to support new clause 4. Therefore, I would like to take the opportunity of recommending to those who feel as strongly as I do about this to vote for new clause 1. If they do not feel able to do that, let them at least abstain. If they do not feel able even to do that, let them write a very strong letter to the Minister, as I hope they will do.

Mr. Cook: As the majority of speeches have come from the Conservative Benches, we will withdraw new clause 1 and will divide on new clause 4. I beg to ask leave to withdraw the motion.

Motion and clause, by leave, withdrawn.

Madam Deputy Speaker (Miss Betty Boothroyd): We now come to new clause 2.

Sir Brandon Rhys Williams: On a point of order, Madam Deputy Speaker. May we be told whether you intend to give us an opportunity to vote on new clause 4?

Madam Deputy Speaker: Certainly there will be an opportunity to divide on new clause 4, but we can deal with new clause 4 only when we have got new clause 2 out of the way.

New Clause 2

Attendance Allowance for Children Under Two

'In section 35(5) of the Social Security Act 1975, at the end there shall be added the words "or any modification which discriminates on grounds of age against severely disabled children under the age of two."'—*[Mrs. Beckett.]*

Brought up, and read the First time.

Mrs. Margaret Beckett (Derby, South): I beg to move, That the clause be read a Second time.

We are now on an entirely different matte payment of the attendance allowance. There are st tests which those claiming attendance allowance h satisfy—*[Interruption.]*

Ms. Dawn Primarolo (Bristol, South): On a p order, Madam Deputy Speaker. I cannot hear the of my hon. Friend. I shall be able to hear her now, b everyone has stopped speaking.

Madam Deputy Speaker: That is the most genuin of order that has ever been put to me in the Chai

Mrs. Beckett: That is not as much of a complin it might seem, given some of the points of order t raised.

As I was saying, there are stringent tests which who claim attendance allowance have to satisfy be can be awarded. I am confident that hon. Memb both sides of the House know of cases where atte allowance has been denied although they might ha that it should have been awarded. Even when the st tests are passed, as again hon. Members on both sid be aware, a substantial period—six months—e before the allowance can be paid. There must sufficient degree of need, a sufficient amount o required and, particularly in the cases of those w physically disabled, a sufficient degree of pain incu those applying for the attendance allowance befor can be any question of the allowance being paid. In for all of that six months, the conditions for the have to be satisfied.

Many hon. Members will know, from their exp of their own constituency cases, of people unfortunately, are not as aware as all of us would w the circumstances in which attendance allowance claimed or of the fact that they may be entitled to who make late, sometimes very late, claims. I sometimes people have had a degree of pain and su and need not just for months but for years, and appli for attendance allowance is made so late that the on account of whose illness it could be paid dies bef award can come through.

There are stringent tests of eligibility for this pa and of the period before such a payment can be ma months is a very long time for someone to endu degree of pain, if those are the circumstances of his illness. It is a long time for the individual and those s to care for that individual to endure that degree o without the financial support and what must in circumstances be the comparatively small amount o that attendance allowance may provide.

There is one small group—small in every sense word—who, whatever degree of pain or need th experiencing, have to wait not six months, but two Children under the age of two can never, as the law s receive attendance allowance. They may well be, ar number of cases certainly are, ruled out also for a range of other benefits.

Partly because resources are always under pressu indeed, under this Government are declining, the res available to social services committees of local auth and other groups which may seek to alleviate the pro of those in these circumstances are and will alw allocated on the basis of priority. Choices always h be made and when there are cuts those choic inevitably harder and the degree of considerati

[Mrs. Beckett]

priority is all the greater. In a very high percentage of cases, although not invariably, as the Minister is, I know, well aware, the definition of priority used is that of entitlement to other benefits, such as attendance allowance. Those who cannot qualify for attendance allowance, by definition, also often cannot qualify for the other help that might be available.

The argument for the cut-off age of two is based on the development of a normal child, but no normal child of any age could possibly receive an attendance allowance because, apart from the criteria to which I referred at the outset, which every person who applies for attendance allowance must meet, no child can be awarded attendance allowance unless his or her attendance needs are

"substantially in excess of that normally required by a child of the same age and sex".

It is absolutely clear, as the Minister has admitted, that some children do fit that definition; they do experience not only the degree of need that would be required for an adult to pass those tests but a degree of need substantially in excess of that experienced by any normal child below the age of two.

There is no logic, justice or compassion in denying children who can pass those existing serious hurdles the payment of attendance allowance merely because when that attendance allowance was first placed on the statute book some 12 years or so ago it was thought right to have a qualifying age of two. The case does not stand up for a second to the serious examination which I am sure it is going to receive at the hands of my hon. Friends, and perhaps of hon. Members on the Government side.

We believe that the case which is being made for the removal of that arbitrary age barrier, that third hurdle for small children and their parents, is something that the House should have considered long ago and that this new clause should be carried tonight.

Mr. Dave Nellist (Coventry, South-East): As my hon. Friend the Member for Derby, South (Mrs. Beckett) has mentioned, this is the first time for a decade and a half that the full House has had the chance of debating and voting on whether there should be a lower age limit below which an attendance allowance cannot be made to someone with severe mental or physical disabilities. There have been plenty of questions during that period, particularly in the last three or four years, but tonight we have a chance to debate the reasons why the Government believe that the attendance allowance, which they accept should be paid to people over the age of two with disabilities which in many cases can be assessed well before that age, cannot be paid to those children.

As hon. Members who served on the Standing Committee will be aware, my involvement in this issue began late last year when the grandparents of two young constgirls who are now 22 months old—Vicky and Alex Storer — wrote to me to describe the enormous difficulties the twins face. The family lives in the constituency of the hon. Member for Nuneaton (Mr. Stevens), who is present in the Chamber and who I hope will be supporting this new clause not only in a speech but also in the Lobby. The enormous difficulties with which that family has to cope because of the severity of Vicky's and Alex's disabilities could not fail to move any Member of the House who met the children. The children, with their parents and their aunt, were in the H today in order to publicise the need for this be carried.

From birth, the disability was clearly dia attendant consultant paediatrician, the medical officer for the area. Vicky and Alex much in the first 22 months of their life— brain drainage, fits and frequent resuscitati the social and medical evidence indicates t second birthday they will clearly get th allowance, which by April will be a maxi week. But why do they have to wait? Wh attendance allowance be paid to them now

As a parent, with two of my three childr age to Vicky and Alex, one eight months and years old, I have direct experience of the no of and attention demanded by infants. But recently, conjuctivitis, nightly feeding, and be compared with the strain of coping with the degree of disability that Vicky and Ale like them suffer. For the first few months they required permanent hospital care. It m fact that their mother, Sandra, was formerl nurse at the Walsgrave hospital in Coventr her sister, is currently a nurse at that hospi them to cope, but the strain has certainly t

A £33 attendance allowance would occasional professional help. It would allo Peter, the girls' father, to do the shopping an jobs, confident that the children were bein looked after. The job of looking after chil degree of disability ought to be carried out basis by a district health authority or a l social services department, and there is som from that direction. But some of the main months has been from the Crossroads ca scheme, which in the midlands provides carers looking after people with disabil successive cuts in the funding of the loc health authorities have made them unable bairns and families like the Storers.

Because the lower age limit is two years allowance and five years for mobility all bairns are denied access to other things. For parents cannot get an orange badge to put enable them to use parking spaces for the hospital, outside the council offices, by wherever it may be. So what Sandra and Pe is not only to cope with two disabled bair carry an oxygen cylinder and resuscitati sometimes as much as 100 yards to get to w to go.

8 pm

Another consequence of their being attendance allowance is that from April— because of the changes in social security p are going through — there will be a premium which we understand will be abou Only those who currently or by April rece or mobility allowance will be entitled to that premium. The premium covers the axing of that families now receive, such as help wit or with laundry; this assistance will be r

disabled child premium. But families with children under the age of two will not be entitled to the premium because they are not getting an attendance or mobility allowance.

Every hon. Member present in the Chamber or who reads the debate tomorrow in *Hansard* will know of similar cases in his or her area of children suffering from Down's syndrome, spina bifida, autism, strokes at birth or respiratory, cardiac or intestinal malfunction. I asked the Minister to give us his own assessment for today's debate of how many children under the age of two might be eligible for the new allowance, were the House to pass the clause this evening, but unfortunately those figures have not arrived in time for the debate, so I have to make my own estimate.

Let us say that about 10,000 or 12,000 children could be affected. Shortly before Christmas, the Minister gave me an estimate of the cost of extending provision to these children as about £17 million per year. My only comment on the size of that figure is that it is slightly less than half what it cost to refurbish the offices of the Minister, his Secretary of State and his colleagues across the road from 10 Downing street, that palace with its crystal chandeliers costing £38 million. Half that sum would have provided thousands of families with minimal financial assistance to allow them some extra professional help.

I have been in the House nearly five years, and during that time we have heard a lot about the Tory programme for returning people to the community, particularly when it comes to closing down some of the Victorian hospitals for those with mental handicap or mental illness. There is an element of that in this debate. Sandra and Peter Storer are doing the job of the hospital service. If those bairns were in hospital, they could be costing the taxpayer about £200 a week for professional care. Sandra and Peter are doing that job because they love their family, yet they are not even getting this £33 a week which would help them to cope. It is a cruel hoax for the Tories to speak about returning people to the community as if it was a benefit to the families concerned and then not to provide resources to enable those families to cope.

When we debated this matter in Committee on an amendment which allowed us to raise roughly the same subject matter, the Minister said:

"I have some sympathy for some of the points made by the hon. Member for Coventry, South-East".

He said that the argument that we were putting forward was

"more difficult to resist, although the Committee should consider long and hard before accepting"

the amendment.

One of the reasons that he gave, and I accept it entirely, was his own personal experience. He said:

"During the past two years, in my extended family I have had experience of a child who suffered from meningitis soon after birth and who will be severely handicapped for the rest of her life. She is approaching the age of two, when she will get the attendance allowance."—[*Official Report, Standing Committee E*, 17 November 1987; c. 62.]

Later in the debate, the Minister said,

"The intention in Amendment No. 17 to remove the age limit of two years has a strong, obvious and immediate appeal to anyone who is concerned with handicapped children and the stress . . . that is felt by families, particularly mothers." —[*Official Report, Standing Committee E*, 19 November 1987; c. 77.]

I quite accept that, with his own experience, the Minister can see the scope of the problem. This leaves me with a simple question. If he understands it from his own experience, why will he not stand up at the Di and extend the entitlement allowance, the co which, as my hon. Friend the Member for D has said, are stringent, to the 10,000 or 12,0 who are undergoing this same experience?

The reason that the Minister gave the Com why the Government did not take this positio "it is difficult to make assessments for children u of two . . . all of us who have children under th have to give them a degree of care and attention almost certainly lead us, if they were older, to attendance allowance for much if not all the time children guaranteed that never once in two years and I have an uninterrupted night — they w constantly interrupted — but the brother afterwards gave us two years of absolute peace, s pattern even in the demands that normal healthy on their parents during the night." — [*Offic Standing Committee E*, 17 November 1987, c. 69

I can accept that from my own experience two years. But the children who are diagnosed by all medical and social experts as unlikely from conditions suffered from birth—such as Alex—do not fall into the mould which th described of normal children of a similar age. the normal pattern of parents looking after chi not have to carry round an oxygen cyl resuscitation equipment, nor did I have to chec every two hours during the nights that I ha home, and neither did the Minister. But t experience of Peter and Sandra Storer and of of parents like them.

In that larger number of 10,000 or 12,00 there is a group of children to which I would li attention. There can be absolutely no doubt from birth, they will face horrifying proble perhaps tragically short lives. I refer to those from inherited blood disorders such as sickle s or thalassemia major and related haemoglobin I am grateful for the assistance that I and my have been given on this by the Organisation for Anaemia Research—OSCAR. Sickle cell ana inherited disorder of red blood cells affecting pe forebears lived in those parts of the world wh is a scourge.

It is estimated that there are 4,500 suffe United Kingdom, most of whom live in conurbations. The illness is chronic, unpredic recurrence and variable in its manifestatio usually appear in early infancy. Failin intervention, there is a high risk of death before five — before they would become entitled t allowance. If the sufferer survives, she or he r organ damage with impaired quality of life a life expectancy. Parents and families face dis education, employment and normal family life. for the purposes of this debate to understand disorder affects young children. At about six age, those suffering from sickle cell ana experience a painful swelling of the hands lowered resistance to infection, bodily pains, pallor and jaundice. The abnormal red bloo fragile and short-lived, leading to anaemia. The oxygen and become distorted, obstructing the s vessels and causing localised, irreversible tissue

Neither I nor the Minister who will reply to has any personal experience of this in rega children such as was mentioned in Committee.

[Mr. Dave Nellist]

of caring for children is completely different from the upbringing of normal children. There is no cure for sickle cell anaemia. Prophylactic measures include regular penicillin and occasional blood transfusions, high oral fluid intake, warm clothing, well heated rooms and remedial treatment when the painful crises may necessitate hospital admission or day-and-night nursing at home.

I could spend some time describing how all this affects not only the children who suffer from the disorder but their parents and their siblings but, as one would expect with that degree of disability, the effects are also economic and social and impinge on the quality and continuation of family life. The family and the marriage may break up because of the instability brought into the situation by a child with that degree of suffering. Even if the attendance allowance were to be paid, its present level is inadequate. Nevertheless, there would be an element, particularly for children under two, of respite and care available to minimise the effect on the family—although I stress that it ought to be the job of the district health authority or local authority to provide proper 24-hour care for parents and children in that position.

Let me describe a point that was raised in Committee to illustrate the continuation of care that is needed for those who suffer from such conditions as thalassemia major. One of the ways to alleviate the condition partially is by using a drug called, I believe, Desferal, but that drug must be administered over an eight or 10-hour period, several times a week, to children — particularly very young infants—with a hypodermic needle inserted in the stomach overnight. That necessitates the parent constantly getting up to check not only that the baby is all right, but that the needle has not worked itself free from the stomach.

That seems to me to satisfy all the criteria — even with the Government's extended restrictions—for those who need constant supervision. From the age of two, the child — or, rather, the parent — would receive the necessary financial assistance, but the problem is occurring now, and it does not start at the age of two.

It would have been possible, even with the time allocated to tonight's debate, to give a wider range of examples of the problems experienced by the families of a few thousand children in this country who are so severely disabled and face such serious problems that that minor amount of money—£33·00 a week, from April—could provide some degree of alleviation. I trust that my comrades who speak later in the debate will be able to give further examples. However, there has been no serious attempt in the past decade and a half to change the law, and there has been no attempt during the Committee stage to justify the Government's position.

I hope that I am not stealing the remarks of my hon. Friend the Member for Bristol, South (Ms. Primarolo), who pointed out that no research had been undertaken to justify the Government's decision that the allowance should start at the age of two. We are discussing children in whom the diagnosis can be made — because of a disorder in the blood, or because of the severity of their physical or mental disability from birth — that their problems will be with them for the rest of their lives, which in many cases are tragically short. There can be no justification for the Government not cough up a minimal amount such as £1 families of such children.

Vicky and Alex were here today. S may have seen them. Certainly, I hope will be given to their case in the day Sandra, who raised this case, a grandparents, recognised when they fi in the autumn of last year that March be two years old, was probably too ea the law. But they have put themselves other families do not have to undergo, years ahead, the trauma that they ha bringing up their children.

If the Minister and his hon. Friend to give some reality to the talk of pe to the community, and of the Tory pa of the family, they will act tonight. I some reality — admittedly, this is a point—to the view that I expect to January, when we debate a private M curtailment of the age limit on abortio amniocentesis test at 18 or 20 weeks for a foetus to be terminated because have a severe physical or mental d Members care so much about y disabilities — they will help their fi extending the £33·00 a week attendanc under two.

I hope that, when we divide the H not only the solid assistance of 149 La have corresponded with me over the C promised me their support, but that c Members who have listened to tonigh

8.15 pm

Mr. Boswell: The House will be fan a Conservative Back Bencher on a St I had the pleasure of serving on the Committee. It could be encapsulate Thomas Hobbes: nasty, brutish and aside the nastiness and the bruti certainly some of the sufferings of whic indeed nasty and brutish for the fam is still true that, whichever party ha Government, speeches from Governm tend, remarkably, to be short. Never body language who attended the Co have noticed a tendency on my part others, to sympathise with the positio Those of us who are parents of healthy to feel considerable sensitivity and sy the children and parents whom we mee not apply, and who face dreadful pro

While I have some sympathy wit must tell the House that I do not pr I should like, however, to put down c My first, and major, reason is th remarkable, and a shade distasteful, attendance allowance that obtained th of Labour Government is now being a cause that naturally attracts huma character of a political stunt.

Mrs. Beckett: Does the hon. Gentl that—sadly, in my view—it is now n

a Labour Government were in office; and, secondly, that nothing would have given us greater pleasure than to be in a position as a Labour Government to carry out precisely this measure? I am 100 per cent. certain that, as an Opposition Back Bencher, the hon. Member would have received a quite different hearing from me, or from anyone else in the position of Minister for Social Security, from that which, sadly, we expect from the Conservative Benches tonight.

Mr. Boswell: I am grateful for the hon. Lady's comments. However, she will be surprised to learn that, even as a new Member, I know enough not to dive into the realms of the hypothetical. I can, however, record that that was the position under the previous Administration. That was a few years ago, and we hope that matters will improve, but we find what is happening tonight remarkable.

It is perhaps part and parcel of the tactics that have been deployed on the Standing Committee, and on other occasions, by the Opposition that the cost of this change is relatively small. The figure that I pencilled in was £13 million. I understand from the Minister that it is now some £17 million—although, as those of us who have worked in advising Government in previous capacities know, even £10 million, or indeed, £1 million, is fought over in departmental budgets nowadays.

If we had a self-denying ordinance from the Opposition that this was the one area in which they were prepared to interest themselves, and that they would, as the Americans say, major on it, that might be one thing. But when it is accompanied by all other issues with which I have much less sympathy — what may be termed consistent, constant and strident ululation, together with the ruthless clocking up of the taximeter of cost—I part company with the Opposition.

During the Committee stage, I busied myself by attempting to keep some record of the overall costs. I found that the cost of the seven items that I could identify exceeded an additional £700 million a year. When I added the uncosted or unquantifiable items, the figure was well over £1 billion a year. What is proposed tonight on that narrow issue must be seen in the context of the general commitment to what I can only call irresponsibility.

The other reason why I have reservations about the new clause is that I believe that there is sense in not merely following the present practice with attendance allowance. We should be looking, as the Government are looking, at the whole aspect of disability. I say that not to put it off, but to try to achieve the right solution. It is easy for us to consider distressful situations that apply to children and say, "Let's do something about them. What's the most obvious and available measure we can adopt? Let's do it." That may not be the right way to proceed and I will explain why.

I want to consider the specifics of the issue. I listened with great care to the debate in Committee and to the Minister's sensitive reply to the points.

Mrs. Beckett: Rubbish.

Mr. Boswell: I am sorry that the hon. Lady feels that that is rubbish. I seem to remember that at the time the Minister was treated with respect because he went out of his way—and he can speak for himself on this—to respond sensitively to the points that were made.

The Minister said in Committee that he would respond to these points and consider how to deal with them later. First, he will have to consider whether it is possible reliably to assess those children under the age of 24 months, but, in practice, before whom there will be a six months waiting period, it is possible to assess a sufficient proportion of them so as not to create an undesirable degree of disparity of treatment between one class and another. Secondly, how to produce a reasonably satisfactory assessment so that children can be assessed before the 24 months so that attendance allowance can be paid at the age of two years or before, no one would welcome more than I. I hope that the Minister will consider carefully whether that can be achieved. A situation in which only a handful of cases might be so assessable and all the others would follow later might be invidious.

I know that the Minister spent some time and effort in considering the next point. Even if an assessment can be made—and I feel instinctively that it is one which we could perhaps over the years consider more closely—would it be possible to make a practical judgment about the level of extra care required for the under-two position? I hope and believe that it would be possible to isolate some cases where one could clearly say that care was required as the needs were great and that we could then meet such cases in due course.

Finally, as attendance allowance is the only benefit as the passport to other benefits or available at all, even if the final decision is not to opt for attendance allowance in those cases, will the Minister consider whether some way can be found to achieve a passport for severely disabled children? I very much agree with the hon. Member for Coventry, South-East (Mr. Nellist) on the point that is clear to all hon. Members who have heard or considered the matter that there are many parents who We are grateful as parents that most of our children have spared such cases. We would like to help those who are involved. In the sense of the debates that have taken place, I want the Government to consider this one of the matters of the highest priority, if not immediately, in the future.

Mr. Dafydd Wigley (Caernarfon): I agree with the hon. Member for Daventry (Mr. Boswell) on the matter. This debate is similar to a fairly lengthy debate we had in Committee, although the wording of the new clause is different. I am glad that we have had the intervention from the Conservative Benches. The Committee stage would have been more worthwhile had it been possible to have a proper debate on the issues in front of the Committee. Conservative Members were tightly bound and gagged by their Whips and could not play a constructive part in the debate.

The hon. Member for Daventry has made a good speech and it is worthwhile for me to attempt to respond to it. First, he said that it was not reasonable to raise the matter because the Labour Government had not considered it 10 years ago. The fact that the Labour Government did not consider it is no reason why a Conservative Government or a subsequent Labour Government should not consider it. If the Labour Government were to restrain themselves to only what Labour Governments have done

[Mr. Dafydd Wigley]

presumably Conservative Members would not agree with everything that their Government were doing. The hon. Gentleman's argument was very superficial.

He allied with that point the cost of the total proposals put forward in Committee for improving the lot of disabled people and others. He said that it was approximately £1 billion. Yes, that is a lot of money, but it is only about half of what would be produced by reducing income tax from 27p to 25p in the pound. At a time when that is being actively canvassed and discussed, I should have thought that a reasonable alternative use of those resources—even if not what the hon. Gentleman called "economically responsible"—would certainly have a social responsibility far in excess of its economic cost. Indeed, the small element of £20 million for those children out of £1,000 million is money well spent. Even if the rest of the package is expensive and unacceptable, that is no reason for cutting out the one element which may appeal to the hon. Gentleman. Therefore, I reject his argument on that point as well.

The hon. Member for Daventry referred to the need to assess below the age of 18 months and said that there is a danger of discrimination. Of course there is a danger of discrimination. However, discrimination exists now against everyone below the age of two who may well be clearly in need of assistance, and if there were criteria at all, those children would fall within them.

The new clause deals with discrimination. We are currently discriminating against people who clearly should receive some kind of assistance. There are many people over the age of two, including the elderly, whose condition is nothing like as severe as that of some children to whom reference has been made today. It would have been a lesser discrimination to have an ability to pay an allowance before the age of two against a set of criteria. That set of criteria may need to be slightly different because of the kind of children we are talking about and because of the normal pattern of "expected burden" of any children below the age of two. However, surely it is as possible to produce a set of guidelines for those circumstances as it is to produce guidelines for older people. After all, people aged 80, 90 or 100 may be expected to need care and attendance allowance is paid in those circumstances. It should also be practically possible to pay such an allowance for those under the age of two.

The hon. Member for Daventry said that, even if it was possible to make an assessment, it would be difficult to determine the need for extra care. With respect, that question arises in all cases of attendance allowance. No one type of care is needed. Circumstances vary from category to category. We all have constituents who receive attendance allowance and we are pleased about that, although sometimes we think that their cases may be marginal. Others patently need the allowance.

The hon. Member for Daventry said that he was going to make four points, yet I have commented on five that he made. He referred to the passport question. I accept that if there were other ways of getting a passport to other benefits including invalid care allowance which may be passported by attendance allowance, that would be a way out of the hon. Gentleman's argument. However, we are not considering them tonight. We are debating a new clause to try to ensure that we make provision for those children below the age of two who place an extra cost and burden on their parents way beyond the normal responsibility of minding children at that age.

We won the argument in Committee overwhelmingly. In fact, there was not a lot of argument because the Minister agreed with us half the time. I suspect that we will win the argument tonight. I want to remind the Minister briefly of the points rehearsed in Committee which have not been adequately answered. I believe that the Minister acknowledges that extra costs are involved. Therefore, it is a question of getting a mechanism to help parents. There are also extra burdens for the parents of children below the age of two if there is a disability in that when that disability is first diagnosed—and that is likely to be around the age of one — parents will be going backwards and forwards on day trips to hospitals and will incur considerable extra costs. At a later stage they may have some stability in looking after their children, but at the point of diagnosis when they are uncertain about how to cope the extra cost can be even greater than it will be later.

The Minister did not respond in Committee to the question of how there could be objective attendance allowance assessment for older people. If the needs of older people who qualify for attendance allowance can be taken as a barometer, surely it must be possible to devise a system to meet the needs of those below the age of two.

8.30 pm

In Committee we dealt with the issue of community care, or the lack of it. The hon. Member for Coventry, South-East (Mr. Nellist) mentioned the absence in many areas of services that give adequate support to parents with disabled children below the age of two. If those services are not available through the local authorities or the area health authorities, the least that we can do is to give them some flexibility to buy into those services by having such resources. We are not talking about an enormous sum of money, or an enormous departure from principle. We are talking about an area in which at the moment the Government are not looking very bright. I should have thought that, in the case of young disabled children below the age of two, the Government would seek a way forward in which their performance could be seen to be a little more creditable than it has been recently. On that basis, I suggest that the new clause be accepted.

Mr. Lewis Stevens (Nuneaton): I had not recognised how serious and sad was the case of many young children until that of Mr. and Mrs. Storer and their twins occurred in my constituency, about which the hon. Member for Coventry, South-East (Mr. Nellist) has reminded the House. It was so tragic for those parents to be sure at that early stage that they would have difficulties with their children almost from birth and for many years to come, with little likelihood of any substantial relief or improvement.

Like other people, I consider children and babies to be problems for any parents. It is not easy for all parents for several months. Outsiders do not readily recognise that children may have physical or mental difficulties. When one looks a little more deeply into the real difficulties which such parents must undergo, one realises that almost from the moment that those children arrive home there can be no normal family life. The family is committed to providing children or babies with the basic necessities—feeding them, looking after them, playing with them and

enjoying them—but to disabled children they must be totally committed, which prevents the family from having any normal relaxation.

With babies, at least one can relax for an hour or two when they are in bed. In the sad case of Mr. and Mrs. Storer and their children, there is little opportunity for the family to relax unless someone else takes over. That is when there is need for an attendance allowance. It would provide some relief for the family and enable it to have some physical and mental relaxation and carry on a normal life. They need some recreation so that they can give that tremendously full commitment to their children.

In general, there is an age limit of 18 months plus six months, or two years. It is easy to see how such an arrangement could come about. If one examined statistics and drew a distribution curve to show how difficulties with children come into that curve, one would see that many ailments, illnesses and disabilities are recognised at about 12 months. At that stage it is certain that those disabilities really exist and will continue. In cases such as that of Mr. and Mrs. Storer, those disabilities were recognised when the babies were in hospital, and certainly as soon as they came home there was little doubt. A very well qualified consultant, a lady who does not exaggerate and who does not unnecessarily alarm people, even politicians, as some doctors may do — she is a very realistic and understanding person—said that from a very early stage it was possible to know that those children would undergo physical and mental disabilities which would create problems for the family.

We must look for a way to give support to such families from the earliest possible time. That time may be a few weeks or a few months after they are born. Perhaps we should apply a rule of six months, as we do for the attendance allowances, as that would still bring the time available for payment well forward of two years. We should consider that.

The hon. Member for Coventry, South-East spoke about the availability of support, whether through attendance allowance or other support. Help should be available directly when those families take the babies home. In my constituency case I had the impression that help was not quickly forthcoming. It was not easy for the parents to find out that help was available.

Even if it is a matter of attendance allowance, one must look at similar cases and different disabilities and ensure that there is medical or social help automatically available to those families and that at an early stage there is somewhere for them to turn to. There are many services available in Britain. I shall not make any political point about how good or bad they are, but they are available. Yet it is not easy to say where help should come from for such families at the time mentioned by the hon. Member for Caernarfon (Mr. Wigley), the age at which the diagnosis first comes about. Families are taking their children to the hospital to find out about their disabilities. Once they have been properly diagnosed and confirmed, some action can be taken and some procedure put in place to look after those children. But until that time, those weeks and months are desperate times and families have more concern during the time of uncertainty than when the diagnosis is confirmed and they recognise that they have practical difficulties.

I raised that point on Second Reading, partly in the hope that as the Bill went through Committee the matter would be debated. I was not able to serve on the Standing Committee, but I am sure from the words of the hon. Member for Coventry, South-East that it was debated. Indeed, there was sympathy from the Government Benches for an improvement in help—perhaps through the attendance allowance. It is obvious from the Bill that there will not be a Government amendment stating what changes should be made.

I shall be interested to hear my hon. Friend the Minister's response. The new clause seeks to ensure that a family receives support from an early stage and that is right. However, I understand that it may well cause problems in its practical application and in providing adequate support in different cases. My hon. Friend might suggest that various reviews are taking place to try to define more precisely the needs of disabled people in general which may also cover the needs of young children and that the objective of the new clause may be achieved better at a later stage in the Bill or in a subsequent Bill.

Such explanations I shall listen to. However, I hope that my hon. Friend will be able to say that the Government intend to provide cover for the type of cases to which I and the hon. Member for Coventry, South-East have referred and the many others that might exist. I hope that he will say that the Government intend to review support available both in the form of attendance allowances and by other means, and to bring forward measures to assist such cases at an appropriate point.

My hon. Friend the Member for Daventry (Mr. Boswell) spoke about a time when that might happen, and I hope that it will be in months, not years. I hope that my hon. Friend the Minister will reassure me that the Government intend in the near future to introduce measures to provide full and proper support for families with children under two years of age as soon as their disabilities are properly diagnosed. If he does, it may well be that I can support the Government, and not the new clause. Without such an assurance, I shall be tempted to support the clause.

Ms. Primarolo: I want to try to answer some of the points that have been made and to draw the debate back to the essential problem that the new clause seeks to address.

It is regrettable that the hon. Member for Daventry (Mr. Boswell) sought to introduce financial considerations and to calculate how much the Opposition proposals added up to. He may not need reminding, but I shall do so all the same, that each amendment is voted upon individually and he can support this proposal without supporting all the others, although obviously we would wish him to do so. Parents with disabled children do not want sympathy from the House. Sympathy is not enough. Understanding is not enough. It is cheering, but it does not help them.

The hon. Member also asked whether we need some complicated formula to work out whether a child under two requires an attendance allowance. Such a formula already exists in the Bill to work out how everybody else qualifies for an attendance allowance.

Mr. Boswell: Will the hon. Lady accept that the issue is not whether there is a formula in being, but whether it is appropriate to the special situation and the areas of uncertainty which were rightly identified in Committee in the assessment of the need for and the level of special care for such children? That is the issue on which we await the Minister's reply.

8.45 pm

Ms. Primarolo: I do not remember the Minister addressing that point in Committee. My hon. Friend the Member for Coventry, South-East (Mr. Nellist) referred to the proposed changes to the Abortion Act 1967 and the fact that it is possible to diagnose hereditary diseases and severe abnormalities before birth. It is possible to work out from that whether a child will require more care than a normal able-bodied child under two.

It is obviously correct that a Labour Government allowed the age bar. It should not have done so, and I hope that the Labour party is now big enough to admit that and to say that the next Labour Government will change it. Comments were made in the previous debate on child benefit about the value that our society places on children and on understanding their needs. I hope that that is greater now than it was 10, 15 or 20 years ago.

This matter was raised with me by my constituents in September of last year and I wrote to the Minister to ask why there was an age bar. The age bar says that even if a child has all the disabilities that would qualify him for an attendance allowance at the age of three, if he is under two, he is disqualified. That age bar has nothing to do with an assessment of a child's needs. The Minister said that clearly in his reply to me of 14 September when he said:

"Unfortunately, a line has to be drawn somewhere."

It is an arbitrary line for a cut-off date.

The other main plank of the Government's argument has been that it must be proved that a disabled child under two requires care substantially in excess of that required by a normal child under two. I asked the Library to find out whether any research has been done on the care needed by a child with an inherited disorder or severe disability compared with a so-called normal child under two. There has been no such research. There has been research and statements on the care needed by a so-called normal child and there has been research on disabled children, but no comparison has been made. There has been no evaluation of the differences. The Government have taken refuge exclusively behind the barrier that all two-year-olds require substantial care.

I am sure that those hon. Members who are parents understand clearly the problems of lack of sleep caused by a child who is under two who does not want to sleep through the night. It may be rather like discussing matters here late at night. [HON. MEMBERS: "Much worse."] At least there is the pleasure of one's children and the knowledge that they will grow up into decent members of our society. Such satisfaction is not always the outcome of debates in the Chamber. Indeed, the Opposition have won only one vote so far, and that was in relation to the Post Office.

The basis of the Government's argument is that all children under two require the same amount of care. Therefore, we need to demonstrate that that is not the case. We do not particularly want to read out the endless horror stories of those children and their parents but we must underline the fact that caring for such a child is not the same as caring for a normal under-two-year-old.

I shall give the general outline of a letter that I received about a child born with a hereditary disease which meant that it did not have all its skin. Sufferers from that disease have varying amounts of skin on different parts of their body. Parts of their skin are very thin and are likely to break and blister. It is an extremely painful illness. Those who have had to change nappies can imagine the problems of a child suffering from that disease when it is very young and still requires nappies.

The parents in question wrote to me about their daughter who, unfortunately, lived for only 12 weeks. She had only 30 per cent. of the normal amount of skin. She was in great pain and needed much care. Both parents stayed at home, which put an immense emotional strain on them, especially as they did so in the sure knowledge that the child would die. After eight weeks the parents simply could not cope any longer with the strain of caring for that child 24 hours a day and had to resort to having her put back into hospital care. They did not have the necessary support to relieve them from the exhaustion and deprivation that they were suffering. It seems to me that that experience is not the same as caring for a normal 12-week-old baby. There is a world of difference. The condition is medically known. It can be diagnosed and its effects are known. Age is not a problem in that case.

The work of OSCAR on sickle cell anaemia has been referred to. It is an inherited disease and the symptoms of those suffering from it are well charted. The crises of that illness are particularly acute in children of two and under and drugs have to be administered to those children throughout the night. The crises occur about every six weeks or so and last for several weeks and the child will be in extreme pain and discomfort during that period. Naturally that is reflected in its behaviour. Clearly, caring for such a child is not the same as caring for a child under two who is teething and in pain.

The Government persist in hiding behind a barrier that is totally transparent. They say that they cannot assess the difference between looking after a severely disabled child and the impact of known inherited diseases on such children, and giving the care and support that a normal child under two requires. The conclusion that I draw from that is that they are mostly men, who have little experience of looking after children and little understanding of the constant demands placed on parents. Therefore, they can say in complete astonishment that they have never thought of the continuous help and care that a disabled child under the age of two would require. Indeed, they have never really thought about how much care a normal child under two needs.

The new clause forces the debate by asking, "Why do we need an age bar at two, which excludes families from claiming attendance allowance despite the social economic and personal strains that caring for such a child puts on them?". Why do we need the age bar when we can assess the illness and when we can assess whether or not an attendance allowance is necessary under the legislation already? It is already difficult to qualify for such an allowance. As there is already a method of assessing diseases, and medical opinion that can forecast their progress, why do the Government persist in keeping the two-year age bar? The answer must be meanness, lack of understanding of the care of children and especially of the care that needs to be given to children who are physically or mentally disabled—who have inherited diseases, who are born with spina bifida, who suffer a stroke at birth or who have cleft palates and who need additional care, over and above the care needed by any other two-year-old.

I have attempted to clarify the purpose of the new clause. I sincerely hope that Conservative Members will now say that there is no logical or moral reason why the two-year bar should remain. I hope that they will join us

in saying that, while it is regrettable that previous Administrations, of whatever political colour, have failed to address that point, we shall put it right tonight and ensure that the parents receive at least some support, albeit not enough, in recognition of the difficulties that they face in trying to keep their families together and care for their children.

Mr. James Arbuthnot (Wanstead and Woodford): I speak from a position of great luck because I am the father of a 20-month-old child who is healthy and normal. Frankly, the demands of my son are incessant. He needs constant watching, worrying over and caring for, because a 20-month-old son is an extraordinary phenomenon. As his father, I have had to think of 40 different ways in which a lunatic might commit suicide and then prevent him from doing so.

The Government have decided, I believe rightly, that the constant demands made on parents of any child under the age of two are never-ending. They have also admitted — as I admit — that in practice the parents of handicapped children sometimes have greater needs than the parents of normal children, and that those needs are unmet. However, it becomes much easier to assess those needs when the child is about two—as well as the extra time taken by the parents and the extra costs that they incur in meeting the needs. Inevitably, the younger the child the harder it is to assess its needs. The matter cannot be looked at in terms of black and white. It must be a question of balance, as must everything that is discussed in this Chamber.

The hon. Member for Caernarfon (Mr. Wigley) was right: it is no argument to say that a previous Labour Government decided that the age limit of two years should be in place, and that therefore this Government must be right. As I have said, the issue is not black and white. However, there is an argument for saying that the previous Labour Government had to weigh up the various different and competing claims on resources and the various different and competing ways of targeting those resources, and that they came to the same conclusion as this Government.

9 pm

Mrs. Beckett: I know that the hon. Gentleman was a member of the Committee and that he listened to some of the debates, but I remind him of a point made by the Minister—that once the age limit had been introduced at an early stage during the introduction of attendance allowance, the issue of the age limit was hardly raised and has not been considered from that time to this. It is not the case, as the hon. Gentleman and his hon. Friend the Member for Daventry (Mr. Boswell) have said, that the matter had been considered and rejected by a Labour Government. The initial age limit has not been seriously questioned until now. It is regrettable and terrible that it has not been questioned, but that is not an argument for not questioning it now.

Mr. Arbuthnot: Although I am grateful for that intervention, the hon. Member does not appreciate that the imposition of an age limit requires a positive step. In my view, the positive step to impose that age limit was correct because of the incessant demands that are made on the parents of any two-year-old child.

It is inevitable that resources are limited and, therefore, that those resources must be targeted in one way or another. The way in which those resources are targeted must be a matter of judgment and balance. It is not always possible for a Government to satisfy every unmet need, and it would not necessarily be right for a Government to do so.

My hon. Friend the Member for Daventry referred to the fact that the Government are examining the whole system of attendance allowances that are paid to disabled people. It is better to examine those attendance allowances as a whole and for that to be done in the light of the survey of disabled people which is being carried out by the Office of Population Censuses and Surveys, and which is expected later this year. It is also better that the matter be considered in the light of the study of community care that is being performed by Sir Roy Griffiths. When attendance allowances are dealt with, it is necessary that the final conclusion reached by the House is the right conclusion.

Nobody could deny the effectiveness of the speech by the hon. Member for Bristol, South (Ms. Primarolo). However, because of the review that is coming this year, the decision must be the right one. It is also necessary that attendance allowances are not looked at——

Ms. Primarolo: What review is the hon. Gentleman talking about?

Mr. Arbuthnot: I refer to the review that is being carried out by the Office of Population Censuses and Surveys. Its survey of disabled people is expected later this year.

Ms. Primarolo: That is a general study of disability and does not address specifically the question that we have raised in the new clause—the position of under-two-year olds and babies—for exactly the same reasons that the age bar exists in the first place.

Mr. Arbuthnot: That is precisely the point that I am making. It is a general study. Because the position of disabled people is a matter which must be considered as a whole, that is the more sensible way of dealing with this issue, rather than by the new clause——

Mr. Nellist *rose*——

Mr. Boswell *rose*——

Mr. Arbuthnot: I have given way five or six times in my speech already. I would rather wind up my speech by reminding hon. Members that it is not only the attendance allowances which are available to disabled people——

Mr. Nellist *rose*——

Mr. Arbuthnot: No, I shall not give way. I have done so six times already.

It is not only attendance allowances which are available to disabled people, because the allowances are only one of a whole range of services that are also available——

Mr. Nellist: Will the hon. Gentleman give way? He said nowt for two months in Committee, so will he give way now?

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. Arbuthnot: There is a specific responsibility on local authorities and on health authorities to help those families which have disabled children. That help can take the form of the provision of equipment, home helps and nursing facilities for other children in the family, among other things.

Therefore, the balance is difficult to strike——

Mr. Nellist *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. Arbuthnot: The balance is difficult to strike, but in this case I believe that the Government's conclusion, which coincides with the last——

Mr. Nellist: Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Speaker: Order. I heard the hon. Gentleman say that he was not giving way.

Mr. Arbuthnot: It is a difficult balance to strike, but I believe that the Government's conclusion, which is the same as that arrived at by the last Labour Government, is the correct one.

Mr. Nellist *rose*——

Mrs. Wise: While sitting through the debates on the Social Security Bill in Committee, I used to wish that Conservative Members would speak out. I believed that, once they had heard speeches such as those made by my hon. Friends the Members for Coventry, South-East (Mr. Nellist) and for Bristol, South (Ms. Primarolo), they would have to think the same thoughts as I was thinking. Any human being would have done so. I heartily believed that, if they would only throw off the discipline of the Whip and speak, all would be revealed.

Now, I am so shocked at the revelation of the depths of their total lack of comprehension of the problems facing so many people that I regret that they have spoken. I regret having had my illusions shattered. I would rather believe that Conservative Members were bound and gagged by the Whips than that their sensibility and understanding was so limited.

The hon. Member for Wanstead and Woodford (Mr. Arbuthnot) talked about his child of 20 months needing constant attention. I have a grandchild of 16 months, who of course needs constant attention and supervision. He climbs and is apt to fall over. But there is all the difference in the world between adventureness which requires supervision, with all the joy and laughter that accompany that period of life, and the complete helplessness and sadness occasioned by severe sickness and disability described by my hon. Friends. Possibly, if there were more women Members, even Conservative Members would show more understanding, although I cannot guarantee that, given the shattering of my illusions tonight.

I am sorry that we do not have the same level of attendance in this debate as we had for the child benefit debate earlier. Many more hon. Members were willing to come and talk about the needs of normal families. I welcomed them and took part in that debate, but it is a great pity that those who do not have such force of numbers behind them and do not wield so many votes cannot count on such a turnout. I deeply regret that.

All the arguments that have been used against the new clause tonight could be used equally well against any attendance allowance. We have heard that it is difficult reliably to assess the need. That is at least as—if not more—true of adults. Medical opinions differ about the needs of adults. Some doctors say that an attendance allowance should be given, some that it should not. We do not use that genuine difficulty as a reason for not having an attendance allowance. But when it is a matter of babies, for some reason every judgment must be perfect and the balance must be so delicately attuned that we must never take the risk of tipping it in favour of children or their parents.

I would rather some attendance allowances were giv and later withdrawn because the children improv Unfortunately, in most of these cases, death will be t only relief for the children and their parents. For t House to refuse to give any help that we can to parents such children is diabolical and monstrous. The House Commons should be ashamed of itself tonight if it vo against this amendment.

I can see that I shall have to follow the advice given another hon. Member in Committee and study bo language. Normally I do not interpret body language t listen to what people say. However, from the shuffles a wriggles of Conservative Members it is clear that they fi some of my arguments uncomfortable. At this very min I can see those arguments being shrugged off by th Members.

When we debated child benefit, we were told of huge expense that would be involved in upgrading it. were told that it would cost a lot and that it was a bl instrument. Indeed, one Conservative Member said t that benefit was sprayed all over. However, we are n talking about something that would be finely targete a delicate instrument. The allowance would go to ab 10,000 of those families in this country who have suffe the misfortune of all misfortunes. Now we are told that matter is too complex and that judgments might be m that were not absolutely correct.

In Committee, the Minister — we are told responded sensitively to the problem—said that the h given should be the right type of help. I do not think t giving an extra £31 or £32 to a family so that they can a bit of extra help or a bit of extra rest could possibly the wrong help. I accept that there might be a whole of things that should be done—some of those thi may be dealt with at the moment, but inadequately and it is right that they should be considered and vo upon. What we are being called upon to vote for toni cannot possibly be regarded as the wrong type of help any parent in such a position.

I have heard about the OPCS survey regarding extent of disability and the needs of the disabled. Howe the hon. Members who have mentioned that survey h no knowledge—they certainly have not shared it with —of any specific attempts to study the problems disabled and severely sick babies. Such babies will lumped in with other people.

I believe that those children need extra, urg attention. I happen to believe that, in this amendment, are, if anything, being over modest. There will still be age limit to qualify for the allowance. Those babies t die before the age of 12 weeks will not be covered by amendment. Our amendment still means that th children would have to suffer for six months before t qualified. Therefore, the earliest age for benefit woul six months and it may well be that weeks would before it was understood that a claim could or shoul made. As a result of that claim, an assessment would h to be carried out and therefore it would probably m that few children under the age of one would get benefit.

Even though the amendment represents a s measure, it is still infinitely worth while. I do not k how hon. Members will sleep tonight if they deprive pe of this benefit for the children. I hope that when the h Member for Wanstead and Woodford goes home ton and looks at his 20-month-old child, he will think ab

the mother struggling with twins who are unable to stand up unaided and who have to have an oxygen cylinder ready. That mother has to look out for those twins ceasing to breathe. She does not have to watch to see if they fall over and graze a knee, but to check that they have not ceased to breathe. The hon. Member for Wanstead and Woodford should look at his 20-month-old son and be thankful that he is not a candidate for the attendance allowance for which we are appealing tonight.

We hear a great deal about sympathy. It has been said that the Minister responded sensitively in Committee and that sympathy poured from him. I am prepared to believe that he genuinely feels that sympathy, but it does not help parents for one minute. They face a burden that goes on minute by minute, hour by hour, 24 hours of the day; and mothers, in particular, face that burden. We could not take it from them. They have been plagued by nature with this dreadful catastrophe. We can only try to alleviate it a little at the edges. The Minister tells us that we may not be able reliably to assess every case, so one person may receive the allowance and another person may not, when they should both receive it.

Words do not often fail me, as my hon. Friends know. I cannot understand how hon. Members, having had these matters brought to their attention, can then throw the argument back. I reiterate what my hon. Friend the Member for Derby, South (Mrs. Beckett) said. The Labour Government did not reject any such proposal. The matter was never considered during the 1970s.

9.15 pm

Mr. Simon Burns (Chelmsford): Before you get carried away with self-righteous indignation, what did you do——

Mr. Speaker: Order. No "yous".

Mr. Burns: I was wondering what the last Labour Government did from 1975 to 1979 to consider this matter and what the Labour party has done while out of office, if it feels so strongly about the matter.

Mrs. Wise: The Labour Government were doing a few useful things, such as introducing mobility allowance and non-contributory invalidity benefit. Many of us were helping them with that.

We did not know that there are 10,000 families in this position. They did not bring the problem to us. Presumably no Conservative Members knew about the problem when they were on the Opposition Benches, because they did not raise the matter. Nobody raised the matter. None of my constituents brought it to my attention. As the problem affects such a small minority of children, it is not surprising. Like the hon. Member for Chelmsford (Mr. Burns), I thought that all babies needed a lot of care, and that therefore the problem did not arise. However, we are aware of the problem now because we have been told about it by the people who suffer, so none of us has any excuse.

Mrs. Alice Mahon (Halifax): I raised this point in Committee on 17 November. I have worked for the Health Service for many years and have nursed such children. A change occurred in the care of these children. I asked the Minister how many beds had gone out of the National Health Service during those years. He gave me an answer which ran into thousands, so there are different trends. The Labour Government did not recognise the problem, but, although there is no excuse for that, there was a different method of caring for children. We cared for children with severe handicaps in hospital. That trend has changed and that is a good argument for bringing forward this amendment.

Mrs. Wise: My hon. Friend is quite right. I take the expression "righteous indignation", which tripped off the lips of the hon. Member for Chelmsford, not as a term of abuse, but as a compliment. Anybody who does not feel righteous indignation at the thought that this amendment might be rejected is deficient in humanity, and as a politician and human being. If the hon. Gentleman's constituents were aware of the facts, they would feel that too. I call on all hon. Members with a grain of humanity and a grain of common sense to acknowledge that there is no financial or moral justification for rejecting this amendment.

Mr. Nellist: My hon. Friend the Member for Preston (Mrs. Wise) has listened carefully to the debate here and in Committee. It is interesting to note that the interventions from one or two Conservative Members, who sat silently in Committee, should be so derogatory. The only Conservative Member to speak in the debate tonight who has met one of these families—the Storer family — is the hon. Member for Nuneaton (Mr. Stevens). He has been the only Tory Member to say that, unless the Minister gives an assurance that there will be some progress, he may support the Opposition. None of the Tory Members who have spoken this evening have gone to the 30 or 40 families in their constituency and asked the parents how they are coping. They are all speaking out of the back of their heads.

Mrs. Wise: I am grateful to my hon. Friend for the intervention. I join the call for all hon. Members to vote for the amendment. There is little enough we can do. It would be shameful to refuse to do what little we can.

Mr. Jacques Arnold (Gravesham): I should like to pay tribute to the members of the Standing Committee that considered the Bill, because the House has seen the kind of emotional tirade from the hon. Member for Preston (Mrs. Wise) that they have had to put up with day in and day out. We have had an emotional tirade time after time, when I would have thought the purpose of the Committee and the House was to consider dispassionately, but with heartfelt attention, the cases of fellow citizens such as those we have heard about tonight.

Let us remember the background to the introduction of the attendance allowance that we are extending to the parents of children under the age of two. That allowance was introduced by a Conservative Government, who paid heed to the needs which were evident in those days, before the magnificent advances in medical science of recent years, when it was extremely difficult to distinguish between those youngsters who had a serious disability that would qualify for the attendance allowance and normal children. That was the reason the Conservative Government introduced the two-year limit, and presumably that was the reason why the succeeding Labour Government—of whom the hon. Member for Preston, the then Member for Coventry, South-West, was a part —did not raise the two-year limit, let alone change it. It is being considered now.

In those days the number of cases of such youngsters was minimal, but thanks to advances in technology and

[Mr. Jacques Arnold]

medical science, more children are surviving the weird and terrible conditions that afflict them, and they are the serious cases which hon. Members have quite rightly raised. The hon. Member for Nuneaton (Mr. Stevens) and other hon. Members have referred to cases which prove beyond a shadow of doubt that we should turn our attention to the thousands of children in this condition, because they are worthy of our support.

Mr. Peter Thurnham (Bolton, North-East): I ask my hon. Friend to consider the case of handicapped children in care who require fostering or adoption, because it is generally easier to find parents to adopt or foster younger children than older children. This bears out the argument that the need for care of young children is not as great as it is for older children. When funds are short, surely it is more important to provide funds to look after older children, about whom there is more concern and who cause more worry to parents, than to provide funds for younger children who do not require as much care.

Mr. Arnold: My hon. Friend's point speaks for itself. It is all very well for Labour Members to bring in an amendment and make heart-rending speeches in an attempt to overcome in a superficial way what is a very real problem. I would rather that the Minister gave an undertaking that he will consider the problem and will bring together county council social services departments and local district health authorities to consider the problem of providing adequate support and relief for parents of disabled children under the age of two.

Mr. Scott: It is not surprising, in discussing a subject that has so many emotional overtones, that strong feelings have been displayed this evening. We spent 10¼ hours in Committee in three long debates on attendance allowance. I know that all members of the Committee treated it with great seriousness and concern.

Tonight, we return to the matter. Before I get into the main argument that I wish to put, I should like to say to the hon. Member for Coventry, South-East (Mr. Nellist) that he had a question answered today about the statistics and costs of the matter. I hoped that he would receive it before this debate, and I am sorry if he has not yet done so. I shall give the substance of the answer now, and it will be of some interest to the House.

The hon. Gentleman will recall that in an answer given to him on 30 November 1987, we said that the advice we had was that an estimated 3,900 children currently become eligible at the age of two. Of those, 2,300 were at the higher rate and 1,600 were at the lower rate. Assuming that all those would start at the age of six months, no attempt was made to allow for awards running for only part of the financial year. The resulting estimate of a £17 million extra annual cost included £7·5 million for invalid care allowance and £0·5 million for income support child disablement premium. I emphasise that both of the estimates I am giving to the House now assume the continued application of the six-month qualifying period, that is to say, that no award would start before six months, and that is the basis of the assumption.

We have been able to revise our estimates in the light of expert medical advice about children with severe disabilities from birth, who require attention substantially in excess of normal. We also take into account disabilities that come to light subsequently, particularly duri second year of life. We estimate that there may be 3,000 under-twos who would qualify. They probably divide fairly equally between the highe lower rate allowance. Taking account of dis throughout the year of children coming into bene reaching the age of two, when they cease to be an cost, we estimate an extra annual cost of about £7 m That takes account of £3·1 million for invalid allowance and income support disablement premi £200,000.

Mr. Wigley: The Minister used a telling phrase explanation, which I am sure will be most helpful House. He spoke of children with needs that "substantially in excess of normal". Is that not wh debate in Committee has been about, the inability whether such a group exists? If it does exist an possible to quantify it at 3,000, surely that is abu evidence that the point behind the amendment sho accepted by the Government.

Mr. Scott: Perhaps the hon. Gentleman will all to continue. I wanted to clear up that point for the and particularly for the hon. Member for Co South-East, who I anticipate will have had the ans advance of this debate.

Another point that the hon. Gentleman raised speech concerned entitlement to an orange badge, from the attendance allowance. Technically speal flows from mobility allowance, although I know tha local authorities operate the scheme on the basis th a child reaches the age of two it is entitled to allowa then the parents or other carers are entitled to an badge.

Mr. Nellist: If we are unsuccessful this eve convincing sufficient Conservative Members to sup on new clause 2, and in arranging for all under- have attendance allowance, what can the Minister now from the Dispatch Box on this small point ab passport to an orange badge? Will discretion be so that local authorities can issue badges to the pa under-twos, where need is identified, even where a not two years old and cannot qualify for atte allowance, or is not five years old and cannot qua mobility allowance? Will the Minister offer at le concession before we come to the meat of the new

9.30 pm

Mr. Scott: I shall leave that to the end of my the hon. Gentleman wishes to intervene on an matters, I shall be happy to give way, but we have debate in Committee. As I say, it was a long and debate and obviously a great deal of emotion u many of the contributions. As I promised in Com I have thought long and hard about the propo attendance allowance should be available for under the age of two. I knew that this would b again on Report. I also believe that there was importance about the discussion.

Many points made in Committee caused m Friend and myself to think seriously about the ma I went back to the Department because of the ch put to me and asked for additional expert medica on the medical issues. As a result, I have a clearer some aspects of the argument that perhaps I did in Committee. A lot of this depends on medical

Lest I am arousing expectations that I shall not be able to fulfil when I conclude, I still believe for the moment that it would be wrong to include the proposal in the Bill at this time, but I hope to say something more constructive before I finish.

The contribution of the hon. Member for Preston reached perhaps hysterical points but I understand the strength of her feeling. At one time she seemed to be talking as though attendance allowance was the only help available for parents with disabled children. Of course, a range of help is provided by the social services departments, health authorities and voluntary organisations for such families.

Mrs. Wise: Does not that also apply to adults who receive attendance allowance? Do they not also qualify for other allowances?

Mr. Scott: They may indeed. But listening to the hon. Lady one could have been persuaded that families who had the appalling misfortune to have a severely disabled child, with all the emotional and physical stress that that obviously puts on parents and other members of the family, were left helpless because they were not entitled to attendance allowance. The point I am making is that that is not true. Whatever the arguments may be for or against giving attendance allowance to disabled youngsters, the fact is that there is a range of help available to those families. It is right that we should remind ourselves of that.

Mr. Bill Michie (Sheffield, Heeley): The Minister has mentioned the range of help available through local authorities and social services. But many local authorities, such as Sheffield, are rate-capped and the pressure put on social services is far too great. Rate-capping makes the position worse, so the Minister cannot say that someone else should take care of the problem.

Mr. Scott: On the other hand, the allocation for personal social services which has been agreed for the coming year, although not what local authorities might have wished but nevertheless generous, is certainly of a sufficient size for them to be able to agree to implement sections 5 and 6 of the Disabled Persons (Services, Consultation and Representation) Act 1986 whose author, as it were, is sitting on the Opposition Front Bench. Extra resources have been provided to social services and local authorities. It is not possible for Government to dictate to local authorities how they should spend the allocation. But certainly this range of services is provided by the vast majority of local authorities in this country.

Mr. Tom Clarke (Monklands, West): I am very grateful to the Minister for giving way. Despite earlier temptations, I had not intended to intervene because I think that this is a crucial discussion and I did not want to take away from the main focus of what seems to me to be a vital debate. But I am sure that the Minister did not wish to give the impression to the House that the whole of the 1986 Act had been implemented or that any one of the local authority associations is satisfied with progress so far. Can he clarify that point?

Mr. Scott: If the hon. Gentleman had listened carefully he would have realised that I referred to sections 5 and 6 and said that we had enabled them to be implemented with the resources that we have made available for the coming year. We have said that the implementation of the rest of the Act will depend on the resources we are able to make available in future. It is the clear intention that, resources become available, we shall ensure that the who of the Act is implemented.

The main point that I am trying to make at the mome is that families which have this appalling experience a not left helpless. Local authorities have a responsibility assess the needs of all families with children and to ensu that those needs are met. Health authorities have responsibility to provide health services for all childre including those with special needs, and voluntar organisations provide health services which add to t volume of statutory services and widen the range a variety of response to people's needs.

I know very well, and I recognised this in Committe how the parents of handicapped babies find their practic burdens increased by the emotional strain of coming terms with the handicap. I believe that it is vital important that parents receive the right support a counselling to help them with this emotional strain. Ma parents who find themselves in this situation speak ve highly of the help which they are given by heal authorities, hospitals, local authorities and voluntar organisations, many of which work on a self-help basi and this helps families which find themselves in th situation to cope with both the practical burdens and t emotional strains involved.

Mr. Wigley: The Minister will recall that in Committ I went into some detail about the fact that not only is the a need for these services but, over and above that, the is a real additional cost to the parents of disabled childr and that cost is there from the very beginning. Will address himself to that aspect?

Mr. Scott: There are, of course, voluntary organis tions that are able to help with that sort of thing, but I w recome to the point about attendance allowance in moment. I just want to register the point that families this situation have a range of help from a variety of sourc —from the health services, local authorities, domicilia services, and so on.

Mr. Thurnham: I did not have the advantage of bei on the Committee at an earlier stage, but I have heard figure this evening of 10,000 families, and the Minister h just quoted a figure of 3,000 families. My own research Bolton would suggest that about 10 families each ye have a severely handicapped child born to them, whi would suggest that for the country as a whole there mig be between 2,000 and 3,000 each year. I should be grate if my hon. Friend would clarify the numbers.

Mr. Scott: The figure will, of course, be in the *Offici Report* tomorrow as a result of the answer I have given the hon. Member for Coventry, South-East. It comes o at up to 3,000 children, assessing the total cost, bearing mind that they come on for part of the year, and so o at some £7 million. That includes both the ICA and t child disablement premium.

I think that it is generally accepted that attendan allowance should be paid only in respect of those disabl children whose attendance needs exceed those of norm children of the same age. Giving statutory expression that principle was one of the main purposes of t regulations which were made in 1971 at the outset of t attendance allowance scheme under the power which

[Mr. Scott]

now contained in the 1975 Act. The age two threshold which this clause seeks to remove has similarly been enshrined in regulations since 1971.

I am not making a party political point at all because there are people on both sides of the House who are concerned about this sort of issue.

Given that this is enshrined in regulations—it is not in primary legislation, so people who wished to raise the matter or to have a debate need not have waited for an opportunity arising from primary legislation — I am surprised, I am even surprised at myself, that none of us spotted this and that it has not been raised earlier. But there has been no concerted pressure at all to amend this particular regulation before now. That is not to say that the Committee and the House are not entitled to use the opportunity of this Bill to bring the matter to public attention. I think I may have used a phrase—whether it was a wise one or not—about exploiting the fact that we had a Bill in order to raise this particular matter, but I did not use it in any pejorative sense. I understand why the Opposition, when we have a Bill of this sort, seize on a matter, bring it forward and have it discussed on its merits—merits which have changed over the years, not least because of the improvements in medical science and medical technology which have enabled many youngsters born with severe disability to survive, babies who would not have survived in the early years of attendance allowance.

We can all understand the original rationale of the lower age limit. It was that healthy babies and infants required a lot of attention anyway and so it would be very difficult in practice to identify any substantial extra need for attention arising from disability. The age of two was chosen as the threshold because the important milestones of normal development occurring by the end of the second year meant that by that age any significant divergence from the pattern of increasing independence would have become apparent. But times change, and we must recognise that. Although this rationale remains true for many children who may grow up disabled, it has been overtaken by developments affecting other children. In particular, the continuing advances in medical and nursing care of babies with severe congenital abnormalities and birth trauma mean that more survive and are discharged into the care of their parents in the first year of life.

The advice that I have received confirms that, as hon. Members argued in Committee, these babies have attendance needs which exceed those of a normal child. That is not to say that it is as easy to assess the needs of a baby as it is to assess those of a child over the age of two; there are still substantial difficulties involved in such a judgment. But it is clear that there is a group whose disabilities and needs it is possible to assess before the age of two. Perhaps it is because the hon. Member for Caernarfon (Mr. Wigley) recognised that this did not require primary legislation that he asked me in Committee to undertake a specific review of it and to

"consider the issue in its own right at the appropriate time". —[*Official Report, Standing Committee E*, 19 November 1987; c. 82.]

The recent medical advice that we have received and the conclusion from it that I have reported are obviously an important aspect but I do not think that they can be the absolute answer to the issue in this new clause before us today. With the very substantial extension of allowance that we have seen, particularly si women became eligible, we would have to interaction of attendance allowance and allowance in the context of any extension to the age of two. Because it is intended maintenance for those who forgo the opp employment to look after a disabled perso need to examine the merits of paying it to usually the mother, of a child when that paren well have given up work in any case.

In essence, if we are to consider the attendance allowance to youngsters under th who have needs substantially in excess of those child, it is right to look at the interaction o allowance and invalid care allowance, perhaps childhood, and see what an appropriate patt might be. We must look at those above the a well as those below it to ensure that we have e sensible arrangements for this sort of cash disabled children and their parents.

9.45 pm

I have a reply to the hon. Member for Cove East about local authorities and the orange b Local authorities already have discretion to badges to disabled people who are not co automatic entitlement criteria. I understa colleagues in the Department of Transpo responsible for the scheme are conducting a and have sought comments and represent responsible organisations. I am sure that welcome any representations by hon. Membe operation of the scheme. Some authoritie operate the scheme, although some choose allowance and some go below the age to two have the agreement of the hon. Member for

I mention the kind of issues that I think be right for us to consider if we reviewed cas disabled children and their parents withi narrow context of the existing benefits of att invalid care allowances. I do not intend to sp what answers we might come up with if we en exercise, but, as my hon. Friends the M Wanstead and Woodford (Mr. Arbuthn Daventry (Mr. Boswell) mentioned, s questions are about to be overtaken by the w of attendance allowances, along with oth benefits, that will shortly be made possible of the OPCS survey of disabled people Griffiths' study of community care. They m to significant changes in the form of cas support for disabled people, including child parents, and we shall want to examine their a great deal of care. Sir Roy Griffiths' rep soon, and the OPCS results later this year, wi material for a wider and better-informed deb these matters.

If the hon. Lady is not willing to withd clause, I ask the House to reject it, but background of a recognition that support fo of disabled children throughout the age ra inescapably be part of the system.

Mrs. Beckett: The tone of the Minister's r that I feel confident that many hon. Memb not followed the progress of the debate will b

must have made some concession. I congratulate him on managing not to make such a concession while sounding as though he had.

I accept that the Minister has now gone as far as saying that, in the context of the Griffiths report on community care and the OPCS survey of disability in all their aspects, the Government will look seriously at the position of disabled children. I shall do the Minister the justice of acknowledging that I have little doubt that he and, probably, his hon. Friend the Under-Secretary have been seriously dismayed by the observations and cases put to them in Committee, and will take the opportunity of those reviews to do what they can. Nevertheless, we have no firm date for either of those reviews; certainly the general survey of disability has been awaited for a considerable time. With some regret, I must say that it seems to me that all the Minister is saying is that at some time in the future —perhaps this year, perhaps next year or perhaps the year after—when the general survey of the needs of the disabled is made, he will look at such cases and perhaps act.

At least we have heard from the Minister something that we did not hear from his hon. Friends whose views we did not have the benefit of hearing in Committee—although the members of the Committee who have spoken tonight were, I concede, present for most of the debate, which cannot be said for all Conservative Members. At least the Minister expressed an understanding that the debates in Committee and on the Floor of the House have been serious and thoughtful debates, dealing with serious and important issues of causing tremendous anxiety to the parents of children who are, by definition, very severely disabled, whether physically or mentally.

At least in that respect, the contribution from the Government Front Bench is distinguished from that made by the hon. Members for Daventry (Mr. Boswell) and for Wanstead and Woodford (Mr. Arbuthnot) and indeed the comments made by the hon. Member for Chelmsford (Mr. Burns) whom I am not sure is in the Chamber any longer, so disgusted was he by the tone of the debate. Forgive me: how could I forget the contribution made by the hon. Member for Gravesham (Mr. Arnold)? He referred to what Conservative Members had to put up with in Committee. Apparently the hon. Gentleman does not like to listen to the problems of those who have to cope with severely mentally and physically handicapped children. My sympathy for him is considerably tempered by the recollection of the much greater problems faced by those who have to cope with those difficulties.

From the comments made by those hon. Members, it appeared that they were trying to find excuses to explain why they were unable to vote with the Opposition tonight. I suspect that they were doing that because, against their will, they were much impressed by the arguments in Committee and on the Floor of the House on this issue. The hon. Member for Daventry differed from his hon. Friends in that he did not acknowledge that there had been a serious and thoughtful debate on this point. Instead, he made some silly and unjustified comments about the tone of the debate. He spoke about the other commitments which have been discussed. They were paltry and pathetic reasons for refusing to support a new clause that will extend the right to attendance allowance to children who now meet all qualifications for the award of that allowance other than the fact that they have not passed the age of two.

Comments were made from the Conservative about superficial remarks and about hon. M becoming too emotional about these matters. I know what we should get emotional about if it is sufferings and problems of children in those stances. It is outrageous for Conservative Mem suggest that, although of course they sympathise, o the tone of the debate they are unable to put that sy into action and vote in the Lobby in support of clause.

Mr. Nellist: I apologise to my hon. Friend the M for Derby, South (Mrs. Beckett) in case I p remarks that she is about to make. However, Chamber is fuller now I want to explain that n Friend is referring to complaints made by Tory M about the debate in Committee. Will she allo through her, to explain that we had more than 1 of debate in Committee and we have had more th hours of debate tonight on this matter? Tempers sides of the House have rightly, in my view, risen hi have heard from the Minister tonight that what argued about for nearly 13 hours concerns 3,000 c at a total allowance cost of £7 million. That is less per cent. of the cost of the crystal chandeliers an adornments in the new DHSS headquarters in Wh All that debate involved 3,000 children. That migh Tory Members' eyes and they might understand have been pushing the Minister. We cannot movement to help those 3,000 kids.

Mrs. Beckett: My hon. Friend is right. I pay tri him, to my hon. Friend the Member for Bristol (Ms. Primarolo) and to the hon. Member for Nu (Mr. Stevens) for the way in which they have brou issue to the attention of the House by raising const cases.

I want to consider the remarks made by th Member for Nuneaton. In a sense, he encapsula problem. He said that there is little doubt that in t that has been brought to his attention in his const the children satisfy every criteria for the aw attendance allowance except the fact that it cannot below the age of two. He spoke about the intentio new clause being correct and he hoped that the M would be able to give him some words of suppor the problems that prevented him from accepting t clause or giving effect to it in other ways.

In Committee we sought to give effect to the pr made by the hon. Member for Nuneaton. We as Minister to give the assurance that a review on thi would be undertaken and that, if our proposals w exactly the right way to proceed, whether he woul other proposals. All that he has told us is that we w to await the results of the review into the disabled may take several years.

The hon. Gentleman asked what reaso Government could give for not being able to agree least the principle of the new clause this evening. I can tell the hon. Gentleman that in Commit Minister said that it is somewhat difficult in some get the test exactly right and it

"would create considerable difficulties for the atte allowance board."

I have considerable respect and sympathy f attendance allowance board, which has a difficult do, but my sympathy and respect for the board

[Mrs. Beckett]

outweighed by my sympathy and respect for people such as the parents who are his constituents who are having to struggle to look after severely disabled children and who are being told that they cannot have the allowance because it might be difficult for the board.

My sympathy disappears when I look again at what the Minister said in Committee. He said:

"it is possible in some cases to identify the need for the allowance before age two . . . under the age of 18 months . . . I do not dispute the fact that some children can be identified and assessed . . . The allowance must be paid at a point when attendance needs can be clearly discerned to be in excess of those required by non-disabled children." — [*Official Report, Standing Committee E*, 17 November 1987; c. 64-5.]

But it is not so paid. It is not paid until the children reach the age of two, no matter how terrible their problems, no matter how great their difficulties and no matter how horrendous the struggles of their parents.

Some Conservative Members have spoken with amusement, sneering even, about the emotions that have been aroused on the Labour Benches by the issues raised by the new clause. I am proud of the fact that such emotions have been raised. It was unworthy of the Minister to suggest that the real anger and outrage expressed by my hon. Friend the Member for Preston (Mrs. Wise) was hysterical.

It would be no wonder if someone was driven to hysteria watching the antics of some Conservative Members this evening. This is an issue of real seriousness and importance for the families involved. It is one on which the Minister has not, no matter how much he sought to convey his sympathy, been able to tell us that he will be able to move and the Opposition have no hesitation in seeking to divide the House.

Question put, That the clause be read a Second time:—

The House divided: Ayes 225, Noes 310.

Division No. 129] **[9.56 pm**

AYES

Adams, Allen *(Paisley N)*
Allen, Graham
Alton, David
Anderson, Donald
Archer, Rt Hon Peter
Armstrong, Ms Hilary
Ashdown, Paddy
Ashley, Rt Hon Jack
Ashton, Joe
Banks, Tony *(Newham NW)*
Barnes, Harry *(Derbyshire NE)*
Barron, Kevin
Battle, John
Beckett, Margaret
Beggs, Roy
Bell, Stuart
Benn, Rt Hon Tony
Bennett, A. F. *(D'nt'n & R'dish)*
Bermingham, Gerald
Bidwell, Sydney
Blair, Tony
Blunkett, David
Boateng, Paul
Boyes, Roland
Bradley, Keith
Bray, Dr Jeremy
Brown, Gordon *(D'mline E)*
Brown, Nicholas *(Newcastle E)*
Bruce, Malcolm *(Gordon)*
Buchan, Norman
Buckley, George
Caborn, Richard
Callaghan, Jim
Campbell, Menzies *(Fife NE)*
Campbell-Savours, D. N.
Canavan, Dennis
Carlile, Alex *(Mont'g)*
Clarke, Tom *(Monklands W)*
Clay, Bob
Cleiland, David
Clwyd, Mrs Ann
Cohen, Harry
Cook, Robin *(Livingston)*
Corbett, Robin
Corbyn, Jeremy
Cousins, Jim
Cox, Tom
Crowther, Stan
Cryer, Bob
Cummings, J.
Cunliffe, Lawrence
Cunningham, Dr John
Dalyell, Tam
Darling, Alastair
Davies, Rt Hon Denzil *(Llanelli)*
Davies, Ron *(Caerphilly)*
Davis, Terry *(B'ham Hodge H'l)*
Dewar, Donald
Dixon, Don
Dobson, Frank
Doran, Frank
Douglas, Dick
Dunnachie, James
Dunwoody, Hon Mrs Gwyneth
Eadie, Alexander
Eastham, Ken
Evans, John *(St Helens N)*
Ewing, Harry *(Falkirk E)*
Ewing, Mrs Margaret *(Moray)*
Fatchett, Derek
Faulds, Andrew
Fearn, Ronald
Field, Frank *(Birkenhead)*
Fields, Terry *(L'pool B G'n)*
Fisher, Mark
Flannery, Martin
Flynn, Paul
Forsythe, Clifford *(Antrim S)*
Foster, Derek
Fraser, John
Fyfe, Mrs Maria
Galbraith, Samuel
Galloway, George
Garrett, John *(Norwich South)*
Garrett, Ted *(Wallsend)*
Gilbert, Rt Hon Dr John
Godman, Dr Norman A.
Golding, Mrs Llin
Gordon, Ms Mildred
Grant, Bernie *(Tottenham)*
Griffiths, Nigel *(Edinburgh S)*
Griffiths, Win *(Bridgend)*
Grocott, Bruce
Harman, Ms Harriet
Hattersley, Rt Hon Roy
Haynes, Frank
Healey, Rt Hon Denis
Heffer, Eric S.
Hinchliffe, David
Hogg, N. *(C'nauld & Kilsyth)*
Holland, Stuart
Home Robertson, John
Hood, James
Howarth, George *(Knowsley N)*
Howell, Rt Hon D. *(S'heath)*
Hoyle, Doug
Hughes, Robert *(Aberdeen N)*
Hughes, Roy *(Newport E)*
Hughes, Sean *(Knowsley S)*
Hughes, Simon *(Southwark)*
Hume, John
Illsley, Eric
Ingram, Adam
Janner, Greville
John, Brynmor
Jones, Barry *(Alyn & Deeside)*
Jones, Ieuan *(Ynys Môn)*
Jones, Martyn *(Clwyd S W)*
Kaufman, Rt Hon Gerald
Kinnock, Rt Hon Neil
Kirkwood, Archy
Lambie, David
Lamond, James
Leadbitter, Ted
Leighton, Ron
Lestor, Miss Joan *(Eccles)*
Lewis, Terry
Litherland, Robert
Livingstone, Ken
Lofthouse, Geoffrey
Loyden, Eddie
McAllion, John
McAvoy, Tom
McCartney, Ian
McCusker, Harold
Macdonald, Calum
McFall, John
McGrady, E. K.
McKelvey, William
McLeish, Henry
McNamara, Kevin
McTaggart, Bob
McWilliam, ...
Madden, Ma...
Mahon, Mrs ...
Marek, Dr J...
Marshall, D...
Marshall, Ji...
Martin, Mich...
Martlew, Eri...
Maxton, Joh...
Meacher, M...
Meale, Alan...
Michael, Al...
Michie, Bill ...
Michie, Mrs ...
Millan, Rt H...
Mitchell, Au...
Moonie, Dr ...
Morgan, Rh...
Morley, Elli...
Morris, Rt H...
Mowlam, M...
Mullin, Chri...
Murphy, Pa...
Nellist, Dav...
Oakes, Rt H...
O'Brien, Wi...
O'Neill, Mar...
Patchett, Te...
Pendry, Tom...
Pike, Peter ...
Powell, Ray...
Prescott, Jo...
Primarolo, ...
Quin, Ms Jo...
Radice, Gil...
Randall, Stu...
Redmond, ...
Rees, Rt Ho...
Reid, John ...
Richardson ...
Robertson, ...
Robinson, ...
Rogers, Ali...
Rooker, Jef...
Ross, Ernie...
Rowlands, ...
Salmond, A...
Sedgemore ...
Sheerman, ...
Sheldon, R...
Shore, Rt H...
Skinner, Do...
Smith, And...
Smith, C. (...
Smith, Rt H...
Snape, Pet...
Soley, Clive...
Spearing, ...
Steinberg, ...
Stott, Roge...
Strang, Ga...
Straw, Jack...
Taylor, Mrs ...
Taylor, Rt ...
Thomas, D...
Thompson, ...
Turner, De...
Vaz, Keith ...
Wall, Pat ...
Wallace, Ja...
Walley, Ma...
Wardell, G...
Wareing, R...
Welsh, Mic...
Wigley, Da...
Williams, ...
Williams, A...
Wilson, Bri...
Winnick, D...
Wise, Mrs ...

Worthington, Anthony
Wray, James
Young, David *(Bolton SE)*

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. Frank Cook and
Mr. Allen McKay.

NOES

Adley, Robert
Alexander, Richard
Alison, Rt Hon Michael
Amess, David
Amos, Alan
Arbuthnot, James
Arnold, Jacques *(Gravesham)*
Arnold, Tom *(Hazel Grove)*
Ashby, David
Atkinson, David
Baker, Rt Hon K. *(Mole Valley)*
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Baldry, Tony
Banks, Robert *(Harrogate)*
Batiste, Spencer
Beaumont-Dark, Anthony
Bellingham, Henry
Bendall, Vivian
Bennett, Nicholas *(Pembroke)*
Bevan, David Gilroy
Biffen, Rt Hon John
Blackburn, Dr John G.
Blaker, Rt Hon Sir Peter
Body, Sir Richard
Bonsor, Sir Nicholas
Boswell, Tim
Bottomley, Peter
Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Bowden, Gerald *(Dulwich)*
Bowis, John
Boyson, Rt Hon Dr Sir Rhodes
Braine, Rt Hon Sir Bernard
Brandon-Bravo, Martin
Brazier, Julian
Brittan, Rt Hon Leon
Brooke, Rt Hon Peter
Brown, Michael *(Brigg & Cl't's)*
Browne, John *(Winchester)*
Bruce, Ian *(Dorset South)*
Buchanan-Smith, Rt Hon Alick
Buck, Sir Antony
Budgen, Nicholas
Burns, Simon
Burt, Alistair
Butler, Chris
Butterfill, John
Carlisle, John, *(Luton N)*
Carlisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Carrington, Matthew
Carttiss, Michael
Cash, William
Chalker, Rt Hon Mrs Lynda
Channon, Rt Hon Paul
Chapman, Sydney
Chope, Christopher
Churchill, Mr
Clark, Hon Alan *(Plym'th S'n)*
Clark, Dr Michael *(Rochford)*
Clarke, Rt Hon K. *(Rushcliffe)*
Conway, Derek
Coombs, Anthony *(Wyre F'rest)*
Coombs, Simon *(Swindon)*
Cope, John
Cormack, Patrick
Couchman, James
Cran, James
Critchley, Julian
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Curry, David
Davies, Q. *(Stamf'd & Spald'g)*
Davis, David *(Boothferry)*
Day, Stephen
Devlin, Tim
Dickens, Geoffrey
Dicks, Terry
Dorrell, Stephen
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James
Dover, Den
Dunn, Bob
Durant, Tony
Dykes, Hugh
Eggar, Tim
Evans, David *(Welwyn Hatf'd)*
Evennett, David
Fallon, Michael
Favell, Tony
Fenner, Dame Peggy
Field, Barry *(Isle of Wight)*
Fookes, Miss Janet
Forman, Nigel
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Forth, Eric
Fowler, Rt Hon Norman
Franks, Cecil
Freeman, Roger
French, Douglas
Fry, Peter
Gale, Roger
Gardiner, George
Gill, Christopher
Gilmour, Rt Hon Sir Ian
Glyn, Dr [illegible]an
Goodhart, Sir Philip
Goodlad, Alastair
Goodson-Wickes, Dr Charles
Gorman, Mrs Teresa
Gow, Ian
Gower, Sir Raymond
Grant, Sir Anthony *(CambsSW)*
Greenway, Harry *(Ealing N)*
Greenway, John *(Rydale)*
Gregory, Conal
Griffiths, Peter *(Portsmouth N)*
Grist, Ian
Ground, Patrick
Grylls, Michael
Hamilton, Hon A. *(Epsom)*
Hampson, Dr Keith
Hanley, Jeremy
Hargreaves, A. *(B'ham H'll Gr')*
Hargreaves, Ken *(Hyndburn)*
Harris, David
Hawkins, Christopher
Hayes, Jerry
Hayhoe, Rt Hon Sir Barney
Heathcoat-Amory, David
Heddle, John
Heseltine, Rt Hon Michael
Hicks, Mrs Maureen *(Wolv' NE)*
Hicks, Robert *(Cornwall SE)*
Higgins, Rt Hon Terence L.
Hogg, Hon Douglas *(Gr'th'm)*
Holt, Richard
Hordern, Sir Peter
Howard, Michael
Howarth, Alan *(Strat'd-on-A)*
Howell, Rt Hon David *(G'dford)*
Hughes, Robert G. *(Harrow W)*
Hunt, David *(Wirral W)*
Hunt, John *(Ravensbourne)*
Hurd, Rt Hon Douglas
Irvine, Michael
Irving, Charles
Jack, Michael
Jackson, Robert
Janman, Timothy
Jones, Gwilym *(Cardiff N)*
Jones, Robert B *(Herts W)*
Kellett-Bowman, Mrs Elaine
Key, Robert
King, Roger *(B'ham N'thfield)*
Kirkhope, Timothy
Knapman, Roger
Knight, Greg *(Derby North)*
Knowles, Michael
Knox, David
Lamont, Rt Hon Norman
Lang, Ian
Latham, Michael
Lawrence, Ivan
Lawson, Rt Hon Nigel
Lee, John *(Pendle)*
Leigh, Edward *(Gainsbor'gh)*
Lennox-Boyd, Hon Mark
Lester, Jim *(Broxtowe)*
Lightbown, David
Lilley, Peter
Lloyd, Sir Ian *(Havant)*
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
Lord, Michael
Luce, Rt Hon Richard
McCrindle, Robert
Macfarlane, Sir Neil
MacKay, Andrew *(E Berkshire)*
Maclean, David
McLoughlin, Patrick
McNair-Wilson, M. *(Newbury)*
McNair-Wilson, P. *(New Forest)*
Madel, David
Major, Rt Hon John
Malins, Humfrey
Maples, John
Mariand, Paul
Marlow, Tony
Marshall, John *(Hendon S)*
Marshall, Michael *(Arundel)*
Martin, David *(Portsmouth S)*
Mates, Michael
Maude, Hon Francis
Maxwell-Hyslop, Robin
Mayhew, Rt Hon Sir Patrick
Mellor, David
Meyer, Sir Anthony
Miller, Hal
Mills, Iain
Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)*
Mitchell, David *(Hants NW)*
Moate, Roger
Monro, Sir Hector
Montgomery, Sir Fergus
Moore, Rt Hon John
Morrison, Sir Charles *(Devizes)*
Morrison, Hon P *(Chester)*
Moss, Malcolm
Moynihan, Hon C.
Mudd, David
Neale, Gerrard
Nelson, Anthony
Neubert, Michael
Newton, Rt Hon Tony
Nicholls, Patrick
Nicholson, David *(Taunton)*
Nicholson, Miss E. *(Devon W)*
Onslow, Rt Hon Cranley
Oppenheim, Phillip
Page, Richard
Paice, James
Parkinson, Rt Hon Cecil
Patnick, Irvine
Patten, Chris *(Bath)*
Patten, John *(Oxford W)*
Pattie, Rt Hon Sir Geoffrey
Pawsey, James
Peacock, Mrs Elizabeth
Porter, David *(Waveney)*
Portillo, Michael
Powell, William *(Corby)*
Raffan, Keith
Raison, Rt Hon T
Redwood, John
Renton, Tim
Rhodes James, I
Rhys Williams, S
Riddick, Graham
Ridley, Rt Hon N
Rifkind, Rt Hon M
Roberts, Wyn *(Co*
Roe, Mrs Marion
Rost, Peter
Rowe, Andrew
Rumbold, Mrs A
Ryder, Richard
Sackville, Hon To
Sainsbury, Hon T
Sayeed, Jonatha
Scott, Nicholas
Shaw, David *(Do*
Shaw, Sir Michae
Shelton, William
Shepherd, Colin
Shepherd, Richa
Sims, Roger
Skeet, Sir Trevo
Smith, Tim *(Bea*
Soames, Hon Nic
Speller, Tony
Spicer, Sir Jim *(*
Spicer, Michael
Squire, Robin
Stanbrook, Ivor
Steen, Anthony
Stern, Michael
Stevens, Lewis
Stewart, Allan *(E*
Stewart, Andrew
Sumberg, David
Summerson, Hug
Tapsell, Sir Pete
Taylor, Ian *(Esh*
Taylor, John M *(*
Taylor, Teddy *(S*
Tebbit, Rt Hon N
Thatcher, Rt Hon
Thompson, D. *(C*
Thompson, Patri
Thorne, Neil
Thornton, Malco
Thurnham, Peter
Townsend, Cyril
Tracey, Richard
Tredinnick, Davi
Trippier, David
Trotter, Neville
Twinn, Dr Ian
Vaughan, Sir Ge
Waddington, Rt H
Wakeham, Rt Ho
Waldegrave, Hon
Walker, Bill *(T'sl*
Waller, Gary
Walters, Dennis
Ward, John
Wardle, C. *(Bexh*
Warren, Kenneth
Watts, John
Wells, Bowen
Wheeler, John
Whitney, Ray
Widdecombe, Mi
Wiggin, Jerry
Wilkinson, John
Wilshire, David
Winterton, Mrs A
Winterton, Nicho
Wolfson, Mark
Wood, Timothy
Woodcock, Mike
Yeo, Tim

Young, Sir George *(Acton)*

Mr. Robert Boscawen and Mr. Tristan Garel-Jones.

Tellers for the Noes:

Question accordingly negatived.

It being after Ten o'clock, further consideration of the Bill stood adjourned.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Ordered,

That, at this day's sitting, the Social Security Bill may be proceeded with, though opposed, until any hour.—*[Mr. Maclean.]*

Bill, as amended, again considered.

New Clause 4

UPRATING OF CHILD BENEFIT

'In paragraph (b) of subsection (3) of Section 63 of the Social Security Act 1986 leave out:—

"*(c)* or *(d)* above" and insert:—

"*(c)*, *(d)* or, in any Order having effect on or after 10th April 1989, *(f)*, (child benefit), above.".'.—*[Sir Brandon Rhys Williams.]*

Brought up, and read the First time.

Question put, That the clause be read a Second time:—

The House divided: Ayes 241, Noes 288.

Division No. 130] **[10.10 pm**

AYES

Adams, Allen *(Paisley N)*
Allen, Graham
Alton, David
Anderson, Donald
Archer, Rt Hon Peter
Armstrong, Ms Hilary
Ashdown, Paddy
Ashley, Rt Hon Jack
Ashton, Joe
Banks, Tony *(Newham NW)*
Barnes, Harry *(Derbyshire NE)*
Barron, Kevin
Battle, John
Beckett, Margaret
Beggs, Roy
Bell, Stuart
Benn, Rt Hon Tony
Bennett, A. F. *(D'nt'n & R'dish)*
Bermingham, Gerald
Bidwell, Sydney
Blair, Tony
Blunkett, David
Boateng, Paul
Bowis, John
Boyes, Roland
Bradley, Keith
Bray, Dr Jeremy
Brown, Gordon *(D'mline E)*
Brown, Nicholas *(Newcastle E)*
Bruce, Malcolm *(Gordon)*
Buchan, Norman
Buckley, George
Caborn, Richard
Callaghan, Jim
Campbell, Menzies *(Fife NE)*
Campbell-Savours, D. N.
Canavan, Dennis
Carlile, Alex *(Mont'g)*
Clarke, Tom *(Monklands W)*
Clay, Bob
Clelland, David
Clwyd, Mrs Ann
Cohen, Harry
Cook, Frank *(Stockton N)*
Cook, Robin *(Livingston)*
Corbett, Robin
Corbyn, Jeremy
Cousins, Jim
Cox, Tom
Critchley, Julian
Crowther, Stan
Cryer, Bob
Cummings, J.
Cunliffe, Lawrence
Cunningham, Dr John
Dalyell, Tam
Darling, Alastair
Davies, Rt Hon Denzil *(Llanelli)*
Davies, Ron *(Caerphilly)*
Davis, Terry *(B'ham Hodge H'l)*
Dewar, Donald
Dixon, Don
Dobson, Frank
Doran, Frank
Douglas, Dick
Dunnachie, James
Dunwoody, Hon Mrs Gwyneth
Dykes, Hugh
Eadie, Alexander
Eastham, Ken
Evans, John *(St Helens N)*
Ewing, Harry *(Falkirk E)*
Ewing, Mrs Margaret *(Moray)*
Fatchett, Derek
Faulds, Andrew
Fearn, Ronald
Field, Frank *(Birkenhead)*
Fields, Terry *(L'pool B G'n)*
Fisher, Mark
Flannery, Martin
Flynn, Paul
Forsythe, Clifford *(Antrim S)*
Foster, Derek
Fraser, John
Fyfe, Mrs Maria
Galbraith, Samuel
Galloway, George
Garrett, John *(Norwich South)*
Garrett, Ted *(Wallsend)*
Gilbert, Rt Hon Dr John
Gilmour, Rt Hon Sir Ian
Godman, Dr Norman A.
Golding, Mrs Llin
Gordon, Ms Mildred
Grant, Bernie *(Tottenham)*
Griffiths, Nigel *(Edinburgh S)*
Griffiths, Win *(Bridgend)*
Grocott, Bruce
Harman, Ms Harriet
Hattersley, Rt Hon Roy
Haynes, Frank
Healey, Rt Hon Denis
Heffer, Eric S.
Hicks, Robert *(Cornwall SE)*
Hinchliffe, David
Hogg, N. *(C'nauld & Kilsyth)*
Holland, Stuart
Home Robertson, John
Hood, James
Howarth, George *(Knowsley N)*
Howell, Rt Hon D. *(S'heath)*
Hoyle, Doug
Hughes, Robert *(Aberdeen N)*
Hughes, Roy *(Newport E)*
Hughes, Sean *(Knowsley S)*
Hughes, Simon *(Southwark)*
Hume, John
Illsley, Eric
Ingram, Adam
Janner, Greville
John, Brynmor
Jones, Barry *(Alyn & Deeside)*
Jones, Ieuan *(Ynys Môn)*
Jones, Martyn *(Clwyd S W)*
Kaufman, Rt Hon Gerald
Kellett-Bowman, Mrs Elaine
Kinnock, Rt Hon Neil
Kirkwood, Archy
Lambie, David
Lamond, James
Leadbitter, Ted
Leighton, Ron
Lestor, Miss Joan *(Eccles)*
Lewis, Terry
Litherland, Robert
Livingstone, Ken
Lofthouse, Geoffrey
Loyden, Eddie
McAllion, John
McAvoy, Tom
McCartney, Ian
McCrindle, Robert
McCusker, Harold
Macdonald, Calum
McFall, John
McGrady, E. K.
McKay, Allen *(Penistone)*
McKelvey, William
McLeish, Henry
McNamara, Kevin
McTaggart, Bob
McWilliam, John
Madden, Max
Mahon, Mrs Alice
Marek, Dr John
Marlow, Tony
Marshall, David *(Shettleston)*
Marshall, Jim *(Leicester S)*
Martin, Michael *(Springburn)*
Martlew, Eric
Maxton, John
Meacher, Michael
Meale, Alan
Meyer, Sir Anthony
Michael, Alun
Michie, Bill *(Sheffield Heeley)*
Michie, Mrs Ray *(Arg'l & Bute)*
Millan, Rt Hon Bruce
Mitchell, Austin *(G't Grimsby)*
Moonie, Dr
Morgan, Rh
Morley, Elli
Morris, Rt H
Mowlam, M
Mullin, Chri
Murphy, Pa
Nellist, Dav
Oakes, Rt H
O'Brien, Wi
O'Neill, Ma
Patchett, Te
Peacock, M
Pendry, To
Pike, Peter
Powell, Ray
Prescott, Jo
Primarolo,
Quin, Ms Jo
Radice, Gil
Raison, Rt
Randall, St
Redmond,
Rees, Rt Ho
Reid, John
Richardson
Robertson,
Robinson,
Rogers, All
Rooker, Jef
Ross, Ernie
Rowe, Andr
Rowlands,
Salmond, A
Sedgemore
Sheerman,
Sheldon, R
Shore, Rt H
Skinner, De
Smith, And
Smith, C. (
Smith, Rt H
Snape, Pet
Soley, Clive
Spearing, N
Squire, Rob
Steinberg
Stott, Roge
Strang, Gav
Straw, Jack
Taylor, Mrs
Taylor, Rt H
Thomas, D
Thompson,
Townsend,
Turner, Den
Vaz, Keith
Wall, Pat
Wallace, Ja
Walley, Ms
Wardell, Gr
Wareing, R
Welsh, Mic
Wigley, Dat
Williams, R
Williams, A
Wilson, Bri
Winnick, D
Wise, Mrs
Worthington
Wray, Jame
Young, Dav

Tellers for t
Sir Brand
and Mr.

NOES

Adley, Robert
Alexander, Richard
Alison, Rt Hon Michael
Amess, David
Amos, Alan
Arbuthnot, James
Arnold, Jacques *(Gravesham)*
Arnold, Tom *(Hazel Grove)*
Ashby, David
Atkinson, David
Baker, Rt Hon K. *(Mole Valley)*
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Baldry, Tony
Banks, Robert *(Harrogate)*
Batiste, Spencer
Beaumont-Dark, Anthony
Bellingham, Henry
Bendall, Vivian
Bennett, Nicholas *(Pembroke)*
Bevan, David Gilroy
Biffen, Rt Hon John
Blackburn, Dr John G.
Blaker, Rt Hon Sir Peter
Body, Sir Richard
Bonsor, Sir Nicholas
Boswell, Tim
Bottomley, Peter
Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Bowden, Gerald *(Dulwich)*
Boyson, Rt Hon Dr Sir Rhodes
Braine, Rt Hon Sir Bernard
Brandon-Bravo, Martin
Brazier, Julian
Brittan, Rt Hon Leon
Brooke, Rt Hon Peter
Brown, Michael *(Brigg & Cl't's)*
Browne, John *(Winchester)*
Bruce, Ian *(Dorset South)*
Buchanan-Smith, Rt Hon Alick
Buck, Sir Antony
Budgen, Nicholas
Burns, Simon
Burt, Alistair
Butcher, John
Butler, Chris
Butterfill, John
Carlisle, John, *(Luton N)*
Caglisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Carrington, Matthew
Carttiss, Michael
Cash, William
Chalker, Rt Hon Mrs Lynda
Channon, Rt Hon Paul
Chapman, Sydney
Chope, Christopher
Churchill, Mr
Clark, Hon Alan *(Plym'th S'n)*
Clark, Dr Michael *(Rochford)*
Clarke, Rt Hon K. *(Rushcliffe)*
Conway, Derek
Coombs, Anthony *(Wyre F'rest)*
Coombs, Simon *(Swindon)*
Cope, John
Couchman, James
Cran, James
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Curry, David
Davies, Q. *(Stamf'd & Spald'g)*
Davis, David *(Boothferry)*
Day, Stephen
Devlin, Tim
Dickens, Geoffrey
Dicks, Terry
Dorrell, Stephen
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James
Dover, Den
Dunn, Bob
Durant, Tony
Eggar, Tim
Evans, David *(Welwyn Hatf'd)*
Evennett, David
Fallon, Michael
Favell, Tony
Fenner, Dame Peggy
Field, Barry *(Isle of Wight)*
Fookes, Miss Janet
Forman, Nigel
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Forth, Eric
Fowler, Rt Hon Norman
Franks, Cecil
Freeman, Roger
French, Douglas
Fry, Peter
Gale, Roger
Gardiner, George
Gill, Christopher
Glyn, Dr Alan
Goodhart, Sir Philip
Goodlad, Alastair
Goodson-Wickes, Dr Charles
Gorman, Mrs Teresa
Gow, Ian
Gower, Sir Raymond
Grant, Sir Anthony *(CambsSW)*
Greenway, Harry *(Ealing N)*
Greenway, John *(Rydale)*
Gregory, Conal
Griffiths, Peter *(Portsmouth N)*
Grist, Ian
Ground, Patrick
Grylls, Michael
Hamilton, Hon A. *(Epsom)*
Hampson, Dr Keith
Hanley, Jeremy
Hargreaves, A. *(B'ham H'll Gr')*
Hargreaves, Ken *(Hyndburn)*
Harris, David
Hawkins, Christopher
Hayes, Jerry
Heathcoat-Amory, David
Heddle, John
Heseltine, Rt Hon Michael
Hicks, Mrs Maureen *(Wolv' NE)*
Higgins, Rt Hon Terence L.
Hogg, Hon Douglas *(Gr'th'm)*
Holt, Richard
Hordern, Sir Peter
Howard, Michael
Howarth, Alan *(Strat'd-on-A)*
Howell, Rt Hon David *(G'dford)*
Hughes, Robert G. *(Harrow W)*
Hunt, David *(Wirral W)*
Hurd, Rt Hon Douglas
Irvine, Michael
Irving, Charles
Jack, Michael
Jackson, Robert
Janman, Timothy
Jones, Gwilym *(Cardiff N)*
Jones, Robert B *(Herts W)*
Key, Robert
King, Roger *(B'ham N'thfield)*
Kirkhope, Timothy
Knapman, Roger
Knight, Greg *(Derby North)*
Knowles, Michael
Knox, David
Lamont, Rt Hon Norman
Lang, Ian
Latham, Michael
Lawrence, Ivan
Lawson, Rt Hon Nigel
Lee, John *(Pendle)*
Leigh, Edward *(Gainsbor'gh)*
Lennox-Boyd, Hon Mark
Lightbown, David
Lilley, Peter
Lloyd, Sir Ian *(Havant)*
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
Lord, Michael
Luce, Rt Hon Richard
Macfarlane, Sir Neil
MacKay, Andrew *(E Berkshire)*
Maclean, David
McLoughlin, Patrick
McNair-Wilson, M. *(Newbury)*
McNair-Wilson, P. *(New Forest)*
Major, Rt Hon John
Malins, Humfrey
Maples, John
Mariand, Paul
Marshall, John *(Hendon S)*
Marshall, Michael *(Arundel)*
Martin, David *(Portsmouth S)*
Mates, Michael
Maude, Hon Francis
Maxwell-Hyslop, Robin
Mayhew, Rt Hon Sir Patrick
Mellor, David
Miller, Hal
Mills, Iain
Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)*
Mitchell, David *(Hants NW)*
Moate, Roger
Monro, Sir Hector
Montgomery, Sir Fergus
Moore, Rt Hon John
Morrison, Sir Charles *(Devizes)*
Morrison, Hon P *(Chester)*
Moss, Malcolm
Moynihan, Hon C.
Mudd, David
Neale, Gerrard
Nelson, Anthony
Neubert, Michael
Newton, Rt Hon Tony
Nicholls, Patrick
Nicholson, David *(Taunton)*
Nicholson, Miss E. *(Devon W)*
Onslow, Rt Hon Cranley
Oppenheim, Phillip
Page, Richard
Paice, James
Parkinson, Rt Hon Cecil
Patnick, Irvine
Patten, Chris *(Bath)*
Patten, John *(Oxford W)*
Pattie, Rt Hon Sir Geoffrey
Pawsey, James
Porter, David *(Waveney)*
Portillo, Michael
Powell, William *(Corby)*
Raffan, Keith
Redwood, John
Renton, Tim
Rhodes James, Robert
Riddick, Graham
Ridley, Rt Hon Nicholas
Rifkind, Rt Hon Malcolm
Roberts, Wyn *(Conwy)*
Roe, Mrs Marion
Rost, Peter
Rumbold, Mrs Angela
Ryder, Richard
Sackville, Hon
Sainsbury, Hor
Sayeed, Jonath
Scott, Nicholas
Shaw, David *(D*
Shaw, Sir Mich
Shelton, Willia
Shepherd, Coli
Shepherd, Rich
Sims, Roger
Skeet, Sir Trev
Smith, Tim *(Be*
Soames, Hon N
Speller, Tony
Spicer, Sir Jim
Spicer, Michae
Stanbrook, Ivor
Steen, Anthony
Stern, Michael
Stevens, Lewis
Stewart, Allan
Stewart, Andre
Sumberg, Davi
Summerson, H
Tapsell, Sir Pe
Taylor, Ian *(Es*
Taylor, John M
Taylor, Teddy
Tebbit, Rt Hon
Thatcher, Rt Ho
Thompson, D.
Thompson, Pat
Thorne, Neil
Thornton, Malc
Thurnham, Pet
Tracey, Richar
Tredinnick, Da
Trippier, David
Trotter, Neville
Twinn, Dr Ian
Vaughan, Sir G
Waddington, R
Wakeham, Rt H
Waldegrave, H
Walker, Bill *(T*
Waller, Gary
Ward, John
Wardle, C. *(Be*
Warren, Kenne
Watts, John
Wells, Bowen
Wheeler, John
Whitney, Ray
Widdecombe,
Wiggin, Jerry
Wilkinson, Joh
Wilshire, David
Winterton, Mrs
Winterton, Nich
Wolfson, Mark
Wood, Timothy
Woodcock, Mik
Yeo, Tim

Tellers for the
Mr. Robert
Mr. Tristan

Question accordingly negatived.

New Clause 6

INCOME SUPPORT FOR YOUNG P

'At end of Section 21 (1) *(b)* of the Soc
1986 there shall be inserted the words "and
the age of 18 and below pensionable age he
a lower rate of benefit due to his age.".'.—/

Brought up, and read the First time.

Mr. Fearn: I beg to move, That the clause be read a Second time.

The new clause deals with income support for young people. The intention is to remove the distinction between claimants for income support who are over and under the age of 25. From April 1988, single childless people between the ages of 18 and 24 who are entitled to claim for income support will receive £26·05, while those aged 25 and over will receive £6 more. We are completely opposed to this distinction, as it is completely arbitrary. Why, for example, should a person aged 24½ have fewer expenses and financial needs than someone six months older?

The Government perhaps believe that a person aged under rather than over 25 may be able to depend on parents. Forcing young people to depend on their parents is a recent trend in legislation and is a feature of clause 4 of the Social Security Bill. We should be encouraging young people to take full responsibility for their own lives.

The Liberal party is running an excellent campaign called "Youth Chance" which is designed to help young people take full advantage of their rights so that they can be more independent. In my constituency of Southport, young people certainly fight for their rights themselves, and I hope that they will continue to do so. The Government, by contrast, are helping to create an atmosphere of dependence around young people from which they will find it difficult to escape. That is totally against the Government's avowed aim to encourage independence among all people, and I am perplexed by this contradiction between the Government's aims and their actions.

The age limit of 25 used for income support is not a widely recognised age limit in the sense that 16, 18 and 21 years are commonly recognised ages that mark changes in a person's status. We now assume that once young people reach the age of 18 they are responsible adults and are expected to behave as such. This new age limit attacks that principle.

Similarly, the age limit of 25 years is not widely employed elsewhere in British legislation, so it is difficult to understand why it has been introduced for income support; unless, of course, it is merely a means by which the Government can save themselves a small amount of money. The amounts that will be saved are not great and the hardship and bitterness that this arbitrary age limit will cause cannot justify such a saving. I urge the Government to reflect on this very unfair distinction and to accept my amendment, which will prevent this injustice. I intend to take the matter to a Division.

Mr. Robin Cook: I remind the House that on many previous occasions the official Opposition have supported the principle advanced on this occasion by the hon. Member for Southport (Mr. Fearn). If he divides the House we shall be happy to divide with him. I do not think that at this late hour there is an argument of sufficient originality and novelty for the principle, which I could advance to the House, to change the minds of those who have already made up their minds. But I believe that the Government, in creating a quite new distinction between a full adult rate and a less than adult rate for those younger than 25, have introduced a new distinction into our social security system that is insupportable and cannot survive indefinitely.

10.30 pm

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Health and Social Security (Mr. Michael Portillo): There are three things that we are not discussing tonight. One is the position of 16 and 17-year-olds. There has always been a lower rate of benefit for them under supplementary benefit, and the lower rate continues under income support. I do not think that is in dispute between us.

The second thing that we are not discussing is the position of couples because there will be no distinction in income support between what couples receive, whether above or below the age of 25. The third thing that we are not discussing is the position of parents because single parents will be paid the lone parent rate of income support, which is £33·40. On top of that they will receive the family premium, plus the single parent premium, plus the addition for the child.

The point that is at issue between us is the position of the single unemployed under the age of 25. Our movement away from the distinction of householder to a distinction on age grounds is dictated because we think this is a welcome simplification. All that is needed now to establish the entitlement of a claimant is one piece of information, the date of birth of the claimant. It avoids all the difficult points of definition that arise on householders and non-householders, let alone all the difficulties that arise if we try to divide benefits between people who are living together, sharing a house or a flat. As I have mentioned, there is a precedent for a division on age grounds in supplementary benefit, although I agree with the hon. Member for Southport (Mr. Fearn) that that division was not at age 25. There may not be a precedent for that age, but I will tell him in a moment why we think 25 is the right age for the division.

Most young people expect to receive less when they are young than do others who are longer in the tooth, or than they themselves will receive later in life. That would be their general position if they were in work. I do not think it is such a far-reaching idea that people who are young should be expected to live off a lesser amount of money than people who are a little older. We have not taken that principle to its logical conclusion because we are protecting families of whatever age by treating couples, whether below or above the age of 18, equally by giving the special rate to single parents.

We chose the age of 25 because there is fairly good evidence for that being an important age in the life style of young people. In fact, 90 per cent. of claimants over the age of 25 are householders. On the other hand, only one in five single claimants under the age of 25 is a householder. As a result of the reforms, given those figures, of the 810,000 single claimants between the ages of 16 and 24, 450,000 will gain and 200,000 will experience no change.

Young single claimants will receive rates compensation of £1 in income support even though, as will be clear to the House, the majority of them will not be liable to pay rates. The amount that we will pay in income support of £26·05 compares with the non-householder rate of supplementary benefit of £24·35.

The most important extra cost that a person might face if he was a householder is the housing cost. That is met by a different benefit, housing benefit. Under the reformed system, the starting point for the payment of rent under the income support scheme is 100 per cent. of that rent

payment. We believe strongly that housing benefit is the correct way to address the extra housing cost that a householder might have to face.

I think this is a welcome simplification. It represents a considerable improvement in the system. I believe, despite what the hon. Gentleman has said, that there is every logic to support the age of 25. I commend that approach to the House. I have to advise the House to reject the new clause.

Question put, That the clause be read a Second time:

The House divided: Ayes 176, Noes 297.

Division No. 131] **[10.34 pm**

AYES

Adams, Allen *(Paisley N)*
Allen, Graham
Alton, David
Anderson, Donald
Armstrong, Ms Hilary
Ashdown, Paddy
Ashley, Rt Hon Jack
Banks, Tony *(Newham NW)*
Barnes, Harry *(Derbyshire NE)*
Barron, Kevin
Battle, John
Beckett, Margaret
Beggs, Roy
Bell, Stuart
Benn, Rt Hon Tony
Bennett, A. F. *(D'nt'n & R'dish)*
Bermingham, Gerald
Blair, Tony
Blunkett, David
Boateng, Paul
Boyes, Roland
Bradley, Keith
Bray, Dr Jeremy
Brown, Gordon *(D'mline E)*
Brown, Nicholas *(Newcastle E)*
Bruce, Malcolm *(Gordon)*
Buchan, Norman
Buckley, George
Caborn, Richard
Callaghan, Jim
Campbell, Menzies *(Fife NE)*
Campbell-Savours, D. N.
Canavan, Dennis
Clarke, Tom *(Monklands W)*
Clay, Bob
Clelland, David
Clwyd, Mrs Ann
Cohen, Harry
Cook, Frank *(Stockton N)*
Cook, Robin *(Livingston)*
Corbyn, Jeremy
Cousins, Jim
Cox, Tom
Crowther, Stan
Cryer, Bob
Cunliffe, Lawrence
Cunningham, Dr John
Dalyell, Tam
Darling, Alastair
Davies, Ron *(Caerphilly)*
Davis, Terry *(B'ham Hodge H'l)*
Dewar, Donald
Dixon, Don
Doran, Frank
Douglas, Dick
Dunwoody, Hon Mrs Gwyneth
Eadie, Alexander
Eastham, Ken
Evans, John *(St Helens N)*
Ewing, Harry *(Falkirk E)*
Ewing, Mrs Margaret *(Moray)*
Fatchett, Derek
Faulds, Andrew
Field, Frank *(Birkenhead)*
Fisher, Mark
Flynn, Paul
Forsythe, Clifford *(Antrim S)*
Foster, Derek
Fraser, John
Fyfe, Mrs Maria
Galbraith, Samuel
Garrett, John *(Norwich South)*
Godman, Dr Norman A.
Golding, Mrs Llin
Gordon, Ms Mildred
Grant, Bernie *(Tottenham)*
Griffiths, Nigel *(Edinburgh S)*
Griffiths, Win *(Bridgend)*
Grocott, Bruce
Harman, Ms Harriet
Haynes, Frank
Healey, Rt Hon Denis
Hinchliffe, David
Hogg, N. *(C'nauld & Kilsyth)*
Home Robertson, John
Hood, James
Howarth, George *(Knowsley N)*
Hoyle, Doug
Hughes, Robert *(Aberdeen N)*
Hughes, Sean *(Knowsley S)*
Hughes, Simon *(Southwark)*
Illsley, Eric
Ingram, Adam
Janner, Greville
Jones, Ieuan *(Ynys Môn)*
Jones, Martyn *(Clwyd S W)*
Kirkwood, Archy
Lamond, James
Leadbitter, Ted
Leighton, Ron
Lestor, Miss Joan *(Eccles)*
Lewis, Terry
Livingstone, Ken
Lofthouse, Geoffrey
McAllion, John
McAvoy, Tom
McCartney, Ian
Macdonald, Calum
McKay, Allen *(Penistone)*
McLeish, Henry
McNamara, Kevin
McWilliam, John
Madden, Max
Marek, Dr John
Marshall, David *(Shettleston)*
Marshall, Jim *(Leicester S)*
Martin, Michael *(Springburn)*
Martlew, Eric
Maxton, John
Meacher, Michael
Meale, Alan
Michael, Alun
Michie, Bill *(Sheffield Heeley)*
Michie, Mrs Ray *(Arg'l & Bute)*
Mitchell, Austin *(G't Grimsby)*
Moonie, Dr Lewis
Morgan, Rhodri
Morley, Elliott
Mowlam Marjorie
Mullin, Chris
Murphy, Paul
Nellist, Dave
Oakes, Rt Hon Gordon
O'Brien, William
O'Neill, Martin
Patchett, Terry
Pendry, Tom
Pike, Peter
Powell, Ray *(Ogmore)*
Prescott, John
Primarolo, Ms Dawn
Quin, Ms Joyce
Robertson, George
Robinson, Geoffrey
Rogers, Allan
Rowlands, Ted
Salmond, Alex
Sedgemore, Brian
Sheerman, Barry
Shore, Rt Hon Peter
Skinner, Dennis
Smith, Andrew *(Oxford E)*
Smith, C. *(Isl'ton & F'bury)*
Snape, Peter
Soley, Clive
Spearing, Nigel
Steinberg, Gerald
Strang, Gavin
Straw, Jack
Taylor, Mrs Ann *(Dewsbury)*
Taylor, Rt Hon J. D. *(S'ford)*
Thomas, Dafydd Elis
Turner, Dennis
Vaz, Keith
Wallace, James
Walley, Ms Joan
Wardell, Gareth *(Gower)*
Wareing, Robert N.
Williams, Rt Hon A. J.
Williams, Alan W. *(Carm'then)*
Wilson, Brian
Winnick, David
Wise, Mrs Audrey
Worthington, Anthony
Wray, James
Young, David *(Bolton SE)*

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. Dafydd Wigley and
and Mr. Ronnie Fearn.

NOES

Alexander, Richard
Alison, Rt Hon Michael
Amess, David
Amos, Alan
Arbuthnot, James
Arnold, Jacques *(Gravesham)*
Arnold, Tom *(Hazel Grove)*
Ashby, David
Atkinson, David
Baker, Rt Hon K. *(Mole Valley)*
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Baldry, Tony
Banks, Robert *(Harrogate)*
Batiste, Spencer
Beaumont-Dark, Anthony
Bellingham, Henry
Bendall, Vivian
Bennett, Nicholas *(Pembroke)*
Bevan, David Gilroy
Biffen, Rt Hon John
Blackburn, Dr John G.
Body, Sir Richard
Bonsor, Sir Nicholas
Boswell, Tim
Bottomley, Peter
Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Bowden, Gerald *(Dulwich)*
Bowis, John
Boyson, Rt Hon Dr Sir Rhodes
Braine, Rt Hon Sir Bernard
Brandon-Bravo, Martin
Brazier, Julian
Brittan, Rt Hon Leon
Brooke, Rt Hon Peter
Brown, Michael *(Brigg & Cl't's)*
Browne, John *(Winchester)*
Bruce, Ian *(Dorset South)*
Buchanan-Smith, Rt Hon Alick
Buck, Sir Antony
Budgen, Nicholas
Burns, Simon
Burt, Alistair
Butcher, John
Butler, Chris
Butterfill, John
Carlisle, John, *(Luton N)*
Carlisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Carrington, Matthew
Carttiss, Michael
Cash, William
Chalker, Rt Hon Mrs Lynda
Channon, Rt Hon Paul
Chapman, Sydney
Chope, Christopher
Churchill, Mr
Clark, Hon Alan *(Plym'th S'n)*
Clark, Dr Michael *(Rochford)*
Clarke, Rt Hon K. *(Rushcliffe)*
Conway, Derek
Coombs, Anthony *(Wyre F'rest)*
Coombs, Simon *(Swindon)*
Cope, John
Couchman, James
Cran, James
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Curry, David
Davies, Q. *(Stamf'd & Spald'g)*
Davis, David *(Boothferry)*
Day, Stephen
Dickens, Geoffrey
Dicks, Terry
Dorrell, Stephen
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James
Dover, Den
Dunn, Bob
Durant, Tony
Dykes, Hugh
Eggar, Tim
Evans, David *(Welwyn Hatf'd)*
Evennett, David
Fallon, Michael
Fenner, Dame Peggy
Field, Barry *(Isle of Wight)*
Fookes, Miss Janet
Forman, Nigel
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Forth, Eric
Fowler, Rt Hon Norman
Franks, Cecil
Freeman, Roger
French, Douglas
Gale, Roger
Gardiner, George
Gill, Christopher
Gilmour, Rt Hon Sir Ian
Glyn, Dr Alan
Goodhart, Sir Philip
Goodlad, Alastair
Goodson-Wickes, Dr Charles
Gorman, Mrs Teresa
Gow, Ian
Gower, Sir Raymond
Grant, Sir Anthony *(CambsSW)*
Greenway, Harry *(Ealing N)*
Greenway, John *(Rydale)*
Gregory, Conal

Griffiths, Peter *(Portsmouth N)*
Grist, Ian
Ground, Patrick
Hamilton, Hon A. *(Epsom)*
Hampson, Dr Keith
Hanley, Jeremy
Hargreaves, A. *(B'ham H'll Gr')*
Hargreaves, Ken *(Hyndburn)*
Harris, David
Hawkins, Christopher
Hayes, Jerry
Hayhoe, Rt Hon Sir Barney
Heathcoat-Amory, David
Heddle, John
Heseltine, Rt Hon Michael
Hicks, Mrs Maureen *(Wolv' NE)*
Hicks, Robert *(Cornwall SE)*
Higgins, Rt Hon Terence L.
Hogg, Hon Douglas *(Gr'th'm)*
Holt, Richard
Hordern, Sir Peter
Howard, Michael
Howarth, Alan *(Strat'd-on-A)*
Howell, Rt Hon David *(G'dford)*
Hughes, Robert G. *(Harrow W)*
Hunt, David *(Wirral W)*
Hunt, John *(Ravensbourne)*
Hurd, Rt Hon Douglas
Irvine, Michael
Jack, Michael
Jackson, Robert
Janman, Timothy
Jones, Gwilym *(Cardiff N)*
Jones, Robert B *(Herts W)*
Kellett-Bowman, Mrs Elaine
Key, Robert
King, Roger *(B'ham N'thfield)*
Kirkhope, Timothy
Knapman, Roger
Knight, Greg *(Derby North)*
Knowles, Michael
Knox, David
Lamont, Rt Hon Norman
Lang, Ian
Latham, Michael
Lawrence, Ivan
Lee, John *(Pendle)*
Leigh, Edward *(Gainsbor'gh)*
Lennox-Boyd, Hon Mark
Lester, Jim *(Broxtowe)*
Lightbown, David
Lilley, Peter
Lloyd, Sir Ian *(Havant)*
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
Lord, Michael
Luce, Rt Hon Richard
McCrindle, Robert
Macfarlane, Sir Neil
MacKay, Andrew *(E Berkshire)*
Maclean, David
McLoughlin, Patrick
McNair-Wilson, M. *(Newbury)*
McNair-Wilson, P. *(New Forest)*
Madel, David
Major, Rt Hon John
Malins, Humfrey
Maples, John
Marland, Paul
Marlow, Tony
Marshall, John *(Hendon S)*
Marshall, Michael *(Arundel)*
Martin, David *(Portsmouth S)*
Mates, Michael
Maude, Hon Francis
Maxwell-Hyslop, Robin
Mayhew, Rt Hon Sir Patrick
Mellor, David
Meyer, Sir Anthony
Miller, Hal
Mills, Iain
Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)*
Mitchell, David *(Hants NW)*
Moate, Roger
Monro, Sir Hector
Montgomery, Sir Fergus
Morrison, Sir Charles *(Devizes)*
Morrison, Hon P *(Chester)*
Moss, Malcolm
Moynihan, Hon C.
Mudd, David
Neale, Gerrard
Nelson, Anthony
Neubert, Michael
Newton, Rt Hon Tony
Nicholls, Patrick
Nicholson, David *(Taunton)*
Nicholson, Miss E. *(Devon W)*
Onslow, Rt Hon Cranley
Oppenheim, Phillip
Page, Richard
Paice, James
Parkinson, Rt Hon Cecil
Patnick, Irvine
Patten, Chris *(Bath)*
Patten, John *(Oxford W)*
Pattie, Rt Hon Sir Geoffrey
Pawsey, James
Peacock, Mrs Elizabeth
Porter, David *(Waveney)*
Portillo, Michael
Powell, William *(Corby)*
Raffan, Keith
Raison, Rt Hon Timothy
Redwood, John
Renton, Tim
Rhodes James, Robert
Rhys Williams, Sir Brandon
Riddick, Graham
Ridley, Rt Hon Nicholas
Rifkind, Rt Hon Malcolm
Roberts, Wyn *(Conwy)*
Roe, Mrs Marion
Rowe, Andrew
Rumbold, Mrs Angela
Ryder, Richard
Sackville, Hon Tom
Sainsbury, Hon Tim
Sayeed, Jonathan
Scott, Nicholas
Shaw, David *(Dover)*
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Shelton, William *(Streatham)*
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Shepherd, Richard *(Aldridge)*
Sims, Roger
Skeet, Sir Trevor
Smith, Tim *(Beaconsfield)*
Soames, Hon Nicholas
Speller, Tony
Spicer, Sir Jim *(Dorset W)*
Spicer, Michael *(S Worcs)*
Squire, Robin
Stanbrook, Ivor
Steen, Anthony
Stern, Michael
Stevens, Lewis
Stewart, Allan *(Eastwood)*
Stewart, Andrew *(Sherwood)*
Sumberg, David
Summerson, Hugo
Tapsell, Sir Peter
Taylor, Ian *(Esher)*
Taylor, John M *(Solihull)*
Taylor, Teddy *(S'end E)*
Thatcher, Rt Hon Margaret
Thompson, D. *(Calder Valley)*
Thompson, Patrick *(Norwich N)*
Thorne, Neil
Thornton, Malcolm
Thurnham, Peter
Townsend, Cyril D. *(B'heath)*
Tracey, Richard
Tredinnick, David
Trippier, David
Trotter, Neville
Twinn, Dr Ian
Vaughan, Sir Gerard
Waddington, Rt Hon David
Wakeham, Rt Hon John
Waldegrave, Hon William
Walker, Bill *(T'side North)*
Waller, Gary
Walters, Dennis
Ward, John
Wardle, C. *(Bexhill)*
Warren, Kenneth
Watts, John
Wells, Bowen
Wheeler, John
Whitney, Ray
Widdecombe, Miss Ann
Wiggin, Jerry
Wilkinson, John
Wilshire, David
Winterton, Mrs Ann
Winterton, Nicholas
Wolfson, Mark
Wood, Timothy
Woodcock, Mike
Yeo, Tim
Young, Sir George *(Acton)*

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. Tristan Garel-Jones and
Mr. Robert Boscawen.

Question accordingly negatived.

Further consideration of the Bill, as amended, adjourned.—*[Mr. Dorrell.]*

Bill, as amended (in the Standing Committee), to be further considered tomorrow.

Industrial Training

10.46 pm

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Employment (Mr. Patrick Nicholls): I beg to move,

That the draft Industrial Training Levy (Construction Board) (No. 2) Order 1987, which was laid before this House on 1st December, be approved.

The order requires parliamentary approval under the provisions of the Industrial Training Act 1982, because one part of it — that covering labour-only sub-contractors—involves a levy exceeding 1 per cent. of an employer's payroll. The levy proposals are in the same format as those approved by both Houses in January 1987, and show only one change from those arrangements. The board forecasts that the levy proposals will raise about £48 million.

The levy is made up of three parts. First, there will be an occupational levy on directly employed construction workers in the main industry. A set amount will be raised for each occupation, but that is subject to an overall limit of 1 per cent. of employers' wage bills. The rates vary according to the type of craftsman trained, and reflect the training costs of each craft. It is here that one change has been made from last year's levy proposals. The per capita levy rate for the principal building crafts has been reduced from £75 to £70. This has been made possible by a slightly lower than anticipated take-up of Construction Industry Training Board grants in that sector in the current year. Apart from that reduction, there are no changes in this year's levy proposals.

Secondly, the board proposes to retain the 2 per cent. levy on payments made by firms in the main industry for work done by labour-only sub-contractors. That rate has remained unchanged since 1981, and reflects the board's judgment that labour-only sub-contractors in general undertake too little training, relying instead on obtaining skilled manpower trained by other employers. For the main industry, covered by these two levy rates, companies with payrolls of £15,000 or less will not be required to pay levy. That will exclude from levy about 51 per cent. of all construction firms within the board's scope.

Thirdly, for the smaller brick manufacturing sector, the board proposes a rate of 0·05 per cent. of payroll. Employers with a wage bill of £100,000 a year or less will be excluded from the levy. That, too, is unchanged from last year.

The levy proposals have been approved by the board, and are strongly supported by the employers' organisations in the industry. In fact, as the proposals make no provision for exemption, and as some employers will be paying levy amounting to more than 0·2 per cent. of payroll, the board is required by the Industrial Training Act 1982 to demonstrate a double consensus of support for its proposals — first, among employer organisations representing all firms, large and small, which will pay the levy; and, second, among organisations representing firms that between them will pay more than 50 per cent. of the total levy. The fact that the board's proposals command that level of support, and have done so every year since the need for consensus was introduced in 1973, demonstrates the strong support in the industry for the board's work.

The levy proposals have been agreed by broad consensus among building employers, adopted by the board without opposition and approved by the Manpower Services Commission. They are necessary for the board to continue with its work of developing and improving training arrangements in the construction industry, and I therefore commend the order to the House.

10.50 pm

Mr. Barry Sheerman (Huddersfield): While the Opposition support the order and congratulate the CITB on its work and the challenges that it has met over the past years, and, indeed, over the past year, and although the hour is late, I want to take the Minister to task briefly for not acknowledging tonight that there is a real crisis in the construction industry. There is a crisis in training for the construction industry as a whole. While the Minister is right to state that the Construction Industry Training Board conforms to a model that we would have liked to see in far broader terms for most of British industry, we still lament and regret the fact that the Government abolished all but six of the industrial training boards.

This evening I want to draw the attention of the House to the fact that the Construction Industry Training Board is exactly the system that we admire: it is a statutory board, it has a levy and in many senses it is a very successful industrial training board. It is the model that we would like to see in the rest of British industry. While we admire the CITB and believe that much that it does is of great worth, there is something of a conundrum.

We warned the Government this time last year that there would be a crisis in training for the construction industry. Although there is an industrial training board and a consensus between employers and employees—and we cannot leave out the employees and the very positive approach that the Union of Construction, Allied Trades and Technicians takes on all training matters—there is also tremendous evidence of skill shortages throughout the country, especially in the south-east, south-west and London. Those shortages of trained and skilled people in the construction industry have been caused by the reluctance to train over the past 10 years. While there is a levy and the industrial training board performs some of the job, there are other facets of Government policy that have undermined training in the construction industry, and it is important that I put them before the House briefly this evening.

The crisis facing the construction industry is very grave. It affects all the attempts to build major public and private projects and may endanger some of the projects that the Government hold dear and which they want to see reach fruition over the next two or three years during the Government's lifetime. However, the failure to train adequately in the construction industry will also frustrate any ambition to build publicly or privately provided homes for the homeless or to renovate and repair much of Britain's crumbling housing stock.

I hope that the House will indulge me when I ask, what are the reasons for the crisis and what can the CITB and the levy do about it? The present situation is largely of the Government's making. The crisis has been a long time coming. The Opposition warned the Government last year that there was a crisis and we warned them in the years before that. We told the Government that, if they did not take training seriously, particularly in crucial industries such as the construction industry which must lead in any

[Mr. Barry Sheerman]

economic regeneration, when any growth came it would be short indeed because it would run up against a shortage of skilled workers.

Half the problem is the construction industry's inability to reproduce the skills available to the industry. The CITB sometimes puts out figures that show a rough balance between the number of workers coming into the industry and the construction work going on, but if one looks beyond the statistics, one sees a disturbing picture. There are half the number of apprentices in training—half the number of skilled men and women coming into the industry—that there were 10 years ago.

There has been a dramatic decline in the industry's activity over that period, which coincides with the election of the Conservative Government in 1979. Now, the rate of building is back up to what it was in the mid and late 1970s, yet there is a great decrease in the amount of training. The reason for that is a serious question, which was partly answered in the Minister's brief introduction to the order this evening. It is due to the high level of exemption in the industry.

Let me give some evidence. An increasing portion of the industry is out of scope, due to the exemptions of small employers who make up an increasing share of the industry and due to the growth of labour-only sub-contractors being granted what are called 714 certificates. Despite the increasing activity of the CITB, that greater level of exemption means that less training is being done, even when the labour-only sector is levied at a rate of 2 per cent. That does not make up sufficiently for the failure of a large part of the industry to train.

Let me give some figures. The Minister will be aware that, in 1979, 30 per cent. of the construction industry was accounted for by one-person firms. Within six years, that shot up to 40 per cent. At the other end of the scale, in 1979, 20 per cent. of firms had between eight and 24 employees. In 1985, that had fallen to 10 per cent. of firms employing between eight and 24 employees. At the top level, in 1979, 6·7 per cent. of firms were the large companies that most people know, employing over 25 employees. By 1985 that had fallen to 4·5 per cent.

There has been a real change in the nature of the construction industry, to which the CITB has not been allowed to adapt. The Government have been completely unaware of the need to do something dramatic to change the nature of training in the industry. There has been a downward spiral of training due to the growth of small firms who are out of scope, and labour-only sub-contractors.

Another reason why the levy is not reaching the parts that it needs to reach is that the crisis in the construction industry has been aggravated by the Government's attitude towards local authorities and direct labour organisations. The Conservative party does not like local government or DLOs. But the DLOs do a wonderful job and they do a particularly good job in training.

Let me give one figure. In Greater London, the DLOs account for 14 per cent. of the construction work, but for 35 per cent. of training. The Government's persistent war on local authorities and direct labour organisations means that their ability to operate as such and their capacity to train have been severely affected. That is another reason for the training crisis in construction.

Moreover, the crisis that the construction industry fac because of the catastrophic shortage of skills will soon b accelerated. Just before Christmas, the Secretary of Sta announced yet another review of the skill centre networ which has been under attack from the Government for th past eight years. The Government have closed a third o the skill centres and have very little sympathy or patienc with what is left of the network. They refuse to understan that the skill centre network represents the majo opportunity for adult training in many of the tradition skills, as well as in the new technology skills.

Let us consider the impact of the skill centres on th levy and the inability of the levy to cope. The fact of th matter is that the skill centre network provides a larg percentage of the skilled workers entering the constructio industry. Only last year, the Under-Secretary' predecessor said at the Dispatch Box that a crisis packag of 4,000 new trainees must enter the construction industry He had had talks with the CITB. Of the 4,000, 2,000 wer to be provided by the CITB in new YTS places. That cam about, and more power to the CITB's elbow for deliverin those 2,000. One thousand were to come from othe providers—mainly private providers—of youth trainin in the construction industry.

It is interesting to note that only 250 of the promise 1,000 came on stream. The remaining 1,000 places, whic were to be financed partly by the levy, were to come fron the skill centres. The Minister will know that the skil centres delivered the extra places. In the financial yea 1986-87, skill centres trained 16,400 people in the essentia construction skills of bricklaying, carpentry and paintin and decorating — 7,400 unemployed people on MSC sponsored schemes and 9,000 adults already i employment. Such training and retraining are vital in a industry that is undergoing much change.

What can the CITB do, and how can the levy system be used, to meet the crisis that we are facing in the construction industry, which is as real as for any othe industry? It is scandalous in those sectors that no longe have statutory training bodies. The recent Anderson report, which the Minister should know well, points out that, whereas there is a handful of good non-statutory training bodies, most of them have been dismal failures. Large sections of British industry now fail to train to an adequate standard to keep us in competition with our French, German and other industrial competitors.

There is a collapse of training throughout British industry, and the construction industry is not immune to the problem. Skilled workers are not available now and soon with large schemes such as Canary wharf, the Channel tunnel, Sizewell B, the expansion of Stansted airport and the extension of the M25, the absence of the skilled people needed will be catastrophic. We are already feeling the absence of those skills, but they will be felt much more severely by this time next year.

A recent estimate shows that the Canary wharf scheme alone will require 15 per cent. of the manpower of our construction industry. The impact of that one scheme alone will be incredible. A recent survey of the Federation of Master Builders showed that 45 per cent. of its members were having difficulty finding qualified workers. Even with all the schemes that I have mentioned coming on stream, there is a crisis. Therefore, I am surprised that the Minister has been relatively complacent about what has been going

on. The order comes through; he thinks that it is a good thing; he has laid on hands this evening, but he has not said one word about the crisis that we face.

In my final comments, I should like to suggest some answers to the crisis. What can the Government, the CITB and the levy system do to meet the situation? The Government's panic this time last year—they did panic—was too little, too late: 4,000 new trainees were not nearly enough even at that stage. Firm action on labour-only supply must be taken now; the legitimised lump, as it has become, will succeed in undermining the training system in the construction industry.

Although the answers are not simple, some action must be taken on one-person business exemptions and on the limit of £15,000 in turnover, because, as the Minister said, that is 51 per cent. of the industry. There must be a system whereby every employee in the construction industry is involved in training and comes within the purview of the industrial training board. The Government could tackle the way in which that is done. With the analysis and the new review of finance and training with which the Manpower Services Commission has just come forward, I believe that here is the opportunity to look again at strengthening the power of the CITB so that all employees in the construction industry will be covered.

Moreover, because of the picture that I have painted this evening, I believe that there is a need for a dramatic emergency programme to target particular regions and sectors to ensure that the shortages that I have described do not become a disaster for the great construction projects that are in hand. In docklands, for example, we must be able to find ways of training the people in Newham and Tower Hamlets, where there is 20 per cent. male unemployment. Those people must be trained to help in the task facing the construction industry. In our country, which still has dreadful levels of unemployment in its city centres—even in London—it must be possible to find a way of training those unemployed people to take part in such efforts.

In conclusion, I am afraid that the bullet that the Government are too ideologically blinkered to bite is that of contract compliance. If they really want to do something about the construction industry and training, they must say to a firm that wants to tender for work on large public or private contracts, "You will not get a contract unless you can show that you are training, and that every person on a site is eligible for training and has training and retraining as part of their individual contracts."

It is absurd that, when we still have massive unemployment, we have such dreadful skill shortages which will, as I have said, endanger the growth of our economy and the stimulation that many of those great projects offer. I do not want to discuss only Canary wharf, the Channel tunnel and the other great projects, but to return to the simple fact that many people in this country live in squalor—be it in public or private housing—largely due to the absence of skilled workers to renovate and refurbish their houses.

Of course we shall not oppose the motion tonight, but we believe that the Government must take in hand the crisis of training that lies beneath the issues that we have discussed.

11.10 pm

Mr. Nicholls: In all fairness, I should reply briefly to the speech that the hon. Member for Huddersfield (Mr. Sheerman) has just made. It is a great tribute to his eloquence that, in what might have been a narrow debate, he has been able to make a wide-ranging speech. I do not criticise him for that.

The hon. Gentleman admires the work done by the CITB, and I associate myself with his admiration. It will come as no news to the CITB that the hon. Gentleman feels as he does, but it will be pleased to hear him say so again. He said that there was a chronic skills shortage throughout the industry, and lays the responsibility for that at the Government's door. That cannot be right, because the main responsibility for training must lie in the hands of the employers. Going back to the 1970s, one can see that the economic state of the country was so parlous that it was not much good telling employers then that they should be thinking of the future and of investing in training. A great many of them, under the Governments of that time, were not so much investing in training as trying to keep their heads above water.

Mercifully, we now live in a different climate, but the damage done over the years cannot be repaired in a few moments. The skill shortages are more complicated than the hon. Gentleman would have us believe. It is inevitable that there will be skill shortages in parts of the country in an industry as diverse as the building industry. Having said that, however, there are grounds for optimism. A great deal of taxpayers' money is provided. Well over £1 billion is spent on YTS training, and well over £1·5 billion is spent on training in general. The CITB is responsible for the biggest YTS training agency. It has 22,000 trainees under training out of a total complement in the industry at large of about 62,000 trainees. That augurs well for the future.

The hon. Gentleman complained about the decline of traditional apprenticeships. I understand his point, but times move on. There are ways into the building industry now other than through the traditional craft apprenticeships. The hon. Gentleman would acknowledge that, too. One can, for instance, discuss the role increasingly played by those who enter the industry as site surveyors, planners, buyers, estimators, site engineers, civil engineers, production managers, quantity surveyors, structural engineers, and so on. All those people play an increasing part in a changing building and construction industry, but do not enter it via traditional apprenticeships. Even a substantial number of those now in YTS training use that training as a foundation course before going on to an apprenticeship.

The Government are putting a vast amount of taxpayers' money into providing the infrastructure necessary for training, and are doing the initial pump priming in YTS and other schemes. However, in the end training is a matter for the employers.

Not for the first or the last time, the hon. Gentleman and I differ over the future of the boards. Honest men will sometimes honestly differ. Speaking rhetorically, so that I do not provoke him, perhaps I can say that if his attitude to the creation or existence of the CITB were right, he would have to say that all the 16 boards that were quietly laid to rest by the Government and replaced by non-statutory training organisations had been doing a super job—but they clearly had not. At the time, the industry accepted that the CITB was doing a decent job, and the

[Mr. Nicholls]

hon. Gentleman has already paid tribute to that. The CITB was perceived to be doing a good job, which is why it survived. The hon. Gentleman is perhaps stretching the imagination and the facts a little too extremely if he believes that in the good old days of the many training boards training was at a higher level. It would be nice if that were the truth; in fact, it is not.

I hope that the hon. Member for Huddersfield will not take it amiss if I take him up on a point of detail regarding his remedy for bringing more people into scope. I can understand him saying that, because the exemption level is at £15,000 and has been so since 1975, there must be fewer and fewer people within scope. However, because there has been a general increase in the economy, with small businesses coming into operation, it is perhaps surprising — certainly it is true — that more and more people have come into scope even though the £15,000 exemption has not been raised since 1975.

The hon. Gentleman is of the opinion that the Government do not like the skill centres and have it in for them. I believe that I can set the hon. Gentleman's mind at rest regarding our motives. Two reports have cast considerable doubt on whether the skill centres are providing the right sort of training at the right sort of price.

The National Audit Office report said that it considered that the MSC's agreement to purchase fixed amounts of training from the Skills Training Agency had resulted in the MSC incurring

"considerably higher total costs for providing training courses".

The Public Accounts Committee noted the action that the MSC was taking to improve value for money in the operation of schemes, but expected it to

"continue its efforts to minimise the diseconomy arising from its agreement with the Skills Training Agency to purchase a fixed amount of training at Skillcentres".

Faced with such evidence, it would have been the height of folly for the Government not to respond.

Without in any sense trying to prejudge the eventual outcome, it was clearly right for my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Employment to ensure that outside consultants would consider the matter and decide whether the STA is doing the job that the hon. Gentleman and I would want it to do.

Mr. Sheerman: As a former member of the PAC, I can understand what was said by the Committee and the National Audit Office. However, I do not believe that those quotes should be taken out of context. The skill training network has changed a great deal, but the PAC did not look at the broader fact that the skill centres represent the one agency in the country with proven success in imparting skills to adults. No other organisation or institution has been as successful as those centres.

Mr. Nicholls: If I were to concede those remarks in their entirety, I would be pre-empting the result of the inquiry that we have instituted. I believe that the hon. Gentleman and I would be at one in wanting to see the right type of training delivered to those in need of it at the right price. If there is prima facie evidence to suggest that the MSC is paying too much taxpayers' money — our money and that of our constituents — to the STA, that evidence should be studied. That is as far as it goes. The being considered and I would not like to m judgments at this stage.

The hon. Gentleman has his doubts about wh levy goes wide enough. The two main limbs of cover firms with a payroll of £15,000, which rep person and a half. I had better not say a man an as I might be leapt at from other areas of the *[Interruption.]* I understand that the hon. question is not here.

The levy of £15,000 covers a small number of e and although it may, on the basis of the hon. Gen calculation, exclude 51 per cent. of those wh otherwise be in scope, it affects only 2 per cent. of force. On the basis that the devil can quote figur own purposes, I can find such a figure.

I am sure that the hon. Gentleman did not i identify labour-only sub-contracting automatic the black economy. Although he came up with a of alliteration, "the legitimised lump", I did not personally, as I assumed that he was referrin operation of labour-only sub-contractors.

It is entirely true that, in the very nature o labour-only sub-contractors do not usually play and large a part in training as they otherwise mig is inevitable from the very nature of them. Hav that they are the legitimate part of the industry, not the illegitimate part. A swingeing levy is imp them. The board has instituted one scheme, the le system, to operate for training those who will be only sub-contractors, and another pilot sc operating to that effect.

The hon. Gentleman is right to say that this particular problem, but it is the legitimate en problem. The CITB feels that the labour-o contractors play their part, through the pilot proj are operating and the levy imposed.

Mr. Andrew Rowe (Mid-Kent): Does the Minis that one of the problems that dogs the cons industry is that the differential in wages between th skilled and semi-skilled or unskilled is too low to a the kind of——

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Mr. Harold Walker): O had better stick to the levy rather than discuss structure in the industry.

Mr. Nicholls: I am tempted to respond to m Friend, but I know from experience that I would n to get away with it. I ask my hon. Friend to come me later.

The hon. Member for Huddersfield finished w started, by talking about the necessity to train. Th be entirely right. Billions of pounds of taxpayers' are being devoted to that end. Training construction industry is not a straightforward or matter. It is a peripatetic industry, which brings pa problems in its wake. Training must be the respo of the employers, and there is increasing evidence that employers are matching that responsibili Government have a role to play in ensuring t billions of pounds are spent properly, and ther doubt that they are fulfilling that role to the full.

Question put and agreed to.

Resolved,

That the draft Industrial Training Levy (Construction Board) (No. 2) Order 1987, which was laid before this House on 1st December, be approved.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT FINANCE

Ordered,

That the provisions of paragraph (2) of Standing Order No. 84 (Constitution of standing committees), paragraph (1) of Standing Order No. 86 (Nomination of standing committees) and Standing Order No. 101 (Standing Committees on Statutory Instruments, &c.) shall apply to the Code of Local Government Audit Practice for England and Wales as if it were a statutory instrument; and that the said Code be referred to a Standing Committee on Statutory Instruments, &c.—*[Mr. Lightbown.]*

HOUSING (SCOTLAND) BILL

Ordered,

That, notwithstanding anything in paragraph (2) of Standing Order No. 84 (Constitution of standing committees) and Standing Order No. 95 (Scottish Standing Committees), the Housing (Scotland) Bill be considered by a Scottish Standing Committee.—*[Mr. Lightbown.]*

DARTFORD-THURROCK CROSSING *(re-committed)* BILL

Ordered,

That the Order for Committee be discharged and that the Bill, as amended in the Select Committee, be re-committed to a Standing Committee.—*[Mr. Lightbown.]*

Cerebral Palsy

Motion made, and Question proposed, That this Hou do now adjourn.—*[Mr. Lightbown.]*

11.22 pm

Mr. Tony Baldry (Banbury): I am sure that whenev a child is born a parent's deepest wish is, "Pray God th be healthy." Alas, through no one's fault, some childr do not enjoy full health, and some suffer from cerebr palsy. At present, hundreds of children with gra impairment of their motor co-ordination are destined remain bedridden or in wheelchairs, unable to sit, stan walk or achieve even a modest measure of independenc

I started to learn about cerebral palsy only by parer coming to see me to tell me about their hopes for the children's future. Several families in my constituency ha children afflicted with cerebral palsy. One extreme courageous mother has three children who are so afflicte

They came to see me not to whinge but with a messa of hope that their children could one day walk and li more independent lives because they had either been to were going to the Peto Institute in Budapest. Some fi families from north Oxfordshire have been to Budapes They wanted to make sure that I understood the potenti of conductive education and the outstanding achievemen that are being made at the Peto Institute.

Many hon. Members have had a far closer involveme than I in trying to ensure the maximum opportunities f children suffering from cerebral palsy. The right ho Member for Stoke-on-Trent, South (Mr. Ashley) h always been tireless in his efforts on behalf of the disabl and has led an all-party parliamentary campaign promote conductive education.

My hon. Friend the Member for Wyre Forest (M Coombs), before entering the House, was a Birmingha city councillor and was largely responsible for helping set up the Foundation for Conductive Education Birmingham. My right hon. and learned Friend t Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister Trade and Industry visited the Peto Institute when he w Minister for Health. The Institute was similarly visited b my hon. and learned Friend the Minister of State, Foreig and Commonwealth Office on behalf of the Foreig Office, and in a personal capacity by Lady Howe, the wi of my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of Sta for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs.

Many hon. Members have first-hand experience helping to raise money for the Foundation for Conductiv Education in Birmingham. They include the ho Members for Walsall, South (Mr. George) and f Coventry, South-East (Mr. Nellist) and the Parliamenta Under-Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, my ho Friend the Member for Coventry, South-West (M Butcher). I simply seek to add my voice because I hav been so greatly impressed by the courage of tho constituents of mine who have children afflicted wit cerebral palsy, and impressed by the evidence of my ow eyes of what has clearly been achieved in Budapest.

When, for example, little Richard Shakespeare was fir brought to see me by his parents, I never in my wilde dreams believed that this little boy, who could barely rai his own head unaided, could within a matter of month stand on his own two feet. But the truth is that Richar Shakespeare can now stand on his own two feet wit confidence and move his arms naturally, thanks to th

[Mr. Tony Baldry]

training that he has received at the Peto Institute. I know that there are many children like Richard who have improved beyond their parents' greatest hopes. Credit, in Richard's case, must go to Oxfordshire county council for being prepared to pay Richard's fees in Budapest and for helping with some of the travel costs.

As the House will know, conductive education has been developed in Hungary and is used there as the main basis for the early education of physically handicapped children. The emphasis of the movement is on establishing sufficient control for the individual child to take part in everyday life without the use of artificial aids. Children are allocated to one particular teacher known as the conductor, who takes them through the whole process of education as they grow older.

Conductive education is hard work; it is intensive, with children being taught from the time they wake up in the morning until they go to bed at night. This approach clearly has great success. I understand that the Hungarians estimate that it could help 70 per cent. of all children afflicted with cerebral palsy, across the whole spectrum of the disability range, to achieve self auto-function; in other words, to reach a position where they can live as independently as children of a similar age and can walk with confidence and be able to go to school.

This is a fantastic achievement. There is, of course, the evidence of the experience of those who have been to Budapest and the evidence of our own eyes as to what has been achieved out there. It is clearly good news that the Peto Institute is collaborating with the Foundation for Conductive Education which, as the House knows, is a national charity formed to establish the Hungarian system of conductive education in Britain and collaborating to set up an integrated programme to train conductors and to establish working conductive groups of children. The Peto Institute has undertaken to train British conductors to the same high standard as its own and will co-operate to ensure that conductive education is established and working properly here in Britain. We all have good cause to be grateful to the Peto Institute.

I also have little doubt that what has been achieved by mutual understanding has come about in large part because of the efforts and energy of the staff of the British embassy in Budapest and the Hungarian embassy in London. I understand that a British-Hungarian cultural exchange agreement is to be negotiated in the next few months. It is hoped that it will include a provision that will enable this invaluable co-operation to continue and to expand.

It is also extremely encouraging that the Government have provided a grant of £326,000 to enable Birmingham university to carry out a research evaluation of the Foundation for Conductive Education project over a five-year period. My hon. Friend the Under-Secretary of State for Health and Social Security and her colleagues in the Department of Health and Social Security and the Department of Education and Science, with the help that they have received from Ministers within the Foreign Office, are to be congratulated on the initiatives that they have taken so far. Clearly it is right and proper to ensure that conductive education is evaluated in this country before being more widely available. However, as yet there is no conductive education in this country to evaluate.

This project should not be a matter of fiv research, with us then standing back and seein been learned and deciding what to do next approach could result in the loss of valuable momentum and, most important, could affec relationship with the Peto Institute, and I beli the only country with such a close involvemen

The international pressures on the Peto In such that, if we are to maintain the closen involvement, we must have clear commitment strong reason appears to question the v conductive education, there should be a clear co on the part of the Government, in co-oper others—individuals, charities and local autho secure the future of the Birmingham centre with five years and to expand conductive education t Britain. That can be done by people from th being trained in Budapest and, in turn, returni to the same high standard further conductors h by that cascade effect, conductive education available throughout the country.

Britain is at present the only country that i so closely with the Peto Institute. We thu wonderful opportunity to ensure that good c education may become established here. It w tragedy if we lost that opportunity and the n that has been established with the Peto Institut

It is difficult for a fit person to imagine how it must be for a child to be confined to a whee to have difficulty moving about. While c education cannot help all children afflicted b palsy, it is clear that it can help many. It is c calculate the costs of the special educational req of children who are confined to wheelchairs or severe difficulty in moving about. Those co however, be far greater in the long term than term costs involved in those children being benefit of conductive education here in Britain

The Government have demonstrated their v to support conductive education. Let us make determination to make conductive education throughout Britain as soon as possible so that ch Richard Shakespeare may also get up and stand on their own two feet. I ask for nothing more an less than a commitment to make the introducti conductive education a firm policy objective.

11.32 pm

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State and Social Security (Mrs. Edwina Currie): I co my hon. Friend the Member for Banbury (Mr. his success in the ballot and on raising the quest valuable treatment known as conductive educat is being undertaken at the Peto Institute in Bud

As my hon. Friend pointed out, we have number of favourable reports about the Peto from Members in all parts of the House. He refe visit made to the institute by the Chancellor of t of Lancaster in November 1984 when he was M Health. I am also aware of the favourable comm by the Minister of State, Foreign and Comm Office, my hon. and learned Friend the Me Putney (Mr. Mellor), when he visited the instit autumn of last year with Lady Howe, the w Foreign Secretary. Other Members have also v Peto Institute or taken an interest in the develo

conductive education in this country, and my hon. Friend the Member for Banbury referred in his speech to several of them.

We are aware that about 70 families with children now attend the Peto Institute and are currently living in Budapest. Of those, we think that about 40 are British, the rest coming from other countries. The total school roll is about 750 children and 250 adults. It is sometimes forgotten that much of the work of the institute is with adults who have motor impairment, perhaps as the result of an accident, and I am also interested in aspects of that work.

I am sure that my hon. Friend will join me in paying tribute to the tremendous efforts of Her Majesty's ambassador in Budapest, and his wife, Mr. and Mrs. Appleyard, in providing help and comfort to the United Kingdom families there. I understand in particular that Mrs. Appleyard has regular weekly lunches to enable the families to meet together, and I wish to put on record our appreciation to her for her efforts.

It has to be recognised that the extent to which it is possible to help United Kingdom nationals who voluntarily leave this country to seek treatment abroad is constrained by the statutes laid down by this House. Perhaps it will do no harm, and some good, if I remind families that, except in the most restricted and extreme circumstances, Ministers in this Department have no power to pay for treatment of this kind in most other countries. My colleagues in the Department of the Environment have no powers to pay for accommodation, nor do their own local authorities. My colleagues in the Department of Education and Science are similarly constrained.

According to a letter that was sent recently to the Oxfordshire local education authority by Mr. Sawtell from the Department of Education and Science, there may even be some difficulty if the local education authorities pay, since the definition of "school" under the current legislation seems to apply only to schools in this country. However, some local education authorities make such payments. I recognise that the local education authorities take their own legal advice and that some, such as Oxfordshire, have decided to proceed.

We are therefore doing a kindness by warning families that, if they choose to go to Hungary or, indeed, anywhere else, we have no power to assist them; nor do the Hungarian authorities have any obligation to remit fees, to find or pay for accommodation or transport, or anything else. Before families commit themselves to spending a year or more in another country with a very different culture and language, however kind people are to them while they are there, we hope that they will give careful thought to these points.

Some United Kingdom social security benefits may continue, if the beneficiary goes abroad specifically for medical treatment—for example, attendance allowance, mobility allowance and invalidity benefit. There should be no problem concerning child benefit in respect of any child attending the institute, provided that there is a responsible adult in the United Kingdom to whom the benefit can be paid. However, child benefit in respect of other children accompanying a disabled child to Budapest can only be paid for up to eight weeks.

Some parents have reported difficulty over renewing benefits while abroad, since more than one office must be contacted. To help to simplify matters, we have introduced some common rules and we shall do what we can them, but again we are somewhat constrained different statutes that cover the various concerned.

I am very concerned about the appalling pres families in these circumstances and on the family m including children, who have to stay behind. The been divorces. The price that some people have to been very high indeed. Nevertheless, I should like on record our thanks to the Peto Institute for the k that it has shown to the families and children con and also our appreciation to the Hungarian auth We shall bear my hon. Friend's remarks in mind renegotiate regularly the various agreements that with the authorities in Hungary.

The technique of conductive education as prac the Peto Institute is the main system of early educa physically handicapped children in Hungary, whe regarded as a necessity that a child should be able to school if he or she wishes to receive normal ed with able-bodied children. No such rule exists he disabled children are readily integrated into schools, following the Warnock reforms earlier 1980s. The technique is quite intensive and can re child to be resident in the institute.

The work goes on throughout working hours, hardly surprising if some children show consi improvement. The institute can be highly selective, is probably right that it should be selective. We expect any one technique to be universally success all conditions. We have no reason to doubt its succe as claimed, of about 70 per cent. of children being attend normal schools after treatment, but there ar a number of questions that we should wish t answered relating to the techniques that are used Peto Institute.

For example, to what extent does the tec concentrate on certain aspects of disability example, motor development, or incontinence— expense of something that we would regard as imp which is all-round social development? What do institute do about the more severely or m handicapped children? If there is no chance of a chi walking again, or if the treatment fails, are childre regarded as ineducable — as, for example, D syndrome children were regarded in this country quite recently?

What is the procedure? Is there an alter procedure if the child has difficulty in communicat understanding the commands of the conductor? long-term follow-up arrangements are provided community? What happens if a child, for example, condition that is subject to a relapse, or if he degenerative problem? In other words, we need to whether the effect is lasting.

We also need to know why the institute ex epileptics. We need to know to what extent the high of concentrated service input at the institute contribu the success of the type of education that is provide need to know what is the role of the parents. schemes—for example, the Philadelphia system very heavily on parents and helpers. It may be th should need to take on board messages and lessons more than one scheme.

Given those two main concerns, there are unanswered questions. We are concerned about fa

[Mrs. Edwina Currie]

who feel obliged to go abroad. I feel very sympathetic to what my hon. Friend has said about doing the work here. Recently, with my hon. Friend the Member for Wyre Forest (Mr. Coombs), a junior Minister at the Department of Education and Science, I met some of the families concerned in the campaign to bring conductive education to this country. On behalf of both Departments I say that we do not wish to stand in the way of any techniques that would assist disabled people, including children with cerebral palsy, spina bifida or any condition that would benefit from improved techniques.

When the BBC television programmes were broadcast, therapists in this country, for example, in Preston, protested that the techniques were available here and were being used to benefit people. In that respect, therefore, it seemed wise to take the following approach. The Government have involved themselves in two studies. My hon. Friend has already referred to the Birmingham project. He is probably aware that I am acquainted with a large number of the people who are interested in that project. I am delighted to join him in the tribute he paid to my hon. Friend the Member for Wyre Forest (Mr. Coombs), who was my fellow councillor in Birmingham for a number of years, for his efforts to get something set up.

The research project arose out of the Anglo-Hungarian cultural agreement, which was signed in Budapest on 21 March 1986 under the auspices of the British Council, involving Birmingham university and the Teachers' Training and Education Institute for the Motor Disabled in Hungary. Because of the need to approach the development of conductive education in a systematic way, it was decided that the Government could four-year research project being un Birmingham university to train conductor method of conductive education by funding of the project.

As my hon. Friend has said, the Governm provided some £326,000 over five years for t I understand that the first batch of 10 teache the research project either have gone or w going to Budapest for part of their training. some valuable information comes out of the my hon. Friend's view that if we get goo quickly than five years, we should be able t

Apart from this, the DHSS and the DE funded a survey by the Spastics Society into which aspects of conductive education are b in the United Kingdom. Findings are ex available later this year.

I hope that the approach I have outlined progress has been made in the past 12 montl United Kingdom. We look forward w enthusiasm and great sympathy to the results and to hearing more from families who h from the work at Peto and perhaps from th not had the opportunity to benefit, despit their children assessed there. It is also hel about the failures because that helps understand the successes.

I am most grateful to my hon. Friend fo important issue and giving us a chance to p our policy as it stands at the moment.

Question put and agreed to.

Adjourned accordingly at eighteen minut o'clock.

House of Commons

Wednesday 13 January 1988

The House met at half-past Two o'clock

PRAYERS

[MR. SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

Oral Answers to Questions

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Home Accidents

2. **Mr. Boswell:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what his Department is doing to reduce the number of accidents in the home.

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Corporate and Consumer Affairs (Mr. Francis Maude): We are doing a great deal to reduce the number and severity of home accidents. The new Consumer Protection Act 1987, and in particular the general safety requirement, greatly improves the protection provided for consumers by introducing tougher but more flexible consumer safety laws. We are now doing more than ever before to educate consumers about potential hazards. In November I announced a series of home safety awareness campaigns designed to make people more aware of the dangers in and around the home. I expect those and other initiatives to reduce home accidents.

Mr. Boswell: I thank my hon. Friend for that reply and for the action that was taken on foam-filled furniture earlier in the week. Does he agree that more than 5,000 fatalities a year in the home are still far too many? Because such fatalities occur in different places, often on private property and behind closed doors, they represent the Cinderella of the public protection industry. Will my hon. Friend re-emphasise the importance of starting safety education at school and, at adult level, reminding people of the availability of cheap, effective devices, such as stair guards and smoke detectors, which are now readily available and realistically priced?

Mr. Maude: My hon. Friend is absolutely right. Of course, there is a role for regulation, as we showed earlier in the week in respect of foam-filled furniture. However, most accidents in the home occur as a result of people's behaviour rather than because of design faults in products. Most accidents in the home are as a result of falls. The home safety awareness campaign is a series that we are running for three years, and its purpose is to try to influence the way in which people behave.

Mr. Ashton: After the most humiliating climb-down of any Minister in 20 years regarding foam-filled furniture, is it not a fact that there is a major loophole in that legislation because it does not apply to beds? Is the Minister aware that in bed-and-breakfast accommodation and many other places of overcrowding, chil have to sleep in the same room in which the often next to an electric fire? People may smoking a cigarette. Such hazards do nothing b the incompetence of the Minister and the Gov

Mr. Maude: I do not want to reduce this debu political wrangling, because it would not be a but I must remind the hon. Gentleman that we Government who have done anything about furniture. That danger has been apparent for if not 20, years, but the Labour Government th Gentleman supported in the late 1970s did nothing about it. We accept that there may be with beds. However, the problem to which Gentleman referred, and which I mentioned answer, relates to the way in which people behav behaviour that we need to influence. There problem with beds, and I am looking urgen whether further steps can be taken in respect of

Mr. Blair: Does the Minister acknowle whatever the reasons for fires beginning, ma victims are either the elderly and immobile or chi have no responsibility for starting those fires? N have secured regulations covering foam-filled u furniture, does the hon. Gentleman agree that logical reason why we should not extend similar to foam-filling in bedding, cushions and othe domestic furniture?

Mr. Maude: There are already regulatio toughest in the world — in respect of u furniture, and those will remain in force. Matt other bedding components are covered by th safety requirement that we introduced in the Protection Act. We are in the process of standards for items such as mattresses, which w benchmark for safety in that area. Howeve looking urgently to see whether we can take furt

Mr. Holt: Would my hon. Friend care t Opposition Members that, far from doing a U-tu acted expeditiously, because the new trial foams on the market for only eight months and so far a and untested by consumers? My hon. Friend precipitately because it is not yet known whet foams will be commercially viable. If my hon. Fr be consistent, he should also consider bedding, loose covers and other flammable items.

Mr. Maude: There is a serious danger that th all this regulation may be to induce in people a f of security, because there is no way in which we c complete safety in the home by regulation and le I reiterate that safety in the home depends, continue to depend to a large extent, on the wa behave. Nothing that we do should in any way relax the vigilance that people should show at h

Mr. Beggs: I welcome the action that is propo at this late stage, and share the Government's an steps should be taken to improve safety in the h respect to foam-filled furniture. Will the Ministe the House whether he has yet consulted the Ireland Office or the Secretary of State for Ireland to ensure that Northern Ireland hou receive similar protection in future?

Mr. Maude: We shall certainly talk to the Northern Ireland Office about the impact of any regulations on Northern Ireland. The hon. Gentleman talked about action being taken at a late stage, but I must tell the House again that we already have in force the toughest regulations anywhere in the world in respect of foam-filled furniture.

COCOM

3. **Mr. Atkinson:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster when he last met his COCOM colleagues; and what matters were discussed.

The Minister for Trade (Mr. Alan Clark): I have not met my COCOM colleagues recently, but the Department's officials participate regularly in COCOM meetings. Matters discussed recently have included the review of the control lists and efforts to improve the operation of COCOM.

Mr. Atkinson: Is my hon. Friend aware of the growing number of cases of British exporters of high technology being set up by the CIA under the guise of the COCOM rules? Is he further aware of the high volume of American technology illegally sold to the Soviet bloc, most notably through Norway? Does that not suggest that we should have an urgent fundamental review of the working and enforcement of the COCOM rules?

Mr. Clark: Yes, there is something in what my hon. Friend says. The COCOM list is composed of three categories — the munitions list, the atomic energy list, and the industrial list, which is the longest. I feel sure that the House would not wish to see anything done that would prejudice the strategic controls on the munitions and atomic energy lists, but my hon. Friend is right in saying that the industrial list could be overhauled much more often than it is. We have had a rolling review since 1984, which considers a quarter of the list every six months, but my feeling is that a great deal of material that is obsolete and does not deserve to be included remains on the list. Unfortunately, COCOM must have unanimity before an item can be removed from the list, and it entails an arduous negotiating process to achieve that.

On the question of breaches of COCOM, it is particularly regrettable that other countries, particularly Norway and Japan, have broken the COCOM agreement and sold sensitive industrial material to the Soviet Union. I do not know of any instance in which the United States has done that, but it is true that there are rumours — and I should be glad to have the facts from my hon. Friend if he can provide them — that from time to time the United States precludes competitive items from being sold and may then find other ways to fill the gap itself.

Mr. Skinner: Why does the Minister not turn round to his hon. Friend the Member for Bournemouth, East (Mr. Atkinson) and tell him that there is now a different ball game between the Prime Minister and Gorbachev? He is the bloke with whom she says she can do business. She gallivants down the streets of Moscow with him and meets him on the tarmac at Brize Norton. The world has changed in the past few months, and the Minister should tell his hon. Friend that.

Mr. Clark: I am glad to have the hon. Gentleman's support and endorsement. He will be glad to hear—the reasons that he cited may have somethir —that the United Kingdom takes the have the COCOM list simplified and re

Austin Rover

4. **Mr. Andrew Hargreaves:** To ask t the Duchy of Lancaster what inform forecasts for sales by Austin Rover in J as to how the figures compare with tho

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary o and Industry (Mr. Robert Atkins): Regist Rover Japan, which also markets ce Rover products, increased by more th between 1985 and 1987. Continued expected in 1988.

Mr. Hargreaves: Does my hon. Friend figures explode the myth that British c sell in Japan, despite non-competitive tax motor cars? Does he further agree that th Austin Rover exports and therefore for e west midlands, and ultimately for th intention to return the company to the

Mr. Atkins: My hon. Friend is right. T news story, because the figures have incr in 1985 to 6,445 in 1987. That is an excel should congratulate Austing Rover Japa

Mr. Barry Jones: Having heard his a Minister against complacency. Does h Department told me this week that Japa to Britain amounted to 191,000, represent What will the Government do about that of trade?

Mr. Atkins: The hon. Gentleman shou proportion of imported cars in this cou year by year. We must take into accou people in this country wish to buy cars, an them doing so. He must recognise that th the hon. Gentleman represent a small pro market.

Mr. Oppenheim: Is it not true that man by Austin Rover in Japan are Peugeots others are Rovers assembled in Japan? that, although we accuse Japan of protec an 11 per cent. gentleman's agreement Japanese exporting to Britain? France imports to 3,000 cars, as do Spain and I Europeans who are now the protectioni have unfortunately lost the will to cc Japanese by making competitive goods?

Mr. Atkins: My hon. Friend must reca I referred to a moment ago. This is a go

As regards the proportions of cars Japan by Austin Rover, 80 per cent. are A and Peugeot and Rolls-Royce make up

Mr. Heffer: As one who has alway Rover cars and found them absolutely ex great craftsmanship of the workers involv Government to begin to ask some c correspondents on occasion to write tha cars that should be sold abroad with ou

Mr. Atkins: The hon. Gentleman ma point, and I agree with him.

Mr. Austin Mitchell: I welcome any improvement for Austin—and even for Rover—but can the Minister tell us why, in his opinion, the production of cars of 2·8 litres and more, which constitute the major part of exports to Japan, is only three quarters of what it was in the early 1970s? Why are our exports of cars only half what they were in the early 1970s, and why has the import penetration of cars into our market risen from less than 40 per cent. in 1979 to more than 50 per cent. today?

Mr. Atkins: I think that the hon. Gentleman and the House are aware that in past years there were question marks over some British manufacturers and the cars that they produced. Since then things have improved beyond all peradventure, and increasing numbers of cars made in this country are being purchased. None the less, my right hon. and learned Friend the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and my right hon. and learned Friend the Foreign Secretary, who is in Japan at the moment, and everyone else will continue to push the case for an increasing share of the Japanese market.

Export Promotion

5. **Mr. Amess:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster how many people in his Department are engaged in export promotion work.

Mr. Alan Clark: Approximately 730.

Mr. Amess: Is my hon. Friend aware that many companies in Basildon have achieved excellent export results over the last year and that they have certainly been helped in their endeavours by his officials? Will he join me in congratulating two companies in particular, Fisherman's Friend, which now exports to 37 countries and has recently won a West German order for £1 million, and a much smaller firm, Uniscan, which, after inventing a walking frame for the disabled, now exports to six countries?

Mr. Clark: I am grateful to my hon. Friend for his remarks about the officials in my Department. I am glad to extend congratulations to the companies that he mentioned. Of course, my Department will always do its best and, under the enterprise initiative announced yesterday my right hon. and learned Friend the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, we shall be able to do more, especially for small businesses. In the end, success is due to the efforts and the commitment of the private sector itself.

Mr. Campbell-Savours: Does the Minister recall that memorable day last year when we had all his huffing and puffing at the Dispatch Box about exports to Japan? Is he satisfied that since then there has been movement on this matter and, if so, could he tell us what movement there has been?

Mr. Clark: The puffing, which was not only from the Government side, related to exports from, not to, Japan. Alas, they are not in balance. However, exports to Japan have increased by 30 per cent. over the past year.

Mr. Wells: What evidence does my hon. Friend have that the export promotional activity of his Department is being hindered by the rise in the value of the pound?

Mr. Clark: None.

Mr. Cryer: Are the 730 people who are assisting in export promotion making any dent in our massive balance of trade deficit in manufactured goods? W British Leyland, for example, to reco proportion of exports to Japan, do they British manufacturing industry, or to fat Leyland simply so that it can be sol contributors of funds to the Tory party? If B is ever sold off it will be an outrage becau quantities of taxpayers' money that have company. The citizens of Britain expect th to play its part in making sure that Briti successful.

Mr. Clark: I always enjoy the hon. questions. He rather lost his way, I suspect that question, but I shall answer the first p

Of course my Department plays its part i exports, and both the companies cited by m the Member for Basildon (Mr. Amess) ha and successful in exporting. The new chang announced by my right hon. and learne specifically directed towards encouraging exports by smaller firms, where we think potential lies, rather than the large firms ab hon. Member for Bradford, South (Mr. concerned.

Mr. Conway: Will my hon. Friend and so of 730 look at the help, advice and encour to firms that are not in big city areas, wh covered by chambers of commerce and trad but are perhaps in small rural areas, and e take part in international trade fairs?

Mr. Clark: That is very important and it why, under the new arrangements, a furthe of staff of the Department are going into th British Overseas Trade Board has an active role to play in assisting small companies to fairs and exhibitions abroad. If my hon. F specific cases that he wishes to raise with m course, closely follow them up.

Chemicals

6. **Mr. Bernie Grant:** To ask the Chan Duchy of Lancaster by how much the trad chemicals changed between the second quarte the second quarter of 1987; and what are th figures for the average, best and worst Organisation for Economic Co-ope Development country.

8. **Mr. Rogers:** To ask the Chancellor of Lancaster by how much Britain's share of w chemicals changed between 1979 and 1986; a the comparable figure in the best, averag performing Organisation for Economic Co-o Development country.

Mr. Atkins: Britain's trade balance in c measured by the ratio of our exports to our by 9 per cent. between 1979 and 1986. This w same as the OECD average. Among the to exporters of chemicals, France saw a 4 per c in her export-import ratio and the United Sta of 39 per cent. Throughout this period Kingdom has had a substantial surplus on chemicals.

Between 1979 and 1986 Britain's share of OECD exports of chemicals was unchanged at 9·5 per cent. Among the OECD's major exporters of chemicals, the changes ranged from an increase of 13 per cent. in Japan's share to a decrease of 13 per cent. in the share held by the United States.

Mr. Grant: Is not the true situation that over the period imports have risen twice as fast as exports? Is this not yet another example of Government neglect of a wealth-producing manufacturing industry?

Mr. Atkins: The hon. Gentleman is quite wrong. This is a success story, again. There are many success stories that we do not hear about. The United Kingdom has a substantial surplus on her trade in chemicals. It is the number one export industry in the manufacturing sector. We ought to tell the world, as I am doing and as the Opposition ought to be doing, that we are doing well.

Mr. Ashton: What about No. 7?

Mr. Speaker: Order. No. 6 comes before No. 7.

Mr. Rogers: Is the Minister not misleading the House by simply saying that we have a surplus in chemical exports as opposed to imports, when that surplus is rapidly diminishing? Since 1979 imports have increased by over 50 per cent. The Minister should give both sides of the story. He should point out to the House that the chemical industry's share of the British market is steadily declining and that, because of very low investment in chemicals, we are gradually falling behind the rest of the world.

Mr. Atkins: I appreciate the hon. Gentleman's interest in chemical matters, but in this instance he is wrong. In proportionate terms, as I said in the previous answer, we are comparable to many other OECD countries. This is an important industry, and it is doing well. It is achieving great success at home and abroad, and we ought to congratulate it on its success rather than whinge about it.

Mr. Stern: Does my hon. Friend agree that, despite attempts by Opposition Members to poor-mouth the chemical industry, it is showing consistent success? If they are worried about lack of investment in the industry, will he draw to their attention the investment of well over £100 million by ICI, on the border of my constituency and that of my hon. Friend the Member for Northavon (Mr. Cope)?

Mr. Atkins: My hon. Friend is quite right. ICI has achieved a great deal of success. I opened a plant in Fleetwood not so long ago, which again indicates a very great success. I repeat that this success story ought to be told to all who can hear.

Mr. Speaker: Mr. Charles Kennedy.

Mr. Skinner: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Order. No points of order at Question Time.

Mr. Heffer: On a point of order——

Mr. Speaker: Order. No points of order at Question Time.

Mr. Heffer: The Liberal Benches are empty.

Mr. Speaker: I know. I cannot help it.

British Steel

10. **Mr. Butler:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster when he last met the chairman of British Steel; and what matters were discussed.

16. **Mr. Morley:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster when he next intends to meet the chairman of British Steel to discuss the state of the industry.

The Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister of Trade and Industry (Mr. Kenneth Clarke): I last met the chairman on 16 December. No date has yet been fixed for our next meeting. When we meet we discuss a wide range of issues relating to BSC and its prospects.

Mr. Butler: Did my right hon. and learned Friend discuss the £190 million half-year profit that BSC has made? Is that not a wonderful tribute to the management and men, who have shown great sense in not standing in the way of privatisation of the steel industry?

Mr. Clarke: I congratulated Sir Robert Scholey and all his colleagues on their excellent half-yearly results. We are looking forward optimistically to the full-year results that will be announced in due course. I agree with my hon. Friend that the results are a tribute to everyone working in the corporation, including the work force, who have achieved remarkable changes in the competitive position of the industry over the past few years.

Mr. Leigh: When my right hon. and learned Friend met the chairman of British Steel, did he discuss regional development grants? Did the chairman inform him that British Steel has often used regional development grants to rationalise and shed labour? Is it not a fact that regional development grants have often resulted in growing distortions in the economy and that the puny have been victimised to pay for the mighty? Is it not a disgrace that hon. Members cannot ask questions about the regional development grants because the hon. Member for Ross, Cromarty and Skye (Mr. Kennedy) was not present in the Chamber as the white smoke has not yet come out of Cowley street?

Mr. Clarke: Regional development grant was very useful in its time and no doubt British Steel made use of it. As I explained yesterday, the time has come to make better use of our money. I agree with my hon. Friend that it is a pity that I could not answer earlier questions tabled on the regional development grant. However, I understand that the Liberals and Social Democrats have taken an interest in policy. That is quite a novelty for them and they have not yet brought the results to the Floor of the House.

Dr. Reid: Is the Minister aware that, like the Liberals and Social Democrats, we in Lanarkshire have a major steel problem—*[Interruption.]*

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Dr. Reid: I am sorry, Mr. Speaker. I will temper my remarks.

Is the Minister aware that the optimistic bleatings that have come forth about the British Steel Corporation are regarded with wide scepticism among many people in Lanarkshire?—[HON. MEMBERS: "Why?"] I will explain why. In particular, does the Minister realise that his supposed seven-year guarantee for Ravenscraig is seen by many as a timetable for execution over a seven-year period? In addition, why was there no mention in the

Minister's statement or in other statements of the tubes division of the British Steel Corporation. There are threats and ambiguities over that division? Will he take the opportunity today to assure us that there is a strategic future for the tubes division and that any necessary investment to ensure that future at the Clydesdale plant at Bellshill will be provided?

Mr. Clarke: In response to the first part of the hon. Gentleman's question, I am responsible only for privatising the steel industry. I suspect that the other Steel is about to be privatised by his colleagues, but that is not a matter for me. With regard to the serious question about Lanarkshire, in my statement on the preparations for privatisation I was able to announce that the corporation in its commercial judgment had said that, subject to market conditions, there was a future for steelmaking on the Ravenscraig site for at least seven years. That should give considerable comfort to those in Lanarkshire. That is a tribute to the success that they have helped to achieve. The future of that plant will inevitably depend on those commercial judgments and the ability to compete in the market, regardless of who owns the industry.

There have been problems on Clydesdale with seamless tubes and there have been losses in that division of British Steel. However, I understand from my discussions with Sir Robert that the losses have now been reduced and there is no particular problem facing the future of Clydesdale at the moment.

Mr. Devlin: Is my right hon. and learned Friend aware that among the many letters that I have received from my constituents involved in the steel industry on Teesside there have been a number of messages of support for the Government's privatisation line and a widespread wish by the work force to be involved in the share issue and to take full advantage of an industry in which they believe and to which they are fully committed for the future?

Mr. Clarke: I am not surprised that my hon. Friend receives that reaction in his constituency, because the Redcar works are very successful and profitable. The workers can see the benefits of the greater commercial freedom that the Government have already given to the management in recent years. Therefore, they have no fears about a privatised company free of Government controls. At the moment we are preparing for privatisation, but the Government are committed to the policy of giving shareholding opportunities to workers in their own industry wherever that is remotely possible.

Mrs. Margaret Ewing: As the Minister has now made it clear that he accepts responsibility for the privatisation of British Steel, will he ensure that all reports from his discussions with British Steel are brought back to the House for debate by hon. Members? Will he ensure at his next meeting with British Steel that he asks whether it has a strategy involving a move to a one-plate mill concept within the United Kingdom, which is of particular interest to the workers at Dalzell? Finally, will he ensure that the exact problems of Scotland are taken into consideration in any privatisation moves in order to ensure that Scotland does not continue to be seen as being on the periphery, as we need to have a Scottish steel headquarters to guarantee our jobs and futures because steel is so vital to our manufacturing base?

Mr. Clarke: The statement that I made before Christmas was a serious and considered report to the House of the Government's proposals and of the corporation's commercial judgment of where the business stood. I shall ensure that the House is kept up to date and informed.

Some serious investment decisions regarding the plate mills will be required in the next few years, but, again, British Steel's position is that no investment decisions are needed now, and it will be a matter for it to decide in due course, probably after it becomes a private company. The Scots should not continue to regard themselves as necessarily peripheral to all these matters. Quite the reverse is true in view of the statements that the corporation was able to make in its commercial judgment about the future of steel making in Ravenscraig for at least seven years.

Mr. Grylls: In view of the real advantages, not least to the people who work in British Steel, of bringing forward privatisation, when will my right hon. and learned Friend be able to present the Bill to the House to speed this up?

Mr. Clarke: The Bill should come before the House in the next month or two. There will be considerable other preparatory work, and I cannot see privatisation being practicable or possible before the second half of this year at the earliest.

Mr. Morgan: Will the Minister tell the House what investment proposals he has before him from the British Steel Corporation? If he has none, will he explain to the House whether that causes him any concern, as the last raft of investment proposals from the BSC were made just over two years ago and are coming to an end? If anyone in the City is contemplating investment in the industry, or if the workers themselves were to believe that one could have a steel industry that could rely on past investment and not have investment proposals for perhaps two or three years, to have a healthy-looking balance sheet with a nice-looking bottom line just for the period of privatisation, would he not agree that that would be a serious confidence trick to play on any investor in the steel industry?

Mr. Clarke: A continuous process of investment is required in the steel industry and investment is taking place in various plants, including Ravenscraig. I have no proposals before me requiring the Government's formal consent, but they are likely to come in the near future and we do not intend to stop investment in the run-up to privatisation. Any proposals for further investment in continuous casting in Wales, for example, would be considered favourably by the Government, provided that they satisfy the usual commercial tests that we have to apply.

Mr. Holt: Would my right hon. and learned Friend care to note, when he next speaks to the chairman of British Steel, that the North Skelton brass band in my constituency, sponsored by British Steel, has just made a record with Mr. Acker Bilk and that some of the proceeds from the record will pay for schoolchildren from the Grangetown school in Redcar to go to Australia for the bicentenary celebrations? They will be the only musicians from this country. Well done, British Steel.

Mr. Clarke: I am glad that British Steel scores success stories, other than just returns on capital. British Steel is

an important part of the community in the north-east and I am glad that it is helping to take north-eastern music down under.

Mr. Austin Mitchell: In the light of the absence of major investment proposals, just how responsible is it to flog this major national asset back to the private sector, which has such a bad record on investment, particularly in steel? How irresponsible is it to do so when stock exchanges are falling?

Mr. Clarke: British Steel has an extremely good record of investment. The hon. Gentleman is mistaken if he assumes that, because there are no formal proposals requiring the Government's consent at present, British Steel has stemmed its investment effort. That is not the case. This is a continuous process and major schemes of investment must come forward for Government approval, which will be readily given, provided that they make commercial sense. That is something that we leave largely to British Steel in the first place.

Export Promotion

11. **Mr. McLoughlin:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what he is doing to reduce the business burdens currently facing British exporters.

Mr. Alan Clark: The Government are committed to promoting enterprise and to minimising and reducing burdens on business. As part of the new enterprise initiative announced yesterday, the Department's export services will be made more attractive and more accessible to firms, particularly smaller firms.

Mr. McLoughlin: I am grateful to my hon. Friend for that answer. Does he agree that, whatever the Government do, the most important thing for exporters is free and fair trade? To that extent I welcome his earlier answer about the improvement in sales to Japan, but does he agree that, however much the Government may help now, more must be done to ensure free and fair trade throughout the world, including the Japanese economy?

Mr. Clark: My hon. Friend is entirely right. My right hon. and learned Friend the Foreign Secretary is on his way back from Japan. The House has long recognised his gifts in combining courtesy and firmness, which he will have deployed in Japan. However cordial the atmosphere at those meetings, he will have told his hosts that we shall judge them by the results in the aftermath.

Mr. Pike: Does that answer mean that the Government now recognise the importance of getting manufacturing industries into export surplus? On 10 December 1986 the Minister told me from the Dispatch Box that it was neither the business nor the responsibility of the Government to get manufacturing industries into export surplus.

Mr. Clark: The Government have a role to play, principally in an advisory capacity. The Government must help manufacturers, especially small firms which have not yet broken into export markets, with guidance and encouragement on how to break into those markets, how to cope with form-filling, how to assess the possibilities of different markets and how to maintain themselves in the difficult early periods. In all those categories the new enterprise initiative will be extremely helpful, beamed as it is on smaller businesses.

Mr. Anthony Coombs: Is my hon. Friend aware of t recent excellent export figures announced by the Briti Textile Confederation, which show that last year Briti exports to most major European countries increased by to 20 per cent. and exports to Japan increased by 23 p cent.? Is he equally aware of the grave disquiet of ma carpet manufacturers about the illegal subsidies given one of our major competitors—Belgium—to its carp manufacturers? I have in mind especially the payment the Belgian Government of £3·5 million to Beaulieu, t biggest carpet manufacturer in the world, which, despi a recent European Court ruling, has not been repaid. W my hon. Friend make representations at the highest lev to make sure that it is repaid and that similar practices c not recur?

Mr. Clark: My hon. Friend is right to draw attentic to the achievements of the textile industry, which has mac a notable recovery from its serious difficulties — recovery in no small measure due to our maintenance the multi-fibre arrangement, which I hope will continue exist for some years.

As my hon. Friend said, there has been an especial flagrant breach of the understandings, with the Belgia subsidising their carpet industry. We continue to pursu the matter. Recently, we made representations to th Belgian Government. So far there appears to have been n response to the judgment of the European Court, but assure my hon. Friend that we treat the matter with th utmost gravity and will continue to maintain pressure unt satisfaction is achieved.

Mr. Blair: Will the Minister be more specific about ho the new Government gimmick, the department enterprise, is supposed to help export promotion? Can h point in this document to one penny of extra cas resources committed or to a glimmer of a new idea?

Mr. Clark: The hon. Member for Dagenham (M Gould) has not yet surfaced during this Question Time, s we must be content with the repetitious performance of th hon. Member for Sedgefield (Mr. Blair). He ha mentioned the matter several times. The fact that there no additional money may upset Opposition Members, bu it is a source of satisfaction to Conservative Members tha we are achieving those results without additiona expenditure. As my right hon. and learned Friend th Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster said, we must adap to changed circumstances and introduce more sophistica tion and selectivity. We believe that the results will justif our actions.

Mr. Brazier: Will my hon. Friend consider the impac of the dock labour scheme on the country's exporters?

Mr. Clark: That is a subject for my hon. Friends at th Department of Employment, which I vacated not all tha recently.

Space Industry

12. **Mr. Ernie Ross:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duch weof Lancaster what further action he intends taking t promote and safeguard British interests in the spac industry.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: I am discussing with Unite Kingdom companies the space projects to which the

attach importance, and we are taking a fresh look at United Kingdom civil space activities, both nationally and in the European Space Agency.

Mr. Ross: When will the Minister be able to tell us exactly what he intends to do? Some of us supported him when he came back from his meeting in Europe. He will recall that he said at the time that he was going to revamp the British National Space Centre. When can we hear the proposals, and when will those working in the industry know what those proposals are, so that they can start planning to deal with the losses which they say they will incur as a result of being excluded from programmes in Europe—regardless of whether those programmes are good or bad—because of the decision not to participate?

Mr. Clarke: We have made no cut in our present plans. As I have said, I am discussing with companies how they see the future Indeed, I have arranged meetings with the managements of two important companies tomorrow.

Obviously, we wish to reach conclusions over the next month or two. However, I see this as a continuing process of ensuring that we obtain good commercial and scientific value out of the commitment to space that we retain.

Mr. Wilkinson: Important as it is to listen to the views of commercial companies, it is for Governments to have a strategic vision of the importance of space activities, for their strategic interest and also for their commercial benefits. That is the case in the Soviet Union, the People's Republic of China, the Indian sub-continent, Japan and 13 of the 14 countries in the European Space Agency—particularly, of course, France, which has kept Europe in the space business.

Mr. Clarke: The strategic view that the Government have to take must have some aims, and those aims must be commercial, scientific and consistent with the public interest. With respect to my hon. Friend, it is not good enough to point to other countries and say that if they spend a certain proportion of their gross domestic product on space we must do the same. India is always cited. I believe that it spends its money on education satellites, for understandable reasons. We are already spending large sums in the space industry, and we are committed to continuing to do so, but, talking to private companies, we find a wide range of views on what our commercial and scientific objectives should be. We must also explore with them the prospect of the private sector putting a bit more money into the efforts that it wishes to pursue.

Mr. Stott: The Minister is only too well aware of our views on his recent performance at The Hague. They are not very complimentary. Notwithstanding that, however, will he tell us what Government policy will be in respect of companies that are currently being funded for, and are engaged in, work on European Space Agency projects—particularly Logica, which is a leading multinational team of companies developing software for all of the Columbus programme, not just the polar platform? What will happen to projects such as that, and those developed by British Aerospace, in the future, given his statement at The Hague?

At the same time, perhaps the Minister will remind his hon. Friend the Member for Langbaurgh (Mr. Holt) that the Wigan metropolitan brass band is also going to Australia for the bicentennial celebrations.

Mr. Clarke: We decided at The Hague that we were not going to join certain optional programmes. I have met the executives from Logica, which is one of the organisations affected. We shall get work in those projects in which we choose to participate, and not in those in which we choose not to participate.

The way to judge such matters is not simply to say that a company will receive a contract and that therefore we must participate. We might as well give Logica the cheque if that is our sole interest. We are prepared to fund any work in which we trust that British companies will obtain a large proportion of the contracts available, as long as we are pursuing serious commercial and scientific objectives.

I am delighted to hear about the brass band from Wigan, but I do not think that it is likely to be able to travel to Australia by Hotol in the very near future.

Mr. Sayeed: Does my right hon. and learned Friend's Department believe that Hotol has commercial potential?

Mr. Clarke: Work is just about to be completed on what is called a proof of concept study. When we have the results of that to hand, I intend to have further discussions with the companies that have been involved with the Government in taking the project so far.

Inner-city Policy

14. **Mr. Allen:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster how many people in his Department are employed on inner-city policy.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: Inner-city policy is an important part of my Department's responsibilities and all members of staff take account of it in their work. Policy is co-ordinated by the inner cities unit, which employs 26 staff. There are also 88 people in the inner-city task forces, as well as some staff in my regional offices who work with the interdepartmental city action teams.

Mr. Allen: What policies does the right hon. and learned Gentleman have to assist the outer cities?

Mr. Clarke: The outer cities are benefiting considerably from the general revival in the British economy and the rapid fall in the level of unemployment. I agree that there are outer estates of some cities where social problems and the problems associated with unemployment are just as severe as those found in inner-city areas. Any lessons found while we develop new policies in inner cities which promote the physical redevelopment of cities and training and employment opportunities for their residents can happily be applied to outer-city districts as we go along.

Mr. Nicholas Bennett: My right hon. and learned Friend's reply will be a great encouragement to those of us who represent rural constituencies which nevertheless contain towns which have similar social and economic problems to those experienced in some inner cities. I am delighted to hear that he will pass on any solutions.

Mr. Clarke: We help with the development of employment—creating activity in rural areas through such organisations as the Council for Small Industries in Rural Areas. I am sure my hon. Friend agrees that the problems in rural areas are sometimes different in nature and background from those in cities, but anything that we develop which speeds up the physical redevelopment of cities and the creation of new work and business opportunities ought to be applied wherever it is relevant.

Mr. Cabora: I do not know whether to offer the Minister congratulations or commiserations on the announcement that was made just before Christmas, now that he has responsibility for co-ordinating all the Government's inner-city policies. In that position, will he address the problems of ignorance and utter confusion in inner cities about grant regimes and the Government's policy towards inner cities? Will he respond to the ever-growing calls, which now embrace the Confederation of British Industry, the Trades Union Congress, local authorities and the churches, which produced "Faith in the City", and the Prince of Wales, who only a few weeks ago said that the Government must take account of local authorities and respond to local needs and opinions? Will the Minister produce a White Paper in the near future setting out how policies for inner cities will be co-ordinated?

Mr. Clarke: By making the appointment my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister clearly felt that we needed to explain more clearly the policies that we are developing. The Government know exactly what the relationship is between urban development corporations, inner-city task forces, city action teams and enterprise zones. We work well together and will continue to do so. Where co-ordination is called for, as I work for the Prime Minister, I look forward to being involved. There will certainly be a White Paper, which we hope will encourage yet more private sector companies to become involved with us and local authorities which want to take a positive view of these matters. In my work so far I have worked closely with Conservative-controlled city authorities in Nottingham and Wolverhampton, and Labour-controlled ones in Birmingham and Hartlepool. The hon. Gentleman knows, given where he stands in the Labour party, that there are some councils where it is rather more difficult to work.

Mr. Tim Smith: Does my right hon. and learned Friend agree that the key to a successful inner-city policy is not the number of people employed in his or any other Department, but the extent to which successful co-ordination, now, I am glad to say, organised by my right hon. and learned Friend, encourages private sector investment in inner-city areas and the jobs that go with it?

Mr. Clarke: I agree strongly with my hon. Friend. Some Opposition Members judge any policy by how many staff it employs and how much public money it spends. We judge these things by results, and they are best achieved by bringing private sector business, initiative and employment back into inner cities. That is what we are trying to do.

Manufactured Goods

15. **Mr. Canavan:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what is the latest balance of trade in manufactured goods.

Mr. Alan Clark: In the first 11 months of 1987 there was a deficit on trade in manufactures of £6·5 billion.

Mr. Canavan: Will the Minister now tell us the whole truth, which is that his Government have managed the remarkable feat of turning a surplus of over £5 billion in 1978 into a deficit of over £6 billion in 1987, that this deficit is the worst ever recorded in Britain's industrial history and that it is a direct consequence of the aby failure of the Government's economic and indus strategy?

Mr. Clark: It is not a function of economic policy a In fact, half the deficit is comprised of semi-manufac and intermediate finished manufactured products w are used for production in this country and contribu employment. Approximately the other half is accou for by consumer choice. The Government are not s giant purchasing agency on behalf of the British consu Why does the hon. Member not speak to his constituents? Why does he not ask them why they p foreign goods? Why does he not admonish them? It w not put his vote up, but he might learn something fro

Mr. John Marshall: Does my hon. Friend agree tha best hope for manufacturing industry is the creation genuine internal market in Europe by 1992?

Mr. Clark: The creation of the internal market will us a consumer market of some 330 million people. It be the largest in the world, larger than the United St or Japan. Progress is being made towards the remov barriers, which should bring about that market by 1 The Internal Market Council on which I represent Department, meets every month in Brussels Luxembourg.

Mr. James Lamond: Is the Minister aware that textile industry's contribution to the balance of trade be severely damaged by the recent very liberal agreen reached with Turkey on the import of yarns into country, which appears to me to undermine the MF which he spoke so warmly a few minutes ago? Is Department looking at that?

Mr. Clark: I have looked at it very closely and w be very glad to do something about it, but unfortuna the industry cannot produce evidence of injury. I produces evidence of serious injury, it will enable m take action to reduce the volume of imports from Tur I have been at great pains to try to secure such evide but none has been forthcoming.

Mr. Latham: Is my hon. Friend aware Conservative Members, at any rate, do not take the sto age view that nothing matters but manufactured goo We are surprised that Opposition Members have interest in the output of hundreds of thousands of pe who work in tourism, insurance and many other n manufacturing industries.

Mr. Clark: Yes, that is true, but I will not go the wh way with my hon. Friend. I attach great importance to performance of manufacturing industry and I regret much that we are still in deficit in that sector. It is the c sector in our whole trade balance where we are in def I am optimistic that it will slowly be corrected, beca exports are rising faster than imports, but I att importance to the sector and I do not believe that service sector, however successful and however m people it employs, can ever be an effective substitute it.

Commercial Vehicles

20. **Mr. Oppenheim:** To ask the Chancellor of Duchy of Lancaster what figures he has for the level exports and imports of light commercial vehicles in first half of 1987.

Mr. Alan Clark: I have run off the dial, so the House should be prepared for some extemporisation in the answer.

The value of exports in the first half of 1987 was £61 million; the figure for imports was £148 million. These figures represent an improvement in the balance of trade of some £30 million over the comparable period for 1986.

Mr. Oppenheim: Is it not true that many of the problems suffered by the commercial vehicle industry were caused by Government meddling in the 1960s and 1970s, which forced factories to go to uneconomic parts of the country and which forced Leyland Trucks to cross-subsidise Austin Morris cars? Is it not also true that there was poor management and appalling labour relations? Is it not encouraging that under the more profitable economic climate which the Goverment have helped to produce our commercial vehicle industry is beginning to produce better results?

Mr. Clark: I agree with my hon. Friend. I regretted it very much when Leyland Trucks, which was one of the finest truck makers in the world at that time, lost its independence. It has taken some time to effect the recovery which is now so clearly evident in the figures, which show, as I said, an improvement of some £30 million over last year.

Questions to Ministers

3.31 pm

Mr. Andrew MacKay (Berkshire, East): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. The point of order arises directly out of questions today. You will have noted on the Order Paper that in the first 21 questions which were likely to be reached, four had been put down by hon. Members who belong to the Liberal party or the SDP. Not one of those hon. Members has been present. Do you agree that that is a gross discourtesy to you and to the House? Do you also agree that those who put down questions, and who were not fortunate to be high enough on the Order Paper but who have patiently waited, find it frustrating that those hon. Members cannot be bothered to turn up to ask their questions?

Mr. Speaker: I am not certain that that is a matter for me.

Mr. Patrick McLoughlin (Derbyshire, West): Further to that point of order, Mr. Speaker. You have to keep a balance between the parties. On yesterday's statement by my right hon. and learned Friend the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, 34 hon. Members were called. You called fifth in that session the hon. Member for Gordon (Mr. Bruce), who I believe is the Alliance spokesman on trade and industry, yet he has not had the decency or the courtesy to be in the House today for questions to the Department.

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: I think I can deal with this matter. It is a courtesy that if hon. Members cannot be present for questions they should let the Chair know so that those questions are not called. That happened in some cases today. As to the statement yesterday, I hope that hon. Members who were not called then got some happiness by having been called today, as I had promised.

Mr. Dennis Skinner (Bolsover): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. The Chair has been placed in some difficulty today. We all appreciate the problem of you having to check whether questions had been crossed off; some had and some had not. We understand the dilemma. It was put to me that in the merger the Liberals and the SDP were going through what is known as a negative care terminal episode. That is an American medical expression for death. I think you could resolve the problem, if you wanted to, by finding a name for them. I have got two. One is Lombard—I shall not tell you what it stands for. The other is PVC—plastic politics.

Mr. Speaker: Ingenious.

Later——

Mr. Tony Marlow (Northampton, North): Is it proper through you, Mr. Speaker, for me to help the hon. Member for Bolsover (Mr. Skinner), who drew the House's attention to the fact that today has seen the birth of a new stillborn party? The hon. Gentleman was seeking to find out the title of that party. I understand that the chosen name is the SLD, which is an acronym for "sold down the river" party.

Ministers (Rules of Procedure

Mr. Tony Benn (Chesterfield): On a point of o
Speaker. Yesterday I raised with you, as I have
and your predecessors over a number of y
question of the rules of procedure for Ministers
you whether, in the light of the incident that oc
the end of the debate on the Second Readin
Housing (Scotland) Bill, it would be possible fo
be published. You very kindly provided me wit
saying that the narrow conditions applied to Mi
respect of their interests were published in the rep
Royal Commission on standards of conduct and
Library.

The point I wish to raise with you, Mr. Spe
rather broader one, as I thought I had ma
yesterday. In 1982 and 1986 I tried to get the
procedure put in the Library. I am not query
decision when you said that it could not be don
submitted them in an appendix to the Treasu
Committee on the Treasury and Civil Servic
declined to publish them in an annex. I greatly re

I am not querying any of the rulings, Mr. Spe
we shall have a debate on Friday on official info
No doubt you will confirm your decision not to
rules of procedure in the Library, so I want to
the record that this puts us in a very grave dif
believe that the House should know under what
certain hon. Members are placed by their oblig
the Crown. I should be grateful if you, Mr. Speake
accept what I say as a submission of con
constitutional importance, although I do not qu
ruling that they cannot be published.

Mr. Speaker: I have written to the rig
Gentleman. He quoted from only part of my lette
be for the convenience of the House if I confirm,
other hon. Members are interested in this matter,
hon. Member for Bradford, South (Mr. Crye
question to the Prime Minister on 26 November 1
she confirmed that the guidance was unchang
detailed rules were set out in full in *Hansard*, at
292-93, on 20 March 1980, and these are readily a
to hon. Members.

Later—

Mr. Benn: I thank you, Mr. Speaker, for confir
ruling in your letter. I intend to publish the
procedure and claim privilege in so doing.

Mr. Tam Dalyell (Linlithgow): On the subject r
my right hon. Friend the Member for Chesterfi
Benn), my hon. Friend the Member for Falkirk, E
Ewing), and me, it may be within your knowled
Speaker, that two questions have been accepted
Table Office, asking the Prime Minister to clarify
of conduct of Ministers and specifically to put
and other interests in the Library, and asking wh
she has taken to see that the Under-Secretary of S
Scotland, the hon. Member for Edinburgh, Wes
James Douglas-Hamilton), has complied with t
governing ministerial conduct, with particular refe
the divestment of financial interests, in so far as the
to his dealings with the Housing (Scotland) Bill, a
will make a statement on the matter.

Would it not be for the good order of the Hou
Speaker, if, until those answers are given by th

Minister on Friday, no final steps were taken to set up the composition of the Standing Committee on the Housing (Scotland) Bill? My hon. Friend the Member for Falkirk, East and I believe that there are serious considerations, even forth of Scotland, on the matter. This really goes to the heart of conduct in the House of Commons. If the ministerial guidelines have been changed, the House should surely be told.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. Member has put down a question on the Order Paper which is in order and will be answered. As to his second point, he should make representatons to the Chairman of the Committee of Selection.

Debates (Calling of Speakers)

Mr. David Winnick (Walsall, North): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. Will you give guidance to the House in regard to the calling of speakers? On previous occasions when the matter was raised, you said that you would call a speaker from the Liberal Benches and from the SDP Benches, and on many occasions you treat them separately in debates. Can you give any guidance about what will happen under the new situation, whatever that may be? How will the group of the right hon. Member for Plymouth, Devonport (Dr. Owen), which is quite separate and refused to merge, be allocated time?

Mr. Speaker: I cannot recollect that I have ever discussed or given guidance about how the occupant of the Chair calls hon. Members. It would by very unwise to do that.

BILL PRESENTED

Registration of Commercial Lobbying Interests

Mr. Bob Cryer, supported by Mr. Ernie Ross, Mr. Tony Benn, Mr. D. N. Campbell-Savours, Mr. Andrew F. Bennett, Mr. Martin Flannery, Mr. George Howarth, Mr. Dave Nellist, Mr. Pat Wall, Mr. Dennis Skinner, Mr. Eric S. Heffer and Mr. Max Madden, presented a Bill to provide a public register of organisations who carry out the lobbying of Parliament for commercial gain, the disclosure of expenditure by such organisations; and for connected purposes: And the same was read the First time; and ordered to be read a Second time upon Friday 22 January and to be printed. [Bill 79.]

STATUTORY INSTRUMENTS, &c

Ordered,

That the Customs Duties (ECSC) Order 1987 (S.I., 1987, No. 2184) be referred to a Standing Committee on Statutory Instruments, &c.—*[Mr. Alan Howarth.]*

Medical Examination of Children at R

3.39 pm

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley (Surrey, South-West): I be

move,

That leave be given to bring in a Bill to amend the relating to child care to enable a social worker or he visitor who believes a child to be at risk to require the pa or guardian to produce the child for medical examina within three days.

The intention of the Bill is to fill a gap in the pow available to those charged with the onerous responsibil of child protection. It is estimated that 150 to 200 child are killed annually by their parents or guardians. There about 30,000 children on local authority at-risk regist None of us can fail to experience a strong emotio reaction to such cases. We have seen in recent mon many sensational and censorious responses to the rep of physical and sexual child abuse and to cases involv the death of a child.

However, sadly, there is nothing new about child ab and neglect. We may have updated our way understanding and describing the syndrome, descriptions of barbarous treatment are widespread literature and popular culture, with tales of infantic ritual sacrifice, mutilation, flogging and exploitati Legislation was introduced to protect animals in 1822, the first children's charter was not introduced until 18

Since the 1973 Maria Colwell tragedy, there have b more than 20 similar inquiries into cases of child abu Each inquiry is a costly, frequently confrontational highly charged event in which the social workers are often treated as whipping boys. We have to find a w forward that takes into account the lessons we le following Mrs. Justice Butler-Sloss's Cleveland inquiry which there appears to have been an idiosyncratic, ov zealous approach by one group of professionals a parental rights seem to have been disregarded.

We should also learn from the lessons of the harrow series of tragic individual cases such as Heidi Kose Kimberley Carlile, Jasmine Beckford and Tyra Hen where somehow the child slipped through the net a where, even in the light of professional or public anxie the child was simply not seen and the parents' sensitivit appear to have been given excessive weight and the chil rights disregarded.

Our present child care law, as everyone acknowledg is untidy and unsatisfactory. The legislation is spread o several Acts and is in need of simplification a structuring into one new Act. There is widespread suppo for the simplification and modification set out in the Wh Paper "The Law on Child Care and Family Service That major overhaul of child care law is eagerly awaite It is intended

"to provide a clearer framework for the provision of child c services to families and for the protection of children at risk

Few hon. Members are aware of the skill required treat or assess child abuse cases. The task of the soc worker, health visitor, general practitioner and othe entrusted with child protection is highly skilled a requires careful judgment.

There will have been widespread encouragem obtained from the remarks of my right hon. Friend t Prime Minister yesterday when she referred to such ca which pose

"sensitive problems to social workers and other people wh have to decide when to go into a home because they think th

[Mrs. Virginia Bottomley]

a child is being abused, neglected or ill-treated. It is not an easy question for anyone to answer, but it is supremely important and involves social workers, legislators and neighbours."—[*Official Report*, 12 January 1988; Vol. 125, c. 142.]

Those involved in child protection frequently have to walk a tightrope between building up parental competence and confidence and encouraging parents to succeed in the task of child rearing and, at the same time, not forgetting that their first duty must be the protection of the child rather than the parents.

If there are clear and serious grounds for worry about a child, there are powers available to obtain a place of safety order allowing the child to be removed and detained for 28 days. Section 40 of the Children and Young Persons Act 1933 enables a magistrate to authorise a police constable to enter the premises. What is lacking is a lower order, an order to ensure that a child about whom there is not deep and widespread concern is seen.

It is very easy for parents to say that the child is away or absent. It is not only abusing families who dislike the intervention of health visitors or social workers in their everyday lives. The purpose behind my Bill is to ensure that there is a power to require the parents to produce the child for a medical examination. They escort the child to the medical examination. They are not handing over the parental rights and the child is not removed traumatically from their presence.

In the review of child care law the Government propose a new emergency protection order. This makes up for many of the shortcomings of the place of safety order. The parents have greater say in the procedure and it does not last for such a long time. It is not good enough, however, to argue that this provides the minimal power which would be required to ensure that the child receives a medical assessment with the least possible offence being taken by the parents about interference with what many of us regard as our private business.

I believe that the new minimal power outlined in my Bill will play an integral part, with the many other initiatives and measures that have been developed in recent years. The highly regarded chief inspector of social services at the Department of Health and Social Security, Bill Utting, has tirelessly sought to improve standards of care, emphasising that the first priority must be given to the child, clarifying the powers already available for those involved in child protection. Consideration has been given to better practice guidelines for social workers, nurses and doctors in the clinical diagnosis of sexual abuse and the conduct of child abuse inquiries.

Other Departments are also involved. The Home Office has taken steps to allow children to provide evidence by video link and to remove the need that their evidence should be corroborated. In the education service, there is a greater awareness of the responsibilities of and the contribution that can be made by teachers.

Many of us are looking forward to the implementation of the Bill introduced by my hon. Friend the Member for Westbury (Mr. Walters) to amend the Ch Young Persons Act 1986, which allows greate and control over those who have been sent ho from care. Certainly, the Tyra Henry an Beckford cases might have benefited from suc

In addition, it is important to introduc measure. A similar power has been recomme commission of inquiry into the death of Kimbe The chairman, in his excellent, thoughtful handed report, argues for a child assessment National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty has endorsed the measure. The National Child has offered its support. The National Childre which has given a great deal of thought to the protecting children, welcomes this as a necess house order.

The fact that the order does not give the loc the right to remove the child should reassu parents while encouraging social workers to the child is seen, in the medical sense—the to be seen physically, to be weighed an Percentile charts need to be consulted to see child is thriving and flourishing.

The Association of Directors of Social Serv British Association of Social Workers have also the initiative. Indeed, I have been impressed b far, has been the unanimous support of the gr consulted on the Bill in the short time availab

The Bill provides a discreet, specific me would improve significantly the powers availab workers and health visitors, and I believe that an important part in the protection of child while minimising any needless distress for pare the concerns about the child's welfare prove The Bill covers a clear area of need, recogni year's White Paper, but not sufficiently n proposals for legislation.

If, by some misfortune, the Bill fails to reach book, I hope that my right hon. Friend the S State for Social Services will find a way to inc in his own proposals for legislation, which I h brought forward at the earliest opportunity.

Question put and agreed to.

Bill ordered to be brought in by Mrs Bottomley, Mr. Tony Baldry, Mr. Alex Carlile Devlin, Mr. Frank Field, Sir Barney Hayhoe, M B. Jones, Miss Emma Nicholson, Mr. Roger Sir Peter Thurnham.

MEDICAL EXAMINATION OF CHILDREN AT

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley accordingly present amend the law relating to child care to enab worker or health visitor who believes a child to to require the parent or guardian to produce th medical examination within three days: And the read the First time; and ordered to be read a Se upon Friday 29 April and to be printed. [Bill 8

Orders of the Day

Social Security Bill

As amended (in the Standing Committee), further considered.

Clause 1

ATTENDANCE ALLOWANCE

3.49 pm

Mrs. Margaret Beckett (Derby, South): I beg to move amendment No. 1, in page 1, line 15, leave out from 'be' to the end of line 17 and insert 'immediately available'.

The amendment deals with a decision in the case of Mrs. Dorothy Moran with regard to attendance allowance that was first made by the relevant authorities and then overturned by the Court of Appeal.

Mrs. Moran's application for the night time attendance allowance was turned down on the grounds that, although there seemed to be little doubt that she needed the assistance and support of her husband, he was not necessarily awake throughout all the hours of the night. However, clear evidence was given to the board that he was quite capable of waking should his wife suffer a crisis that was totally without warning.

Mrs. Moran's application was rejected, but on advice she went to the Court of Appeal, which overturned the previous decision. Her case has now gone back to the board for further consideration. It would be helpful, now or at some later stage, if the Minister could pursue this matter. Even though the case has returned to the board, Mrs. Moran has received neither judgment nor money. Clearly, that was not what the Court of Appeal envisaged when it granted her appeal. I do not believe that the Government had that in mind when they spoke of their intention to make sure that cases in the pipeline were sympathetically considered. Therefore, I hope that the Minister will agree to pursue the matter. I wish to put on record that I have been asked to make that plea by my hon. Friend the Member for Birkenhead (Mr. Field). Unfortunately he is attending the Select Committee on Social Services and is unable to be present to raise this matter.

We hope that the Government will give some consideration to the proposal in our amendment. I hope that they will agree to consult—perhaps a little more widely than they have done on some other alternatives—about their new wording. Throughout our debates on the Bill, the Government have insisted that all they are seeking to do is to restore the law to what it was before the Moran judgment was given. We have expressed the anxiety, felt by many involved in such work, that the new wording carries with it certain dangers and could be interpreted more restrictively than the wording before the Moran judgment. I recognise that the Minister has already said that he will consider some of the alternatives that have been proposed, but he has said that the Government remain of the view that their wording will mean that the law is no tighter than it was before the Moran judgment.

With the greatest possible respect to the Minister, it is clear that the Court of Appeal did not agree with the Government that the wording previously used in the Social Security Act 1975 gave effect to their in Therefore, I hope that there will be wider cons especially with the charities which represent people and which deal with the operation of at allowance.

We are especially worried about someone hav awake to qualify for the night time condition introduction of the words "at frequent interv believe that those words may lead to a interpretation of the law. Obviously, at present we case law to consider regarding the Governme formulation, but the word "frequent" is used rega daytime condition for attendance allowance, Court of Appeal has said that, in that context, "f means several times and not just once or twice.

The reason for having slightly different condi qualify for the payment of night time cover and ni care is that, by obvious definition, night time care onerous on the carer. Therefore, it has always b case that it is slightly easier to satisfy the nig condition than the daytime condition. We are that, as the law is now proposed, the night time c may become more stringent and on all fours v operation of the day time condition.

I must remind the Minister of the problems th even now under the existing law. He may recall tha context of the denial of attendance allowance to under the age of two, observations have been mad children suffering from thalassaemia major and that those children have to wear a pump to admini drug Desferal during the night, and the difficult that causes.

The Minister may also recall that in the context debate attention was drawn in one particular exa the way in which the parents of the child involved get up at regular intervals, and so have badly di nights. The problems of those parents are not rec by the award of attendance allowance. We are that, even now, people who many of us might think be more seriously considered for attendance allowa not meeting the conditions, and obviously that colo anxiety that this problem may be exacerbated in

I have received representations from officials of of Sheffield who remain worried that a large nu people will be deprived of attendance allowance new wording and who have drawn attention problems of those with mental illness, of those su from Alzheimer's disease and of diabetics wh hypoglycaemic attacks. They are often unable to help, but may be able to put carers on the alert. It enough for someone to be present and able to resp an appeal for assistance, although that person sleeping lightly, but alertly.

We believe that the wording that the Governm putting into law is more stringent than at prese carries a danger that people who are now able to the tests for attendance allowance might not meet t conditions. I hope the Minister will recognise that a serious attempt to offer alternative wording wh courts can interpret. We recognise that the commis suggested that they might have difficulties in extra principle from the decision in the Moran case. W that the alternative wording that we are offerin enable them to extract the prinicple and prevent the of attendance allowance to those who at present wo awarded it.

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Health and Social Security (Mr. Michael Portillo): I shall begin where the hon. Member for Derby, South (Mrs. Beckett) began and, indeed, where the whole matter began, with Mrs. Moran, and with the point which the hon. Lady raised on behalf of the hon. Member for Birkenhead (Mr. Field) who, obviously, has shown the closest attention to that case and the issues that it has raised.

It is true that Mrs. Moran has not yet received her judgment. The attendance allowance board is an independent adjudicating authority and I cannot comment on its deliberations. However, I shall explain to the House what the present position is. Following the Court of Appeal judgment, the full attendance allowance board reconsidered Mrs. Moran's case in the light of the judgment in May 1987. Details of its provisional conclusions were sent to Mrs. Moran on 19 May together with copies of all the evidence considered by the board.

In keeping with the board's usual practice, Mrs. Moran was then asked to submit comments on the provisional conclusions and any further evidence that she might have to support her case. She responded on 25 September through Mr. Nicholas Warren of the Birkenhead resource unit, who sent the board the submission on her behalf, together with the report of the consultant neurologist, Dr. Chadwick, and statements from Mr. Moran and Mr. Pugh of the British Epilepsy Association. The full board reconsidered its provisional conclusions in the light of the papers from Mr. Warren and a reasoned statement of its final decision should be sent shortly to Mrs. Moran and her representatives. By that, I understand that she will be hearing from the board within a few days.

I have listened with great care to the hon. Lady's arguments and am grateful for the constructive spirit in which she has spoken, as she did so often in Committee. Much of what has been said today echoes the points made in Committee. I remind the House of what we think the aim of the allowance is and always has been. It is to recognise the extra cost and disruption to normal family life that arises from the attendance needs of severely disabled people.

At night, when the normal state of the members of the household is that of sleep and quiet, disruption can be caused because the disabled person requires frequent attention with his bodily functions or because his condition requires that someone should continually supervise him—that is, be awake and watching over him for a prolonged period or at frequent intervals so that he does not put himself or other people at risk of substantial danger. That is the basis on which attendance allowance operated before the Court of Appeal's decision in March last year.

4 pm

I do not think anyone would dispute that disruption of a household at night by the attendance needs of a severely disabled person is the proper basis for entitlement to the allowance. The Court of Appeal, however, pushed the scope of the allowance wider than that. Its finding was that in some circumstances the disabled person's need for attendance did not cause disruption. Continual supervision might be exercised even by someone who was asleep, albeit ready to wake up if and when danger occurred. Such danger does not have to be common, with the proviso that it is not so remote a possibility that it should reasonably be disregarded.

That is why the Government were the judicial interpretation of continual super which was not consistent with our previous of what was entailed. In our view, interpretation was no longer a satisfactor the criteria that must be satisfied. Clause 1 than spell out what we believe is a reasona expression of the criteria, consistent with th existed before March 1987.

I want to be explicit with the hon. Lady. not our intention to create conditions any those that existed before the Moran judg what we are striving to achieve. I give the absolute assurance on that. We believe t merely returns the law to its position befo Appeal decision. I have listened carefully t the hon. Lady expressed, and I am please thought it right to give examples of wha revolve around. She fears that clause 1 re tightening of the criteria as they operat Moran judgment.

We and the attendance allowance board the sort of people we want to be covere formula. They are the same people as disabilities and accompanying need for night would have caused the board to awar before the Moran judgment. That was specification we put to our lawyers when to draft the clause. They have assured us th are fully covered by the new provision. Any have been eligible for the allowance befor will be just as eligible after Royal Assent t

The hon. Lady is right: ultimately the in the law is a matter for the courts. In the abs interpretation, both Oppositions and depend on legal advice about the effects Therefore, I reinforce my assurance to the say that we shall certainly want to consu again to draw their attention to the points has made, and to her examples. I shall no to debate with her the meaning of the word any other word. I shall take the matte lawyers, and assure her that I shall look i and ensure that her points are considered. understanding is that the clause does noth take us back to pre-Moran.

In Committee, the hon. Lady mentione about the expressions "at night," "during t "throughout the night". I understand that we have used—"at night"—make no dif level or pattern of attendance required at n sort of people will continue to qualify u condition, as drafted; similarly, the same will qualify under the night watching ove they did under the night supervision interpreted before the Moran judgment. understanding. Again, I give that assuranc

I cannot accept the Opposition's amend the words the hon. Lady is proposing wou post-Moran position. I dare say that th would like, but the "immediately availabl proposing is, in our view, unnecessary and post-Moran position that we are trying amendment is unnecessary because clause the criteria for attendance allowance at nig to a proper and equitable footing. I have a

the House that the application of clause 1 will have the same practical effect as was the situation before the Court of Appeal judgment. We oppose broadening the attendance allowance in the way that resulted from the Moran judgment.

The hon. Lady made the point that it is important to give clear guidance to the courts in this matter. The "immediately available" formulation suffers from the problem that it is not a clear form of guidance to disabled people, the courts or the other bodies that we will ask to enforce the legislation. The form of words that we have suggested will prove workable, subject to the assurance I have given to the hon. Lady—that I want to check it further with the lawyers and draw to their attention the points she has made.

Mrs. Beckett: This has been an interesting, although brief, exchange. I recall that Ministers said in Committee that the effect of the Moran judgment would be financially neutral and that the only reason why they were persevering with the clause, however worded, was to tidy up the law, because they had not been able to abstract principles from the Moran judgment. However, in a sense, we were hoping to offer them in the amendment a formulation that would enable them to extract principles that would tidy up the law without, perhaps, tightening it as we fear; and also, perhaps, to give effect to the law as the Court of Appeal had wished it to be. However, I am grateful to the Minister for his agreement to consult again and more widely. That will be helpful to those in another place when they examine this part of the Bill, and I therefore beg to ask leave to withdraw the amendment.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Mrs. Beckett: I beg to move amendment No. 2, in page 2, line 9, at end insert:—

'(3) In subsection 35(2A) of the Social Security Act 1975, after "prescribed", in the first place where that word occurs, there shall be inserted the words "or who requires parenteral nutrition other than as an in-patient in a hospital or similar institution".'.

I pay tribute to my hon. Friend the Member for Dundee, West (Mr. Ross). Sadly, I see he is not with us at this moment, but I hope that he will join us shortly. He drew to my attention and, through me, to the attention of the Committee, the problems of patients who suffer such illnesses as Crohn's disease and who find themselves, in order to sustain life and receive nourishment, reliant upon a form of treatment called total parenteral nutrition. That was unfamiliar to me and, I think, to most hon. Members on the Committee, but I understand from my hon. Friend that apart from the interest that he has developed from his constituency casework, it is a treatment which — fortunately or unfortunately—he has undergone himself. It involves the placement of a central venous catheter which lies in a vein above the right side of the heart and exits through the skin at the front of the chest.

I am confident that my hon. Friend can address the circumstances of the treatment much better than I can, as he has had the experience, but the main point in relation to attendance allowance and the conditions under which the necessity for treatment arises is the comparison that has been drawn between total parenteral nutrition, because of which a patient relies on the support of a machine to sustain life, and renal dialysis.

It may be within the memory of a number of hon. Members that, at first, renal dialysis did not automatically qualify a patient for the payment of attendance Over a period, so many cases had been turned d attendance allowance board, which was op approach to these cases that was more stri Parliament felt was justified, that, after a coupl experience, in 1976 Parliament decided to take out of the hands of the attendance allowance that someone who was forced to undergo renal sustain life should automatically be awarded allowance. I believe that that is the only case automatic entitlement.

We were, and are, asking the House to co extent to which patients who must receive home nutrition may fall within a similar category. Ce treatment is life-sustaining, involves many diffic might be found by many people hard to h endure. We were anxious lest the board, albei seemed to it the right reasons, adopted ra standards of judgment for this condition too therefore sought to raise the issue whether Parliament should step in and make the qualifying condition for the award of an allowance. We have tabled the amendment beca worried that individuals are being denied allowance even though, perhaps for psychologic they have great difficulties with the operatio parenteral nutrition.

Mr. Ernie Ross (Dundee, West): On behalf o who, like me, have had the benefit of total nutrition, I should like to thank all hon. Mem participated in the Committee proceedings. I behalf of those who have the misfortune to have treatment for the rest of their lives in order to s and for those who, like me, were on the treatm short time.

When my hon. Friend the Member for Der (Mrs. Beckett) spoke in Committee, she r correspondence from Professor Lennard-Jones the recess he wrote me a couple of letters, and I s to quote one paragraph from his letter of 17 Dece said:

"Thank you for your courtesy in sending me a of the debate on the Social Security Bill during w Beckett made such a strong case for granting an A Allowance to all patients who give themselves nutrition at home. I am most impressed by the qua debate and the reasoned arguments put forward."

Like Professor Lennard-Jones, I was also impres I read the debate. As my hon. Friend the Me Derby, South said, I had my life saved by this and I should like to share some of my experience Minister and with hon. Members, because it ma to come to a conclusion on the matter.

In January 1985 I required major abdominal s Ninewells hospital, Dundee. That surgery saved Following surgery I was making reasonable pro suddenly, and for no apparent reason, the having been a success, I started to find it difficul myself. I was regularly sick and had diarrhoea, there seemed to be no cause. At first it was suspe it was perhaps psychological, given the surgery t required and the stress that I had gone throu consultant was of the opinion that perhaps I had ability to eat or to want to eat, or even to want to

I assure hon. Members that I was trying as could to survive, and many of my hon. Friends, i

[Mr. Ernie Ross]

my right hon. and learned Friend the Member for Monklands, East (Mr. Smith), came to see me and will recall that I was striving hard at that time but finding it difficult to maintain life. Eventually I was taken back into Ninewells hospital, and the staff inserted an endoscope and discovered that I was suffering from post-operative adhesions. They were not just simple post-operative adhesions, but massive ones and the consultant, Professor Cusheri said that they were among the worst post-operative adhesions that he had come across in his many years as a surgeon. Instead of the wounds inside my body healing separately, they were healing together and I was gradually choking myself to death.

There was no way in which I could feed myself by the normal method. The staff tried all sorts of treatments. They inserted internal tubes to try to feed me, but that simply added to the complications and I lost a considerable amount of weight. I was certainly not in any condition for more surgery, which was obviously what was required at that time. I did not have much to look forward to, and I can remember the day when the hospital staff tried the last method of trying to feed me. The stomach that they had created for me became solid with the infusions that I was taking in a very uncomfortable manner through a tube down my nose and throat. I thought that that was virtually the end of it.

4.15 pm

The next morning my stomach was pumped out, and a new consultant was introduced to me. He told me that his name was Chris Pennington and that he was a consultant nutritionist. He said, "Do not worry. We will look after you." I had heard that story once or twice before, and I was not convinced. The staff carefully gathered up my emaciated frame and put it in ambulance and transported me to King's Cross hospital. I then discovered this new treatment of total parenteral nutrition, and, I should like to put on record what it involves, because it is only when one hears what is involved that one appreciates the psychological stress and the problems faced by those who, unlike me, have to live with it for the rest of their lives.

At the start of the treatment, a catheter is introduced through the skin on the anterior chest, or upper abdomen, and it tunnels through the tissues to end in a large vein near the heart. The catheter cannot be seen under one's clothing and patients can engage in normal activities during the day. At night, using strict sterile precautions, and following a protocol to avoid accidents, about 3 litres of fluid, usually in one flexible, transparent plastic container, are infused slowly through the catheter. During sleep the rate of infusion is kept constant by a sophisticated volumetric pump with an audible alarm which wakes the patient when a technical fault occurs.

In the morning the patient reduces the rate of flow of the small amount of fluid remaining to allow the body to readjust to a fall in blood glucose level. The container is then disconnected. A blocking cap is placed on the end of the catheter, anticoagulant is injected and the patient resumes activity. The patient has to learn how to maintain complete sterility during all manipulations involving the catheter or nutrient solution. New skills have to be acquired for handling syringes, infusion lines and the pump and for care of the catheter and the site at which it enters the skin. Knowledge is needed complications and technique, and abou cope with them.

That all sounds fairly straightforward Members that when one has to try to de on one's chest while working a machine of one's life. People tend to give their ma my machine was called Fred. The volumetric pump, which goes tick, tick, happens during infusion, there is an aud alarm goes off, one immediately start difficult to carry out these procedures c my wife was trained while I was in Kin and she carried out the hooking up an should not have liked to do it myself appreciate the stress and the psycholog patients have to go through. I had to process to ensure that I could undergo operation, but I knew that at some stag to do away with this type of feeding and feeding.

I went back into hospital, and was th to 11 May. When I was taken into Kin my weight was 42·5 kg, which is under three weeks the hospital staff managed to at which I could again undergo fair surgery. From 24 May to 26 June I w parenteral nutrition in King's Cross hos three weeks at home. At the end of that I to feed myself and to say goodbye to gloves and to having to connect myself night and remain connected to Fred u next morning.

The only thing that sustained me was I would be using Fred for only a sho consultant kept on assuring me that at s return to a normal feeding method. possibility of my coming back to the Mark's hospital in London taking ove providing the nutrition that I required. of my illness was when I had to face the carry out my normal work and being hoo for 12 hours a day. That was not somethi looking forward. I have never suffered th of my constituents and many others diseases who have to use this treatme because my wife was with me and she ha method needed to maintain my conditio

The case of Patricia Boyle, which Friend the hon. Member for Derby, Sou that I can well understand. Patricia B intelligent woman, but she cannot cop with the idea of hooking herself to a personally vouch for that being a prob difficult part of my treatment. It was from my wife and King's Cross hosp through it.

On the first occasion on which we t home to Twead crescent and I was ho would have it, the giving set—the con bag of fluid through the volumetric mac —did not work. After half an hour of unblock the line and trying various othe we were able to contact King's Cross provides a 24-hour service to patients li patients who use the total parenteral nutr

up to 500 miles from the centre that looks after their treatment, and they do not have the confidence of being able to gain access to someone who is suitably qualified and trained, as my wife and I could that night. They may not even have access to another giving set. We had a couple of spare sets and we were able to speak to King's Cross hospital. Even after the sister who was in charge that evening had gone home she was able to speak to us on the telephone and talk us through the process to make sure that I was hooked up.

It is difficult, particularly for young and elderly people, to cope with this problem. I hope that the Minister, if he cannot say today that an attendance allowance can be given, will at least give us some assurance that individual cases will be looked at more sympathetically. It appears to me, knowing Patricia Boyle and the Boyle family very well, that the conclusion Dr. Pennington came to — that psychologically she may never be able to come to terms with this form of feeding — is something that the attendance allowance board seems to have ignored completely. It would be sad if it determined that because she is not regularly breaking down, or because someone else is able to assist her, she could not be considered for an attendance allowance.

A number of studies have been carried out on responses to the treatment, and I am sure that the Minister and his Department have studied those. I draw his attention to a study carried out by Belinda-Jane Dewar, a nursing sister, into psychological problems faced by patients who have to rely on mechanical feeding. It is a very useful and informative document. She came to the conclusion that this major advance has

"created new psychological stresses for patients and their families. Since the patients' lives depend on TPN apparatus, they must accept the use of this mechanical device in order to survive. They must also adapt to the loss of normal body function and face the reality that they are permanently dependent on TPN as a substitute."

On behalf of all patients who have used TPN, I thank the Committee for taking the time to consider the matter.

I conclude by referring to a comment made by Professor Lennard-Jones in correspondence to me on 24 December last year. He said:

"It is thus important when discussing this topic not to regard these patients as healthy people who have to perform a technical exercise each night. On the contrary, they are people with a severe illness who courageously cope with it using this technique and they achieve a very high level of activity and rehabilitation."

I hope that the Minister can give some indication that those patients who have to use total parenteral nutrition from now until the end of their lives can be allowed to resume normal activities and a rehabilitated life. Certainly they would be helped if the Minister could give an indication that the attendance allowance board will look much more sympathetically at this form of treatment.

Mr. Portillo: I welcome the hon. Member for Dundee, West (Mr. Ross) to the debate. I understand that he was the unseen moving force behind some of the debates in Committee, and he has contributed most interestingly today. I studied the amendment very seriously before coming to the debate today.

As to precisely what is and what is not at issue, what is not at issue is whether somebody who is on total parenteral nutrition can qualify for attendance allowance, because of course they can and many people do. The question before us is whether somebody who is on TPN should qualify automatically for attendance a that very reason, without any other conside case. I want the House to be clear that that i considering. To answer the first point, the question that people on TPN may in some c be able to qualify.

On the second point, I will put my cards straight away and say to the hon. Gentlem Member for Derby, South (Mrs. Beckett) th recommend acceptance of the amendmen represents an unjustified shift in the genera entitlement to disablement benefits is based o and needs arising from disability and is n specific disabling conditions or forms of should like to explain why we have r conclusion.

The House will know that attendance designed to help with the extra costs faced disabled people who need a great deal of car of frequent attention to bodily functions o supervision or watching over them to avoi danger to themselves or others. Entitlen allowance is based solely on those attendance not, apart from one specific exception, on a disabling condition or form of treatment.

The exception is those disabled pe entitlement to the allowance is based on the f are renal dialysis patients who self-dialyse. Fo it has been accepted that all people who dia have much the same attendance needs, and th sufficient to qualify for a lower rate attendanc Home dialysis patients are awarded the allow because they are receiving the treatment, individual assessment of the needs of e Recently we extended the concession to cover dialyse in hospital self-care units, and it wa treat self-dialysis in this way because th attendance is present in every case.

The amendment seeks a similar blanket co people receiving total parenteral nutrition t home. We aim to enable disabled people to rec minimum of fuss the benefits to which they entitled. The extension of the special attendanc arrangements to renal dialysis patients using se shows that we are prepared to respond po sympathetically to the changing needs of disa brought about by developments in medicin forms of treatment.

Before going down the road propos amendment, we must be certain that all TPN p the same attendance needs and that those n accepted as sufficient to satisfy the criteria for allowance without individual assessment. I argued forcefully that the attendance needs patients are just as great and universal as thos patients, and should be similarly recognised b entitlement to allowance. We have con attendance allowance board and we do not bel could justify extending to TPN patients the kin entitlement available to dialysis patients. Th experienced in assessing the attendance nee patients and has received advice from experts i of treatment.

4.30 pm

I now want to consider one of the problems that so often arise—that of conflicting medical opinion from different sources. It is true that there is a body of medical opinion that holds that all TPN patients need help and assistance with the treatment from another person. Other experts take a markedly different view. To take the extreme, in the opinion of one consultant involved with TPN, to award attendance allowance would negate the whole purpose of the treatment, which is to allow patients to lead completely independent lives to the extent of holding down full-time paid employment. Advice received from another expert is that TPN patients who are otherwise physically and mentally intact do not require attention, supervision or watching over by another person before, during or after the treatment.

I want to draw some comparisons between TPN and renal dialysis. Patients on renal dialysis must without exception keep to a strict timetable and deviation of a few hours may have catastrophic consequences. They are severely ill people with a progressive disease which causes toxic reactions. The preparation of the machine for renal dialysis takes 40 to 60 minutes. That preparation may be physically very arduous. The patient is connected by a very short tube which may be only 12 to 16 in. long. The length of the tube cannot be varied because of the law of hydrodynamics. Moreover, the connection is made via the left wrist and that effectively tethers the patient, making him practically immobile. The connection is of the friction type and it could possibly slip. The treatment causes lassitude, confusion, temperature variations and occasionally even transient heart failure through the lowering of body pressure. Such people are hardly in a state to call for help should a breakdown occur.

The timing of TPN is important, but not critical. A few hours' delay may make the patient thirsty or hungry, but will not endanger life. The preparation of the machine takes five to 10 minutes and consists of running feeding fluids through the tubing. Similarly, the length of the connection is variable from a few inches to yards depending on the pump strength. The connection is not of the bayonet type. It cannot come apart without twisting. The patient is not tethered and is able to turn over in bed and sleep comfortably. It is true that the entire apparatus weighs about 55 lb, but it need not be carried around. When the treatment is finished, TPN patients feel refreshed and often go to work. I do not know whether the hon. Member for Dundee, West would endorse that.

I am not for a moment saying that TPN patients should be excluded from attendance allowance. Undoubtedly some should receive it. I remind the House that the question is whether they should all receive it automatically. We believe that TPN patients are not a homogeneous group, all with the same attendance needs, who can be automatically accepted as satisfying the qualifying criteria.

Mr. Tom Clarke (Monklands, West): How many TPN patients are there?

Mr. Portillo: I will come to that in a moment.

The attendance needs of each individual patient are different. Some can cope with the treatment entirely unaided and do not need assistance from another person. Clearly it would be quite wrong to pay attendance allowance in such cases. Others may well need help and assistance, either because of other mental or physical disabilities or because they are psychologically unable to cope with the treatment. Whether these needs arise and are sufficient to qualify for attendance allowance entirely depends on the facts and circumstances of each individual patient. I think it quite right, therefore, that a TPN patient's entitlement to attendance allowance should continue to be assessed in the light of individual needs by the attendance allowance board taking account of all the physical or mental or psychological difficulties which may be present.

In response to the point raised by the hon. Member for Monklands, West (Mr. Clarke), may I say that the attendance allowance board has made it a policy to consider all TPN cases. That matter is not put out to delegated medical practitioners. All the cases—there are not many—are brought forward. Since the beginning of 1987 there have been eight TPN cases and attendance allowance has been awarded in four of them. That is a striking ratio. It means that the board has concluded in some cases that people should be entitled to the allowance.

I cannot comment specifically on the case of Miss Boyle or any other case. However, in response to a point made by the hon. Member for Derby, South in Committee, I can state that if a letter from the attendance allowance board states that it can find no evidence of mental instability, aggressive behaviour or a suicidal tendency, it does not mean that the board is stating that unless such tendencies are present the person does not qualify for attendance allowance.

The attendance allowance board is bound in its deliberations to go through a checklist of everything that might qualify a person for attendance allowance, including, as hon. Members are aware, whether a person is likely to cause himself or herself any harm. That must be considered and covered in the documentation. That is a standard form of words, but it does not mean that a TPN patient is excluded from receiving an attendance allowance or can receive it only if there is evidence of suicidal or other tendencies.

I hope that the House will realise that we have considered this point carefully. However, I regret that I cannot commend the amendment to the House. In the spirit of the contribution made by the hon. Member for Dundee, West, I undertake to draw everything that has been said in this short debate to the attention of the attendance allowance board and I will ask my officials to continue to discuss all the issues that have been raised. I am grateful to the hon. Members for Dundee, West and for Derby, South for giving us the opportunity to consider this matter.

Mrs. Beckett: Although this has been a brief debate, it has been interesting. While all hon. Members will have sympathised with the experiences related by my hon. Friend the Member for Dundee, West (Mr. Ross), they will have been impressed by the clear and quiet way in which he was able to describe what must have been an horrendous experience. I listened with care to the Minister. I am particularly grateful for his remarks at the end of his observations and I want to make two or three points.

We must bear in mind a point made by my hon. Friend the Member for Dundee, West. By definition, those who undergo TPN treatment are very seriously ill, especially those who are likely to have to undergo the treatment permanently. I recall that in Committee we drew attention to observations made in medical literature to the effect that it is especially those people who have not previously

been seriously ill who are most likely—as was the case with my hon. Friend the Member for Dundee, West whose illness occurred unexpectedly — to face serious psychological difficulties.

Those who have already suffered a long and chronic illness and may have been in severe pain, which hopefully may have been relieved by the operations that led them to need total parenteral nutrition, may be more accustomed to suffering. They are also receiving an advantage. They are receiving a beneficial side effect to accompany their difficulties. Those people who have been struck comparatively swiftly by a serious illness and then find themselves dependent on the use of this technique to sustain life are bound to have far greater psychological difficulties. In that sense, I accept the Minister's point that obviously the circumstances will vary from case to case.

We also drew attention in Committee to medical literature that revealed the new techniques in this area. The Minister acknowledged that techniques were developing and changing. New techniques are being tested in Toronto, where a self-sealing septum is being tried. That is intended to help women patients, where there is a strong resistance to the effects of surgery, because repeated access to the catheter can be made by needle. The Minister will recall that experience there was that many patients had to reject that form of treatment because of a combination of the pain and the build-up of scar tissue and also—and very importantly—the psychological effects.

I am grateful to the Minister for confirming that, when the attendance allowance board said that Patricia Boyle was not displaying evidence of mental instability, aggressive behavour or suicidal tendencies, it was not suggesting that it would be necessary to wait until those conditions were displayed before attendance allowance could be awarded. We did not have such clarification in Committee.

As in the case of renal dialysis, I wonder whether the board is tending to go through what the Minister described as a checklist of tests, which have perhaps arisen from considering people with mental illness or handicap. Is the board giving sufficient weight to the new circumstances and to the technological change which has led to the introduction of this treatment, and is it applying the right tests to its judgment of psychological difficulties? That is an important point which should be considered by the board, and perhaps more widely. As experience develops, Parliament might well feel the need to pronounce on this matter, unless the board is able to convince us that it is using the right criteria with the right sensitivity.

I welcome the Minister's comments about the return to the board. I hope that it will consider the observations that have been made, in a spirit not of criticism, but of anxiety in the debate.

I beg to ask leave to withdraw the amendment.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Clause 2

INTRODUCTION OF RETIREMENT ALLOWANCE AND OTHER PROVISIONS RELATING TO INDUSTRIAL INJURIES BENEFIT

Mr. Portillo: I beg to move amendment No. 3, in page 3, line 24, leave out

'for the purposes of the Act is treated as having'.

Madam Deputy Speaker (Miss Betty Boothroyd): With this, it will be convenient to discuss Government amendments Nos. 4 to 7.

Mr. Portillo: In Committee, a question was raised about the meaning of the phrase "treated as having retired", as it appears in clause 2(3). That matter was resolved, but the point was made that the terminology relating to retirement was not consistent throughout clause 2. Having considered the point further, we offer amendments Nos. 3, 4 and 6, which must be considered with amendment No. 7, under which a new subsection is inserted to clarify the terminology used in the other subsection. These technical amendments aim to standardise the wording used in the clause so that it may be better understood.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 4

INCOME SUPPORT AND CHILD BENEFIT

4.45 pm

Mr. Robin Cook (Livingston): I beg to move amendment No. 10, in page 4, line 21, after 'period' insert 'or when engaged in a course of education or training.'

Before I deal with the precise terms of the amendment, it would be helpful to the House if I set it in the context of the clause from which it offers a further exemption. Competition among the clauses in the Bill to see which may be regarded as most objectionable is intense. However, when history makes its judgment on the Bill it will be by clause 4 that it will be best remembered.

For 40 years, supplementary benefit, or the social security system which preceded it, has been available to any person over 16 years. This clause excludes from such benefit anybody under 18, and, remarkably, it does so in the very decade that has seen more unemployment than ever before among those who are affected by the clause.

In yesterday's debate on child benefit there was a passage of arms about what the Conservative party had meant in its manifesto when it referred to child benefit. The gulf between what it said in its manifesto at the last election and what it is doing in the clause with respect to teenagers is wider than anything that it has said in respect of child benefit. The manifesto stated:

"We will take steps to ensure that those under 18 who deliberately choose to remain unemployed are not eligible for benefit."

Perhaps it should have occurred to us why the Government felt it necessary to take those steps. After all, a battery of powers are available to the DHSS to suspend benefit from anybody who it thinks chooses to be unemployed. It is simply not possible to choose to be unemployed and to claim benefit. I suspect, as many hon. Members no doubt do from the evidence of their constituency surgeries, that the powers against those suspected of choosing unemployment are being used far more readily and more easily than before.

Perhaps we should have been suspicious. We would have been correct in our suspicions, because, as the clause shows, the Government are not suspending benefit from those under 18 who deliberately choose to remain unemployed, but are suspending benefit from anybody under 18 who is not employed. It is an absolute ban. The proposal is as lonely and friendless as any adolescent whom it will affect.

[Mr. Robin Cook]

I noticed, when reading the *Official Report* of the Committee proceedings, that the Under-Secretary of State and the Minister referred to YTS in glowing terms and appeared to pray in aid the success of YTS as the reason why it was no longer necessary to offer supplementary benefit or income support to 16 and 17-year-olds. This is not the place to debate YTS and I am sure that you, Madam Deputy Speaker, would call me to order if I attempted to do so. However, if the Government claim that the success of YTS is the reason why we no longer need to offer income support to 16 and 17-year-olds, they should listen to what is said by the people who administer the YTS scheme and made it the success that the Minister claims.

Everybody associated with YTS has begged the Government not to proceed with the clause. The MSC has persistently emphasised that it regards it as important that YTS is a voluntary scheme, both for the employer and for the young person. The youth training board of the MSC, which administers the YTS, has emphasised its policy that YTS should be voluntary. The Institute of Careers Officers Ltd., which the Under-Secretary of State prayed in aid in Committee, has stressed to the Government that YTS should be voluntary and not a system of conscription.

To all those bodies, it is highly appropriate to the success of YTS that it should be voluntary. The willingness of youngsters to enter the scheme and make a success of their place on the scheme depends on their doing so voluntarily and not being conscripted. All hon. Members who have achieved my exalted years must be familiar with the fact that one can get an adolescent to do something much more successfully when one has persuaded him to believe that he thought of it first and that it was his choice, rather than ordering him to do it.

Miss Marjorie Mowlam (Redcar): That is also true of Ministers.

Mr. Cook: As my hon. Friend says, that is also true of the Government. I shall endeavour to persuade them that they think that the clause is wrong and should be withdrawn.

If we were to consider the poverty lobby, it would not be possible to find anybody in the voluntary sector, responsible for welfare policy, to support this proposal. I suspect that we would not find anybody employed by the DHSS who would support it either, if people only dared to speak their minds. This measure will cause hardship to young people and, as everybody in the welfare debate knows, will increase household poverty.

There are some spectacular exceptions, such as His Royal Highness Prince Edward, but, by and large, those young people who find it difficult to obtain useful, remunerative work are in households with below average incomes. They are in households where parents are least able to support teenagers, who end up with no income of their own, but it would be inappropriate to develop that point.

It would be inappropriate to do that, because the clause is inappropriate to a Social Security Bill. The motive that has inspired the clause and the measure does not come from a consideration of equity or income support. The motive that inspires this proposal is the Government's policy in the labour market consistently to drive down the wages of young workers by excluding them from the protection of the wages councils, and by introducing young workers' schemes designed to subsidise poverty wages.

This is merely the latest step in a number of measures taken by the Government to make it more difficult for teenagers to resist any job, however badly paid, however poor a future it may offer and however temporary its nature. Ironically, it is precisely because they have created that labour market that this measure is spectacularly inappropriate to the context of that labour market. They have exposed teenagers to a labour market in which the jobs they obtain are increasingly casual, temporary and seasonal.

The life experience of many teenagers alternates between employment and unemployment. Survey after survey has shown that one in five young people aged under 18 have a chance of being unemployed within the next three months, and that one in eight teenagers are employed in a temporary or part-time job. The lifestyle of that large chunk of the teenage work force alternates between intervals out of work and intervals in work. The clause states that when they are out of work they will receive no benefit, and that while they are in work they will be expected to pay contributions towards unemployment and social security benefits.

The amendment seeks to widen the exemptions and to exclude another group of teenagers from the scope of the clause. In Committee, the Under-Secretary of State read into the record a list of the present, narrow exemptions. I am disappointed that there is no open exemption for 16 and 17-year-olds who are obliged to leave home because of physical abuse or because they are in danger from incest. The only exemption that is conceded in their case is that they will qualify for income support during the period when child benefit would otherwise have been payable to their parents. They will qualify only for the bridging period of three or four months until a YTS place becomes available.

As the Under-Secretary of State will appreciate, the problem with that is that the YTS allowance is not calculated to meet a trainee's housing costs. Many of the voluntary organisations which cater specifically for the needs of teenagers who have left home because they no longer have a place there have no idea how they will function if those teenagers cannot pay their rents because they can no longer obtain benefit.

Other groups of teenagers are exempted, but the exemptions are extremely limited. I was pleased to note that pregnant mothers will be exempt from the scope of the clause and be allowed to claim income support — not indefinitely, but at any rate for longer than the bridging allowance period. That is an important category, because there are 50,000 teenage pregnancies every year. However, on reading the provision for pregnant mothers, I was startled to discover that they will qualify for income support for only the last 11 weeks of pregnancy. For the first six months they will not be entitled to social security. Perhaps the Under-Secretary of State will explain how he expects a 16 or 17-year-old girl who is four or five months pregnant to obtain employment, or, for that matter, to obtain a YTS place and qualify for a YTS allowance. She will have to wait until the sixth month, when eventually she will qualify for income support.

The Under-Secretary of State may wish to rely on the other categories that are exempted. There will be exemptions in cases of—I quote the words from the list

—"exceptional hardship". In Committee the Under-Secretary of State constantly referred to "severe hardship", but the list calls it "exceptional hardship". Normal hardship will not do; severe hardship will not do; it must be exceptional hardship.

That exemption is rather baroque, because the DHSS proposes that every case of exceptional hardship must be referred to DHSS head office. It is extraordinary that in cases where there will be the most urgent need for payment, the papers will be sent by post to DHSS head office, where they will join the long queue in the in tray, and there will be considerable delay before a reply is received from an adjudication officer, who will not have seen the claimant, to whom the claimant cannot make representations, and against whose decision the claimant has no right of appeal.

The amendment seeks to lever open the door to further exemptions. It would extend an automatic exemption to 16 and 17-year-olds who would rather study than join the youth training scheme. When the Prime Minister addressed the House in April, before the general election, she gave the range of options available to young people. She said that young people aged between 16 and 18

"can stay on at school, can stay on in further education, can undertake a youth training scheme . . . or they can do a job." —[*Official Report*, 23 April 1987; Vol. 114, c. 787.]

The amendment seeks to give expression to the clear wishes and intentions of the Prime Minister, by enabling unemployed 16 and 17-year-olds to make a rational and fair choice between joining the youth training scheme and studying part-time. After all, it is a serious choice for them to make, and there may be many reasons why youngsters will wish to study rather than join the YTS.

More than a quarter of YTS trainees go back into unemployment when their courses finish. That factor will weigh with many 16 and 17-year-olds when considering whether to take up their guaranteed places. Half the YTS places train in skills which, in the words of a report issued by the Department of Employment, are not generally in short supply. By comparison, a 16 or 17-year-old entering a course of education, even on a part-time basis, could obtain a qualification which would enable him to continue into higher education. Under the 21-hour rule, he could obtain two A-levels and thereby qualify for a place in further education for which the youth training scheme would not qualify him.

The reasons why a 16 or 17-year-old might debate whether to join the YTS or go into education are strengthened by the passage of arms in Committee, when the Under-Secretary of State was pressed by Labour Members to guarantee a suitable place for every teenager. He will recall that he could not give such a guarantee. He could give a guarantee only that a place would be available, not that it would be suitable for a 16 or 17-year-old. In those circumstances, it is only fair that that youngster should have the right to say, "No, thank you. I do not want a place that I do not regard as suitable for me. I would rather spend my time studying."

The intent of our amendment may not be immediately obvious from its wording and, with some humility, I should say that I am not 102 per cent. confident that it gives expression to our intentions. The clause refers to income support being available

"in prescribed circumstances and for a prescribed period"

to 16 and 17-year-olds. If the amendment were accepted, the clause would refer to

"prescribed circumstances and for a prescribed period or when engaged in a course of education or training."

The phrase

"when engaged in a course of education"

is offered as an alternative only to the "prescribed period", not to the "prescribed circumstances". I accept that it would be impracticable to offer income support to every 16 and 17-year-old. If our amendment were carried it would be limited to the 16 and 17-year-olds who came within the "prescribed circumstances" of the clause.

Who would come within those prescribed circumstances? First, I wish to clarify the doubts about what will happen to the 21-hour rule. At present, about 30,000 16 and 17-year-olds are studying part-time under the 21-hour rule, which enables them to maintain a course of part-time study without jeopardising their supplementary benefit. In Committee the Minister of State said that the income support regulations will, in general, continue the 21-hour rule. It is correct to say that the 21-hour rule will remain available to everyone over the age of 18, just as it is available now. But after the Bill becomes law—if the House is unwise enough to put it on the statute book—that part and all other paragraphs of the regulations will no longer apply to those aged under 18.

Will the Under-Secretary clarify how he proposes to give effect to the statement by the Minister that the 21-hour rule will remain available? Will he also give a clear undertaking that 16 and 17-year-olds carrying out a part-time course of study under the 21-hour rule will be in the prescribed categories, and that their benefits will not be threatened when the Bill is enacted?

5 pm

There are, of course, other groups who benefit from the present rules, and who appear to be jeopardised by the clause—for instance, teenagers who are separated from their parents, to whom I referred earlier. At present it is possible for such teenagers to obtain supplementary benefit, even for full-time courses of study. They would, however, appear to lose under the clause, unless it is amended along the lines that we propose. There are also school leavers, who at present do not qualify for the 21-hour rule until three months after leaving school. That is an onerous requirement, meaning that many will miss the start of further education college courses in August and September.

It is important to safeguard the interests of those groups and to preserve their right to enter courses of study rather than youth training schemes. If the clause passes on to the statute book unamended, the only group who will automatically qualify for income support while pursuing a course of study will be refugees studying English. While I welcome the exemption of refugees studying English, I see no reason why teenagers who have left school with no literacy skills and without basic English should be denied the opportunity to acquire those skills, which they will certainly need in the future.

The objective of the amendment is to preserve choice and freedom, to give teenagers the right to choose between education and YTS, and to decide for themselves which is the more suitable. In urging the acceptance of the amendment I do not resile from my objections to the principles of the clause, which I outlined at the beginning. I believe that if 16 and 17-year-olds are old enough to be employed, it is wrong in principle that they should be held to be not old enough to receive the benefits of being

[Mr. Cook]

unemployed. I also believe that it is vindictive to visit this further discrimination on teenagers, who have seen their benefit cut 14 times under the present Government.

Unless the amendment is accepted, we shall vote for it in an attempt to soften the effects of the clause, and also to express our contempt for the clause as a whole.

Mr. Ted Rowlands (Merthyr Tydfil and Rhymney): It is a privilege for me to take part for the first time in this debate. The freedom of the Back Bencher at last allows me to rove over issues other than the energy issues on which the Minister and I used to spend most of our time.

I do not wish to rehearse the arguments put so effectively by my hon. Friend the Member for Livingston (Mr. Cook) against clause 4 and in favour of the amendment. However, he rightly began by saying that the clause removed a 40-year-old right. Anyone should be squeamish and uneasy about that principle, even if about nothing else.

The clause removes a right to income support in the form of supplementary benefit which has existed for many years. If it were part and parcel of a comprehensive financial arrangement for 16 to 18-year-olds, we could at least have debated that argument. But the anomalies that already exist, and have existed for a considerable time—and for which we all bear some historic collective responsibility—are in no way altered or removed by the changes that the Government now propose.

There is a host of such anomalies in the provisions for 16 to 18-year-olds. My hon. Friend mentioned some of them: the 21-hour rule, the three-month rule, the 12-hour rule and whether a young person is in full-time education. In communities like mine, hon. Members have been grappling with such matters for some time in their Saturday surgeries.

We admit the need for a fundamental change in financial provision for this age group. However, the Government have removed rights without even attempting to deal with that host of anomalies. They propose to replace income support with YTS and MSC schemes: that will be the simple impact of the clause. It is relevant, therefore, to examine the relationship between financial support and the role played by YTS, the MSC and training allowances in the lives of 16 to 18-year-olds, and in the financial provision for them.

I was interested to read the recent publication by the Manpower Services Commission in Wales entitled "Corporate Plan 1987-1991". I recommend that the Minister obtain a copy, as I shall be asking him about some aspects of it in relation to clause 4. Chapter 2 lays down explicit objectives. Under the heading "Implementing the New Training Initiative", it states:

> "The aim of NTI Objective 2 is to move towards a position where all young people enter the labour market with a qualification relevant to employment. By 1991 the Commission would like to see the vast majority of young people in Wales entering the work force with recognised and relevant vocational qualification."

It continues—this is relevant to our argument—

> "To achieve this, there will need to be a comprehensive and coherent provision for all young people under the age of 18 to allow them to choose between continuing in full-time education entering training or a period of work experience combining work-related training and education. The role of YTS and TVEI in achieving this aim will need to be developed in conjunction with other developments."

The key reference is to the MSC's objecti presumably it is also the Government's objective— comprehensive and coherent provision for all y people under 18, to allow them to choose bet continuing in full-time education and embarking on forms of training. I should have thought that there logical correlation between that and comprehensive coherent financial provision for such young peop make the choice, rather than financial provision tha distort the choices that they must make.

In my community it will be very difficult for a pa friend or even Member of Parliament to advise a y person, as I am often asked to do, to engage in full- education in a technical college. In giving such advi would be saying that that young person, and the fa who must support him, will receive not a penny in trai allowance—not £28, not £35—or any other for financial support, other than child benefit of £7 fr and not uprated.

How can an adviser in a community such as n where parents are on very limited incomes, make recommendation for full-time further technical educa As we know, education authorities are unfortunately willing to offer grants. Those entering university or c kinds of college can receive grants from the co education authority, but financial support for yo people entering technical education courses is restricted.

The anomalies, and the distortion of market choi education—let me use the terms that the Minister —are becoming even more absurd as the MSC beco more and more involved in technical education. Ch of Merthyr's technical college are financed by or rel to MSC-supported schemes. In the same institution have people who are supported by the MSC and receive training allowances, and others who are not who receive no allowance. A major financial penal now attached to young people choosing between full- education and training. Choice, however, remains an M objective. That is a matter on which we should press Minister, leaving aside our fundamental objection to clause.

The anomalies in the present system are not restri to 16 to 18-year-olds. Our 19-year-olds are in an worse position. I wrote to the Secretary of State o November about a 19-year-old called Jonathan Guar am disappointed not to have received a reply. I am that such cases have to go to the DHSS, but it seems we cannot get replies in a reasonable time. He goes technical college to undergo full-time education receives no allowance or grant. Moreover, his mum dad have lost child benefit. Is it not time that, instea proposing nasty clauses such as this, we should m comprehensive and coherent training and educa provision for 16 to 18-year-olds?

I should like to investigate how money has b allocated. We learn from the MSC's corporate plan Wales that in 1987-88 £62·5 million was provided 32,000 YTS places. That figure goes up to £68·7 million 1988-89 and to £68·9 million for 1989-90. W assumptions have been made about the number of yo people who will be driven into YTS? The volunt arrangement has worked well in my area. I do not w to get involved in arguments about the problems of Y Young people are being driven into YTS by the finan

penalties behind the clause. I should like the Minister to give us some detail about the assessments behind the figures that I have given.

5.15 pm

How will the clause affect the numbers of people who enter schemes in the next two financial years? There must be such figures, because the Government have already prepared projected budgets. We want to know how sensible, worthwhile and suitable YTS places will be.

We have recently heard that the Department of Trade and Industry is to become a department of enterprise. In my community, the MSC is the second or third largest employer after Hoover and another company. It has become an industry of its own. Under the proposed arrangement, I assume that it will become an ever bigger "employer", not least because of the element of compulsion behind clause 4. It is tragic that schemes which work, which we have done much to promote and which have offered opportunities to our young people, are to become compulsory. We are to have conscription rather than choice. Even worse, however, the financial provisions and anomalies which remain are as bad as ever. That will militate against the comprehensive development of our young people's talents.

Mr. Robert N. Wareing (Liverpool, West Derby): Clause 4 is a further example of the punitive regime that the Government want us to impose on young people. They go according to the adage of Lord Young, who maintains that young people who do not take a YTS place would rather lie around in bed all day than seek employment.

The clause applies to people who refuse a YTS place —the Minister made a few exemptions in Committee— and others who are not on a YTS course, for whatever reason. It will not matter whether they have been offered a place. The Government are anxious to sacrifice the free choice of youngsters on the altar of the public sector borrowing requirement.

Of the 92,000 16 and 17-year-olds in Britain who are in receipt of benefit, 30,000 benefit from the regulation which allows them to take part-time education which involves up to 12 or 21 hours a week. My hon. Friend the Member for Livingston (Mr. Cook) mentioned such people's ability to take A-levels. For about 25 years, I lectured to mature students and school leavers in further education. On the basis of six hours' study per subject per week, it was possible to take three A-levels. Many students have achieved high grades and gone on to training colleges and universities. I could name students who achieved second-class honours degrees at universities.

That option is now being stopped. The restriction will not apply to 16 and 17-year-olds whose parents have plenty of cash. It will not apply to the children of Ministers who are sent to the large comprehensive schools of Eton, Harrow and Rugby. They can afford that type of education. But it will probably apply to 20,000 or 30,000 young people annually in part-time education.

It is all very well for the Government to say, as they may say, that it is possible for young people to stay on at school until they are 18 and finish their course in that way, but it was the Minister, the hon. Member for Enfield, Southgate (Mr. Portillo), who, referring to the choice of a YTS course, said:

"it is appropriate that careers officers should be guided by the word 'suitable' when choosing a course."—[*Official Report, Standing Committee E*, 1 December 1987; c. 311.]

I repeat what I said in Committee: careers officers ar not in their posts simply to be recruiting sergeants fo YTS; they are there to give advice on the basis of the ag ability and aptitude of the young person concerned.

Often careers officers will tell young people in schoo that a YTS course will be available to them, but if the were free to give advice on what would best suit a individual youngster, they would be able to add that might be better to take a course in a college of furthe education. Many careers officers give that advice i schools, because they realise that many children—som would question whether they are children at 16 and 1 —fall foul of a rigid regime in school and develop bette in the freer community of a further education colleg where they can develop their self-reliance and are no subjected to the same discipline as 10 and 11-year-old further down the school system.

Now, however, careers officers must take somethin else into account. They must consider whether funds wil be made available to those young people if they take course in a college of further education. Those funds ma not be available. The Minister may ask why they do no go to the local education committee. However, we al know how the Government have starved local educatio authorities of funds to enable them to award discretionary grants to young people taking O and A-level and othe courses at college.

I cannot say that the Labour Government were all tha they should have been because, as a lecturer, I was sendin letters to—dare I mention the name, Madam Deput Speaker — Shirley Williams at the Department o Education and Science, saying that more funds should b made available to enable young people to study. But one thing that that Labour Government did was to allow the introduction of regulations which permitted young people to study in college for up to 21 hours a week, and many benefited thereby.

There is no doubt that this clause, introduced by the Government, is contrary to the stated philosophy of the Conservative party, which is always talking about freedom of choice. Now the Government are saying that there can be no freedom of choice for those youngsters who refuse a YTS course.

In Committee the Minister promised—I think that he gave a hostage to fortune—that every 16 and 17-year-old school leaver next year would be offered a YTS place. We shall see. I very much doubt it. It must be a YTS place which is suited to the individual. I do not believe that that will happen, because many thousands of young people who have been on YTS courses have discovered that the courses have folded up or been so inadequate and unsuitable — and "suitable" was a word used by the Minister — that they have preferred to leave or been forced to do so. What is wrong with a young person deciding between his YTS course and a college course which he feels may be more suitable? There is nothing in our so-called free society that says that an individual must be employed in a particular job, but that is what will happen to 16 and 17-year-olds. They will be compelled to go on a YTS scheme or support will be withdrawn.

It may be argued that the Government will continue to pay child benefit, but many young people who take a college course do so against the wishes of their parents. Sometimes the parents are separated; sometimes there is friction between them. So the young person who is told by the careers officer that he can enlarge his opportunities

[Mr. Robert N. Wareing]

and fulfil his potential by taking a college course will now have that possibility jeopardised as a result perhaps not of lack of thought, but certainly lack of appreciation of the position in which many young people find themselves. Ministers ought to ask themselves whether they would be so happy to support this measure if their son or daughter were told that it was a choice between a YTS course and no support whatever.

I support fully what my hon. Friend the Member for Livingston has said. I hope that if this amendment is not carried tonight, it will at least give rise to such a stir among parents and young people that the Government will soon be forced to tell the House that they have had to think again.

Mr. Bill Michie (Sheffield, Heeley): I begin by reiterating what my hon. Friend the Member for Livingston (Mr. Cook) said about our disagreeing with the whole principle of clause 4. As we have no opportunity to debate that, we are doing our best to protect people as much as possible.

Much has been said about ordinary young people who will be severely affected by the proposals in the clause. That is bad enough, but there is another group in respect of which I had the privilege of moving an amendment in Committee. The aim of the amendment was to protect disabled young people who at present are able to enjoy further education — the 16 to 18-year-olds. This was considered necessary, not just by Opposition Members, but by groups which represent the young disabled, by the MSC, by Lord Joseph, as he now is, when he was Secretary of State for Education and Science.

There have been many reports and much information to show why it is necessary that young people who are disabled, either mentally or physically, should have the opportunity for further education, rather than go straight on to YTS. It does not mean that some young disabled people do not automatically go on to YTS schemes — they certainly do — but the young people about whom we are particularly concerned are those who are considered, by others and sometimes by themselves, as not immediately ready at the age of 16 to go on a YTS scheme. Experience shows that some of those who go on such schemes do not necessarily achieve the qualifications or gain the experience that more able young people do, simply because of their disabilities, and so are not given the work experience that they should have. This group of young people therefore need special consideration.

More than once in Committee the Minister gave us certain assurances, to which I shall refer later, because we want to make sure that it goes on record that all people in this category will be able to receive benefit for themselves. No doubt even the MSC is not happy about it, because it is still producing packages for lecturers to deal with disabled people,, called "From Coping to Confidence". It is strange that those packages are still being produced when, under clause 4, the young people will be dissuaded, for financial reasons if nothing else, from attending the courses.

5.30 pm

Many young disabled people who go to college have to make a statement that they are mentally disabled, or whatever. I said in Committee that this was done in the offices of the DHSS, but I have since learnt that that is not so. The young people have to go to their [illegible] practitioners, who, with great respect, may not be t[rained] people to decide whether a mentally or physically d[isabled] person needs this certification or statement, as I t[hink] is called, which is an embarrassment to the young [person]. Many young people will not be prepared to go to th[eir doctor] to ask for a certificate so that they may qualify for [benefit].

Parents do not like to admit that the young peo[ple are] physically or mentally disabled. Colleges are not [happy] about encouraging the system. Under clause 4, th[ey] have to accept a piece of paper stating that the [young] person is physically or mentally disabled. Many [young] people understandably are not prepared to accep[t the] stigma.

One headmaster put it as follows:

"Many of our least able young people cannot co[pe with] the demands of Youth Training Schemes and yet wo[uld be] insulted and humiliated if they were referred to as di[sabled]. The Warnock Report and 1981 Education Act [made] significant developments in ensuring that such young [people] as attended this (special) school were regarded and tre[ated] normal youngsters. Schools like this one have very [much] supported and developed that concept. The labelling o[f them] as disabled totally undermines the work which we hav[e been] carrying out."

The young people themselves have also reject[ed the] labal of severely mentally handicapped. For exam[ple] students at Bedford college have written:

"We all left school and came to college because we [knew] we were not ready for work, or ready to join a YTS [course]. We learn a little bit slower than other young people an[d came] to college to spend a year preparing ourselves for ad[ulthood] and work. We are very annoyed and disgusted to lea[rn that] we will have to register as mentally handicapped if w[e want] any benefits. Why should we be penalised when [we are] improving our education in readiness for work?"

The letter ends by saying:

"Please will you help us in any way you can to furth[er our] case?"

In the last year the strict medical test of severe [mental] handicap has caused grave difficulties and concern. [It has] meant that in some areas there has been a high dro[p out] rate. It has caused financial burdens for families and [has] affected their pride. I have a letter from [the] Warwickshire college of technology and art, where [some] students who joined the vocational induction course [were] "statemented" as requiring special education unde[r the] Education Act 1981. The tutor writes that the requir[ement] has caused 19 of the 53 students to drop out of the c[ourse], that it has caused financial burden to the remaini[ng] students and their families, and that it has also be[en an] insult to the family pride.

In Committee the Under-Secretary of State said t[hat he] saw no problem and that regulation 11*(b)* had w[orked] satisfactorily for some years. That is not the view [of the] National Schizophrenia Fellowship, whose advice w[e] has written:

"This Regulation has not worked well in my opinio[n]. The majority of people who suffer from schizophrenia wi[ll not] accept that they are mentally ill and often have no insigh[t into] the illness, which means of course that they are extr[emely] unlikely to register as mentally disabled. People with m[ental] illness face many obstacles when trying to attend educa[tional] courses, and one more 'rule' may well deter them from [even] applying."

Again in Committee, the Under-Secretary reassur[ed us] that not only the severely disabled but the less se[verely] disabled would continue to be able to claim benefit[s]. severely disabled who are covered by regulation 11*(b)* those who are willing to subject themselves to

labelled or "statemented". Will the Minister say that the regulation he will introduce will keep his promise of allowing the less severely disabled to have benefit?

As we have said, all expert opinion is that these young people are not ready for YTS. That is why they have been persuaded to go on training courses or educational courses, even up to the age of 21, before they go into YTS.

Indeed, a recent report commissioned by the MSC from Social and Community Planning Research shows that even now the YTS schemes providing the so-called "premium places", which include a large number of disabled young people, are under considerable pressure. Already 14 per cent. of people on premium places do not get an opportunity of work experience during their two years on YTS, which is a crucial part of making sure that they are ready for employment. A further 31 per cent. can get work experience only in the second year. The report recommends that consideration should be given to expanding the pre-YTS vocational assessment facilities, yet the effect of clause 4 will be virtually to kill off pre-YTS courses in further education.

It is no wonder that not just the Opposition but all the organisations, including the MSC and educationists, who are trying to help young people in this sphere are worried about the implications of clause 4. The Minister must give us more assurances that these young people will be provided for. I refer not just to the severely handicapped, but to those who are less handicapped. The Minister should ensure that the training places will remain open because there is no point putting money into this, backed by the MSC and by the Education Act, if we are making it almost impossible for disabled young people to go on such courses.

Mr. Jacques Arnold (Gravesham): I cannot help thinking that the amendment is nothing more and nothing less than a smokescreen. It is not significant that it is the only amendment to be moved by the Opposition to clause 4, one of the key clauses in the Bill? Clause 4 relates precisely to 16 and 17-year-olds. The message in the clause is absolutely clear to young people: if they do not go out and get a job, stay at school or college, or get training on YTS, the community will not spend its money supporting them in idleness. *[Interruption.]*

Madam Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mr. Bill Michie: On a point of order, Madam Deputy Speaker.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Order. I cannot take points of order at the moment.

Mr. Michie: An attendant has just taken out my step-daughter, who was sitting in the Strangers Gallery listening to the debate. Just because she is young does not mean that she is a hooligan.

Mr. Arnold: Despite what we have just heard from the Strangers Gallery, I believe that we have had the smoke-screen amendment to clause 4 precisely because Opposition Members have talked to their constituents during the recess and found that there is widespread support for the concept that young people under 18 who are prepared to be idle should not be supported through the funds that all of us believe should be devoted to various Government services, not least training, hospitals, education, pensions and the like. That is the key.

Let us understand the funds that we are talking ab By not providing those funds to young people who prepared to be idle, the Government will save £84 mill However, if those youngsters, who would otherwis sitting around doing nothing, supported by the taxpa would go on to YTS schemes and do themselves s good by getting trained for the future, the Governm admittedly through a different Ministry, would investing—and I use that word advisedly—£144 mil of taxpayers' money in the future of those youngster

It does not seem intelligent for the Governmen spend £84 million of taxpayers' money to subsidise pe sitting in idleness, when that money, plus an additional million—a total of £144 million—would be investe training for the future of those young people. Tha precisely what clause 4 is about.

Let us look at the amendment tabled by the Opposit I noted with interest that the hon. Member for Living (Mr. Cook) said that he was somewhat confused about effect and intent of the amendment. The purpose of amendment is to extend benefit to young people courses of education or training. We are talking about and 17-year-olds. First and foremost, we must underst what financial support the community is giving youngsters in education—one of the two points in Opposition amendment. The parents of those youngs are already supported through child benefit and inco support for families. If a youngster comes from a brok home and has to fend for himself, he is already suppor under the new legislation by the income support syst Either way, the community is already giving resources youngsters of 16 and 17 who are in education.

What does the amendment propose? The other part the amendment deals with training. If youngsters go i training, they receive YTS training allowances. I susp that the amendment, which effectively means little nothing, is a smokescreen. The key point of clause 4 is t the Government wish to invest in the future of th youngsters, but the Opposition wish to spend money youngsters who are prepared to sit around.

Mr. Robin Cook: The hon. Member for Gravesh (Mr. Arnold) really must be corrected. Oppositi Members tabled an amendment to delete the whole clause 4, and we would be delighted to move th amendment and to debate it. Unfortunately, it was n called. The hon. Gentleman's whole house of cards w erected to show that we have cold feet in regard to t principle of clause 4. It is patent nonsense, like the rest his speech.

Miss Marjorie Mowlam (Redcar): I begin responding to some of the points made by the ho Member for Gravesham (Mr. Arnold). It is important f the House to realise that some of the frustration shown the Opposition in the last two days is because ho Members such as the hon. Member for Gravesham sat Committee for 16 sittings, hour after hour, and sa nothing.

Mr. Frank Cook (Stockton, North): It is a pity that did not do the same here.

Miss Mowlam: I wish that Conservative Members ha had the common decency and honesty to make tho points in Committee, so that we could have had a prop debate on the Bill and the amendments, But they did n give us that chance.

Mr. Frank Cook: Will my hon. Friend speculate on the wisdom of the old adage that it is better to keep one's mouth shut and be thought an idiot than to open it and prove that without doubt?

5.45 pm

Miss Mowlam: It is important to emphasise to the hon. Member for Gravesham—if he is listening—that some of that frustration was shown in the Strangers Gallery. I do not condone it, but it is important for hon. Members to realise from where that frustration comes.

As regional director for Thomas Cook Ltd. the hon. Member for Gravesham can afford holidays. Young people of 16 to 18 will not be able to do so.

Mr. Jacques Arnold: Will the hon. Lady give way?

Miss Mowlam: I will not give way. The hon. Gentleman did not give way.

Opposition Members realise the frustration that young people feel when Conservative Members say that they lie in bed all day and make no effort to get work or to join a scheme. The 21-hour rule on part-time education means that people can obtain education. That is what Opposition Members are fighting for in the amendment.

I shall not repeat the many arguments that were put so well by my hon. Friends. I shall begin by reinforcing one point that was made by my hon. Friend the Member for Livingston (Mr. Cook) at the beginning of the debate about the dishonesty of the Government at the general election on exactly that issue. During the election the Government said that benefit would be denied to young people between 16 and 18 who refused to join a scheme. The Government are now extending that to all 16 to 18-year-olds. We are just beginning to see what the Government have in store for 16 to 18-year-olds. I am worried that this is an indication of things to come, about which Opposition Members as hon. Members and the electorate have not been warned.

In Committee, I asked the Under-Secretary of State for Health and Social Security, the hon. Member for Enfield, Southgate (Mr. Portillo) a number of questions that were not answered satisfactorily. I do not bring them back on Report to score political points, but because 16 to 18-year-olds are concerned about what will happen to them later this year. I should be grateful if the Minister could answer my few questions.

First, I should like to quote his words in response to a question on 1 December 1987 in relation to the number of places that will be needed and the number that will be available. The Minister said:

"all 16 and 17-year-olds will have available to them reasonable training leading to recognised vocational qualifications or credits towards qualifications." [*Official Report, Standing Committee E*, 1 December 1987; c. 329.]

Unfortunately, I shall remind the Minister about that for months to come when, in different areas in the country, those places are not available. When we asked the Minister how those extra YTS places would materialise, his first response was that there were 120,000 places around the country and that people would in some miraculous way arrive at those places. When we pressed him further, he said that it was not his job to provide the places; that was the Secretary of State for Employment.

I then asked the Secretary of State for Employment the same question, and, in exactly the same way as the Under-Secretary of State for Health and Social Security, he began by saying that those places would miraculously that they will be there when the Bill is in Opposition Members look forward to both being true to their words, but in Cleveland, fault of careers officers or the local authorities, short of places for the April school leavers Under the present scheme, after April this young people will be without benefit. They wi in the cold. Will the Minister give us an assur by some unfortunate occurrence, the Govern provide sufficient YTS places, a safety net of be provided without appeal to the Minister o about what should be defined as severe hards

The second question that I should like the answer is how managing agents will be pe provide extra places. Managing agents to wh spoken—I am sure that the Minister has don —are reticent to take on extra people. They stretched to capacity. Many of the managing say, "Yes, we will consider extra places, but we additional funding." Therefore, I should like t to say whether there will be additional fundi to managing agents if they are expected additional YTS plac

I should like to reinforce the point made Friend the Member for Sheffield, Heeley (M who spoke about young people between 16 and not defined, under the conditions given by th as severely disabled. I am not referring to peo mentally or physically handicapped or ment who need to live away from home because th cannot cope, but who are not so handicapp incapable of finding work and who are entitle support under this Bill.

I am concerned about young people who c best be described as vulnerable on academic cri they may have been to special schools or been educationally subnormal. Those people m registered as disabled, but they will have diffic a YTS place. We would like the Minister to g assurance that, if such people make every effo YTS place but are rejected because the mana choose people with some qualifications, they help. The bridging loan is not available to the been assured that that will be available once been on a course. We would like the Minister attention to that group of people.

We would also like the Minister to turn h to another vulnerable group that will be in exi law is implemented; that is, young people wh on a YTS course and taken their bridging allo have eight weeks to go before their 18th birth managing agent will look at that group of yo because for those eight weeks they could not ob training, even by the Government's own cr there be an extension of the bridging allowa the appeal procedure?

I should like to remind the Minister of h relation to the appeal procedure, because he on that point:

"I told the hon. Lady that in those cir extremely unlikely though they were, the person for the Secretary of State's discretion, so that too, has been covered." — [*Official Repor Committee E*, 1 December 1987; c. 326.]

Therefore, it is up to the Secretary of State; and we want an assurance that the Minister will take into account the position of every young person approaching 18 who cannot get on a scheme.

There is a problem with the list of exemptions from income support. For example, I am concerned with those who have been on probation. Some people will be able to obtain extended benefit if they have been naughty and put on probation while another young person who is not in that category will not. For example, April school leavers will be denied benefit in September—if that is the date given—if they are unable to get on a scheme and no bridging loan will be available to them. If they have been on probation, they will be able to obtain income support. The officials sitting in the Box are nodding at that, so I am sure that the Minister will consider that point.

I should like the Minister to consider when the Bill will reach fruition. Will he paint for me the scenario as it will apply to April school leavers? I understand that child benefit is to be extended to 13 weeks, but when that benefit has finished, and if there is no YTS place, will young 16-year-olds have their benefit stopped on the first Monday in September? That would be a recipe for inequality and disaster. A school leaver may find a place on a scheme for a couple of weeks in the summer and will be able to obtain a bridging loan in September, but other young people will not be so lucky.

I remind the Minister of the many times in Committee when he referred to the importance of an individual's right to choose.

Mr. Rowlands: There is no financial choice.

Miss Mowlam: My hon. Friend is right. Under this Government there is choice only if one has money—and I mean a lot of money. There are many people in and out of work who will never experience choice under this Government. People have to buy their education, buy their health and, under this Bill, those under 18 will have no chance to buy their future.

Mr. Simon Burns (Chelmsford): I have listened to the debate carefully and to the points raised by Opposition Members. I should like to say, without any wish to antagonise or make cheap party points, that in the final analysis their fears will prove to be unfounded.

The idea behind clause 4 arises partly out of misgivings among members of the public, certainly among my constituents, that it is too easy in certain circumstances to slide straight from education on to supplementary benefit. Of course, no rational person will claim that there are a large number of young people who are workshy or who cannot be bothered to find a job. That is nonsense and it is not true. I think that everyone in the Chamber today would agree with that. However, having said that, the duty of the Government, I am proud to say, is to train young people so that they have a skill and are able to meet the sharp end of the competitive job market.

Clause 4 does not provide only one option, and that should not be forgotten. The clause provides three options for 16 and 17-year-olds. First, it allows young people to remain at school full time; secondly, they can go into full-time employment; thirdly, they can find a YTS place. What is even better is that under this Bill the Government guarantee a YTS place for all young people who choose that option.

The question at the heart of the amendment is finances. I believe that the fears of Opposition M will be unfounded because I do not believe that the situation will change and make it harder for young If young people stay in full-time education, their will continue to receive child benefit. If those qualify for income support, they will receive it. In and unfortunate situation of the child not living or her parents any more due to a problem at hom 17-year-olds will qualify for income support in th right.

One has to bear in mind the philosophy behin the Government are doing for young people. We ensure that educational standards for those at sch improved and that technical and vocational educ given to those who will best benefit from it, becau they will be on their way to acquiring skills. Tho choose the youth training scheme will now rece years of invaluable work training and experience constituency, there is a good record of YTS traini Marconi is one of the major employers in Chel It is an excellent employer and takes on a fair nu YTS trainees. It has a record of over 80 pe translation from YTS to full-time employment w company.

Miss Mowlam: If the three options that th Gentleman outlined are so wonderful and the YT excellent, why is it necessary to make it an enforced to make it compulsory? If it is so great, let us leave j

6 pm

Mr. Burns: I fail to understand the hon. Lady' about the YTS being compulsory. It is not. As th Lady said in her intervention, there are three choi

For the small minority of people who do no w work and who want just to collect state benefit, a de will be created because they will no longer be able so. That is a perfectly reasonable response b Government for people of that age group. I do not that it should be encouraged for anyone of any age to be workshy and to live off the state. I do not w go down the road of making wild accusations abou numbers of people being workshy, but when it co 16 and 17-year-olds, every encouragement should be to make sure that they do not just languish on th queue.

Mr. Robin Cook: The hon. Gentleman is maki of the more lucid speeches in favour of the clause have heard. I am grateful for his insight, that the why he believes that the Government should act prevent from obtaining benefit those who choose unemployed and not to take training. Why is the necessary? Why is it not sufficient to rely on the arrangements that are already available to the DH prevent benefit going precisely to those whom the Gentleman identifies as the problem, those who r voluntarily unemployed who do not qualify for ben present?

Mr. Burns: I think that the hon. Gentlem forgetting that the Bill deals not only with that s situation. It also gives a guaranteed place for 1 17-year-olds on YTS if they choose that option.

If the Labour party decides to divide the House amendment, I shall wholeheartedly support

[Mr. Burns]

Government because I believe that the clause is relevant to the economic situation. It upgrades, gives statutory confirmation to and improves the work training and experience of those who want to go on YTS. It also makes sure that we minimise the number of people who abuse and will continue to abuse the state benefit system. For those reasons, I shall support my right hon. and hon. Friends in the Lobby.

Mr. John Greenway (Ryedale): Watching the progress of the Bill through Committee has been a useful experience for many hon. Members on both sides of the House who were elected to the House last year. Today we shall reach Third Reading, and we shall look back on the Bill as a most fascinating and interesting experience for us all.

As has often been said by Opposition Members, few speeches were made——

Miss Mowlam: None.

Mr. Greenway: There were some. Few speeches were made by Conservative Members, but that does not mean that we do not take our responsibilities seriously and do not investigate the matters that we are addressing.

A clear difference of philosphy and principle has emerged. It came to a head during the speech of my hon. Friend the Member for Gravesham (Mr. Arnold), when there was an unfortunate interruption. One wonders what sort of indoctrination the young people who made that unruly demonstration have been subjected to so that they should consider the opportunity being offered by the Government of a training place leading to qualification to be slave labour.

Ms. Dawn Primarolo (Bristol, South): The hon. Gentleman clearly learned nothing during the Committee stage. The frustration that was shown in the Chamber today was the frustration of people who have a direct experience of the results of the Government's policies, unlike Conservative Members, who have not. The frustration was the result of the appalling comments by the hon. Member for Gravesham (Mr. Arnold), who demonstrated a total lack of understanding of the current position. I hope that the hon. Gentleman's speech will not follow that line.

Mr. Greenway: I do not believe that there is any lack of understanding. The understanding is clear. It has been the Government's policy progressively over the past eight years to improve training opportunities for young people on a scale seen in no other country in Europe that has enabled the Government to introduce the clauses.

I remind Opposition Members that the matter was focused upon during the general election campaign last year, and proved widely popular.

Miss Mowlam: The hon. Gentleman cannot have listened either in Committee or in the Chamber. Both my hon. Friend the Member for Livingston (Mr. Cook) and myself have said that the Conservative party was not honest during the election. In the manifesto—if the hon. Member for Gravesham (Mr. Arnold) is doubtful, I shall produce it for him—all that the Conservative party said was that those who said that they did not want to go on a YTS course would be denied benefit. The legislation widens that across the board to all 16 Therefore, the Conservatives did not pr dare?—a genuine choice to the electorate.

Mr. Greenway: My right hon. Friend State made the manifesto pledge and th position abundantly clear in his speech on on 2 November, when he said:

"We included the proposal in our electio we would guarantee a place on YTS for ev under the age of 18 not going directly into the manifesto that we would take ste entitlement benefit from young people under remain unemployed."—[*Official Report*, 2 Vol. 121, c. 656.]

That is clear, and it is the thrust behind t

The YTS has received Government s than £1 billion per year. Rather than Oppo criticising the Government and, as my h member for Gravesham said, through t trying to put up a smokescreen rather t debate on the clause, I feel that we should c Government on the policy that they ha training young people.

It does not stop with YTS. My hon. Fri for Chelmsford (Mr. Burns) referred to t technical and vocational education initiati be successful. It has been so successful t referred to in at least 50 per cent. of the le received from secondary school head governors who are concerned about the fut in the light of the Government's propos national curriculum.

Many arguments about the clause forward during the debate and in Committ want to go over old ground, but there matters that have not been addressed should like to refer.

The hon. Member for Liverpool, We Wareing) posed the question about how feel if his child were offered the choice b unemployment and no benefit. As a father children who are all at a local comprehe have to say that, if that were the choice children, I should have no hesitation in en went on a YTS course. Let me tell the h why.

On that course, they would be exposed experience — they would be exposed to work. They would be exposed to the wo training — and what is wrong with tha infinitely preferable to embarking upon a and a lifetime of drawing such benefit. Su right that we give every young person betw 16 and 18 every encouragement. I be intervention we witnessed in the Strangers' the speech of my hon. Friend the Member demonstrated that some young people indoctrinated that they would prefer a life and support.

There are two reasons why it is right, a the Government should introduce this there are now more opportunities for youn on at school. As a parent I would prefer make that choice. Indeed, my eldest son, wh that. I feel sure that, increasingly, more par that the best way forward is for their chil

at school. The rolls at our schools are falling, so much so that the Government have been able to introduce the open enrolment provision in the Education Reform Bill. I hope that the opportunity to stay on at school will be grasped by more and more young people—the availability of benefit should not act as an encouragement to leave school.

Secondly, it is right to introduce this measure because, over the past 18 months, we have witnessed an unprecedented reduction in unemployment and the revival of our economy. The revival in the fortunes of Britain lead me to believe that there will never be a better chance for any Government to say to the young people, "Please, please consider your future and make sure that training represents the way forward for you instead of a lifetime of benefit."

During the election campaign I knocked on the door of a house and a young gentleman, rather scruffily clothed, opened it. He said that he could not support my party because he was out of work and on the dole. I replied, "Come on now. There are plenty of jobs in this area. Why do you not go to work at the bacon factory that has vacancy signs outside?" The young man said that he did not want to work at that factory. That is yet more evidence of the type of indoctrination that we have witnessed tonight.

Unemployment should not be an option for any young person under the age of 18. It need not be and it will not be when the Bill is passed.

Mr. Portillo: We have had an interesting debate. It began with the hon. Member for Livingston (Mr. Cook) saying that his objective was to preserve choice. I find that rather confusing because that is also our objective.

Other things that the hon. Gentleman said confused me further. He said, for example, that the amendment was intended to lever open slightly further the exemptions contained in the clause. However, his amendment, as drafted, extends entitlement to income support to all people engaged in a course of education and training. That would represent a massive increase in the role of income support; and, for what it is worth, it would cost £1 billion. I became more confused when the hon. Gentleman said that that was not what was intended and that his objective was more limited. I do not intend to nitpick about that.

The hon. Gentleman alternated between talking about part-time and full-time education. That led me to believe that we have not made clear to him what will be available to young people and what the changes will mean. I shall try to concentrate on that in my reply.

I shall try to respond to as many of the points that were made during the debate as I can, but I must tell the hon. Lady the Member for Redcar (Miss Mowlam) that I am not confident that I will be able to answer all her questions. She came at me like a good-humoured Gatling gun, with a whole series of questions. If I leave any of them unanswered, I shall certainly pursue them with her on another occasion.

A number of my hon. Friends have already made it clear that three options are available to young people: work, education and YTS. The only option that will be denied as a result of the clause is the dead-end option of unemployment. To be specific, the only option that is denied is unemployment, with the state picking up the tab.

We are offering young people YTS. The place schemes are available and valuable and th organisations are of high quality.

6.15 pm

From 1 April 1988 anyone who is offering a must be an approved training organisation. T will be awarded to organisations only after inquiries about the competence of the relevant quality of the training, their financial stand commitment to health and safety and the ed opportunities available. Furthermore, training will be enforced by the training standards adviso which will periodically inspect all YTS placeme

The hon. Member for Liverpool, West De Wareing) repeated a question that had been Committee about the suitability of YTS places our intention to force a young person on to a sc is unsuitable. The guidance given to careers offic Department of Employment categorically stat suitable place is one that accords with the car agreed between a young person and the careers which enhances the job prospects of the youn There can be no doubt that YTS enhances job and it appears to be the first choice for ma people. It is apparent that 60 per cent. of those o into a job straight after it. We expect that perc increase in the years ahead.

The hon. Member for Merthyr Tydfil and (Mr. Rowlands) wanted to know what the incre numbers of YTS would be. I must emphasise to Gentleman that what is on offer is entirely volun that young people can choose between educati —if one is available to them—and YTS. It is for us to estimate how many more people will YTS.

One probable result of the clause will be th people will stay on in education. It is also prob more people will go into jobs—YTS is not option. We estimate that, in Great Britain—I to the hon. Gentleman, but I do not have the Welsh —up to 30,000 additional young people will j for a full year as a result of the benefit cha addition, we expect that most of the 50,000 trai currently leave YTS early to become unemployed on to complete their courses. I hope that that info helps the hon. Gentleman.

The hon. Gentleman also asked about costs, cautious about telling him about them because w know what the additional demand will be. At the we anticipate that we will spend more on YTS tha save on benefit. Therefore, this is not a co measure.

Mr. Rowlands: I have pressed for a detailed because in communities such as mine and some represented by Conservative Members there is an heavy dependence upon the MSC and YTS. communities that I represent there will be no between taking a job and YTS. Those com already depend on YTS, and further dependence n to a diminution in the value and character schemes. That is why numbers are so important.

Mr. Portillo: I hope that the hon. Gentle reassured by our guarantee of the quality placements as a result of the new ATO status t

[Mr. Portillo]

affect all bodies after April. I hope that he will agree that it is better for youngsters to be dependent upon YTS than on benefit. That is the basic proposition that we are offering to the House today.

The hon. Member for Livingston wanted to know why teenagers who are estranged from their family, possibly because they have been battered at home or are at risk of abuse, should not live permanently on income support. I do not see why they should. If they are establishing themselves independently away from home, I do not see why, once they have been given the chance to find a job or once they make a decision to stay in education or to take a place on YTS—in other words, once they have been given the period of months which we call the child benefit extension period—they should not be as self-supporting as any other independent person.

Indeed, it is financially to their advantage to accept a place on YTS because it will offer them £28·50 a week in the first year and £35 in the second year. If that is not enough for them to live on because, for example, they are supporting a whole household or have children and the demands of their family take them above the income support level, they qualify for income support over and above their training allowance. If they have housing needs, they qualify for housing benefit. I hope that I have reassured the hon. Gentleman on that because perhaps we did not explain it previously as fully as we might have done.

Equally, the hon. Gentleman asked about pregnant girls training up to 11 weeks before the anticipated date of confinement. I do not see why there should be any distinction between what we can expect of somebody in training and what we can expect of somebody in work. It is typical for women to work up to 11 weeks before the date of confinement, but if they are suffering exceptional sickness and it is certified by a doctor, that would qualify them.

Perhaps I can now answer a question asked by the hon. Member for Redcar about young people who are on bail or probation or under social work supervision being treated more favourably. That is not right. I ask her to recognise that because somebody is on bail or probation or under social work supervision it does not mean that he is guilty. It does not bear that inference. Such people are required to be away from home and provision must be made for them until the end of the child benefit extension period. In that sense they are in a similar position to others for whom we are providing income support during that extension period—for example, those who need to live apart from their parents.

Obviously education has been a crucial matter in the debate, because the amendment invites us to consider it. Some speeches displayed considerable confusion. Those who are continuing in full-time non-advanced further education—"further" simply meaning beyond the age of 16—will be able to qualify for income support broadly in the following three categories. First, if they are in an income support household, their parents will be compensated at the appropriate rate for a youngster over the age of 16, which is £19·40 under income support and the same as the youngster would receive if living independently.

The second category is those who are estranged from their parents for good reason. If those people choose to stay in education, either at school to d
at university, just because they are livi
families and have no other means, it d
we shall deny them income support. T
they continue in further education. The
offering is a real one.

The third most general category—
go into all the details—is the sev
Committee I was at pains to say that I v
in two categories, although this is a sear
merely those people who are so disa
never get work; it is also those who are
no prospect of getting work within 12
Friends the Members for Gravesham (M
Chelmsford (Mr. Burns) obviously und
than some others.

Income support is available for the
Others who are not severely disabled bu
benefit under the 21-hour rule are by
as available for and seeking work. If t
work, they are also capable of receiv
YTS. There are special facilities under
provide a more sheltered training envi
people with special educational needs.

At one point the hon. Member fo
(Mr. Michie) said that the present re
working, but he, together with the
Merthyr Tydfil and Rhymney, is talki
dissatisfaction with the educational su
takes us well beyond this clause. We
changes here to income support and tho
affect people who continue to be in f
The clause affects the 21-hour rule,
available to people who are 16 and 17

To put it more accurately, income
generally available to 16 and 17-year-o
providing them with other facilities. If
in full-time education, they will be su
in the categories that I listed; if they w
the old 21-hour rule, they will be sa
available, and if they are available the
for YTS. YTS is serious, valuable ex
person to find his or her way in the wor

Mr. Michie: Is the Minister giving an
just the severely handicapped, mentall
those who are less handicapped wi
opportunities for income support und
true or false?

Mr. Portillo: If a person is severely
if he is unable to work or is unlikely t
12 months—he will be eligible for inc
is at present declaring himself availa
studying under the 21-hour rule, becaus
work he is also available for YTS. If his
particular problems for him under YT
special sheltered environment for him.
I can help the hon. Gentleman further

The hon. Member for Livingston m
ary statement when he described th
measure. He wanted me to cite an org
of these proposals, and I happily do
public. The matter was put to the ele
Opposition Members know that th
support for this. My hon. Friend the M

(Mr. Greenway) spoke clearly and forcefully on this. The general public are genuinely worried for unemployed young people, and that is why they demand that the Goverament offer those young people something better. We are doing that. We are offering young people a job, YTS or full-time education. Only one option is being abolished, and that is unemployment at the taxpayers' expense.

Mr. Robin Cook: The Minister concluded by saying that he had consulted the British public and that it had voted for this clause. With the greatest respect, the British public did not vote for any such thing. The British public, in so far as it has been construed to have voted for this Government, voted for a manifesto which said that the Government would take steps to ensure that those under 18 who deliberately chose to remain unemployed would not be eligible for benefit. In its wisdom or otherwise, the country voted for that.

But that is not what clause 4 achieves. It removes the right to benefit of all 16 and 17-year-olds, whether or not they choose unemployment and whether or not they have been offered a place on YTS. The clause will remove the right to benefit for many 17-year-olds who may well have chosen the option described by the hon. Member for Chelmsford (Mr. Burns), of obtaining a job on leaving school and holding it for a year or a year and a half, only to find themselves redundant, without choosing to be made redundant or wishing to be unemployed. Under this clause they are not entitled to a penny in income support or unemployment benefit. With respect to the Minister, that is not the proposition that his party offered the British electorate in June.

I found the debate entertaining, if only for the gloss put on this point by the hon. Member for Ryedale (Mr. Greenway), who explained that there was no deception in the manifesto commitment, because the Secretary of State for Employment had clearly explained what it meant in a debate in the House in November, five months after polling day. That is a new gloss on electoral commitments that I shall treasure for the future.

6.30 pm

The debate has also been interesting for one omission that I want to draw to the attention of hon. Members on both sides. We have been debating this important clause —possibly the most important in the Bill—for nearly two hours with no intervention from the Liberal or Social Democratic parties — indeed, without being favoured with the presence of a single representative of either party. That is to be regretted; I was hoping that the hon. Member for Southport (Mr. Fearn) would be present and would take part. I can understand why he may feel a certain diffidence about being here today, because yesterday he made a speech in the House in support of my new clause to index child benefit in which he said:

"I maintain that we must retain the true value of child benefit."—[*Official Report*, 12 January 1988; Vol. 125, c. 195.]

He then woke up this morning and read in the newspaper that, on the same day, his leader had committed himself to a 6,000-word document that included a commitment to means-test child benefit.

I consulted last night's Division list and I regret to say that the leader of the Liberal party was not present to vote; if he had been, he would no doubt have voted with the rest of the members of his party in favour of indexing child benefit before means-testing it. I am sorry Member for Southport does not feel able to tonight, but I can understand his diffi absence, the rest of us must make up our mi can on the principle of the measure.

The Minister's concluding remarks conf view that we are right to oppose the princip In my opening speech, one of the most imp on which I elaborated and for which I pres would happen to the 21-hour rule. I co Under-Secretary on being honest about this the window with the clause's inclusion. If passed, it will not longer be possible for 16 o to study part-time while in receipt of income will not be able to try to take two A-level are fortunate enough to find themselves in t my hon. Friend the Member Liverpool, We Wareing), three A-levels—within the 21 h obtaining qualifications for further educati important right and choice that is ava teenagers. For that reason alone, I would be for the amendment.

I do not want to leave the hon. Member f (Mr. Arnold) in any doubt about what I s for in the Lobby. He said that we did not ha to oppose the clause as a whole. We have. amendment to delete the clause in its enti we had had the opportunity to deba debate clause stand part on Report.

As the debate has proved, the rea Government and their Back Benchers are clause is that it forms part of their gener blaming the victim for his unemployment. T have heard in speech after speech tonig Member for Ryedale said that the unemploy to be in work; they are unemployed beca down jobs at the bacon factory. I must Members for Ryedale and for Gravesham th Liverpool, Teesside and West Lothian, tens of people are unemployed, not because they wander down to the bacon factory and take but because they cannot find jobs. Therefore their benefit is to victimise the victims.

That is why we shall vote for the amend the hon. Member for Gravesham that, altho because of the procedure of the Hou opportunity to vote against the clause in its e vote for the amendment with the full venom the clause and the full vigour with whic principle; and I invite my hon. Friends to c

Question put, That the amendment be m

The House divided: Ayes 209, Noes 266.

Division No. 132]

AYES

Adams, Allen *(Paisley N)*	Dagga, Roy
Allon, David	Bell, Stuart
Anderson, Donald	Benn, Rt Hon To
Archer, Rt Hon Peter	Bennett, A. F. *(D*
Armstrong, Ms Hilary	Bermingham, G
Ashdown, Paddy	Bidwell, Sydney
Ashley, Rt Hon Jack	Blair, Tony
Ashton, Joe	Blunkett, David
Banks, Tony *(Newham NW)*	Boateng, Paul
Barnes, Harry *(Derbyshire NE)*	Boyes, Roland
Barron, Kevin	Bradley, Keith
Battle, John	Brown, Gordon
Beckett, Margaret	Brown, Nicholas

Buchan, Norman
Buckley, George
Caborn, Richard
Callaghan, Jim
Campbell, Ron *(Blyth Valley)*
Campbell-Savours, D. N.
Canavan, Dennis
Clarke, Tom *(Monklands W)*
Clay, Bob
Clelland, David
Clwyd, Mrs Ann
Cohen, Harry
Coleman, Donald
Cook, Robin *(Livingston)*
Corbett, Robin
Corbyn, Jeremy
Cousins, Jim
Crowther, Stan
Cryer, Bob
Cummings, J.
Cunliffe, Lawrence
Cunningham, Dr John
Dalyell, Tam
Darling, Alastair
Davies, Rt Hon Denzil *(Llanelli)*
Davies, Ron *(Caerphilly)*
Davis, Terry *(B'ham Hodge H'l)*
Dewar, Donald
Dixon, Don
Dobson, Frank
Doran, Frank
Douglas, Dick
Dunnachie, James
Dunwoody, Hon Mrs Gwyneth
Eastham, Ken
Evans, John *(St Helens N)*
Ewing, Harry *(Falkirk E)*
Ewing, Mrs Margaret *(Moray)*
Fearn, Ronald
Field, Frank *(Birkenhead)*
Fields, Terry *(L'pool B G'n)*
Fisher, Mark
Flannery, Martin
Flynn, Paul
Forsythe, Clifford *(Antrim S)*
Fraser, John
Fyfe, Mrs Maria
Galbraith, Samuel
Garrett, John *(Norwich South)*
Garrett, Ted *(Wallsend)*
George, Bruce
Godman, Dr Norman A.
Golding, Mrs Llin
Gordon, Ms Mildred
Grant, Bernie *(Tottenham)*
Griffiths, Nigel *(Edinburgh S)*
Griffiths, Win *(Bridgend)*
Grocott, Bruce
Hattersley, Rt Hon Roy
Healey, Rt Hon Denis
Heffer, Eric S.
Hinchliffe, David
Hogg, N. *(C'nauld & Kilsyth)*
Holland, Stuart
Home Robertson, John
Hood, James
Howarth, George *(Knowsley N)*
Howell, Rt Hon D. *(S'heath)*
Hoyle, Doug
Hughes, Robert *(Aberdeen N)*
Hughes, Roy *(Newport E)*
Hughes, Sean *(Knowsley S)*
Illsley, Eric
Ingram, Adam
Janner, Greville
John, Brynmor
Jones, Barry *(Alyn & Deeside)*
Jones, Ieuan *(Ynys Môn)*
Jones, Martyn *(Clwyd S W)*
Kaufman, Rt Hon Gerald
Lambie, David
Lamond, James
Leadbitter, Ted
Leighton, Ron
Lestor, Miss Joan *(Eccles)*
Lewis, Terry
Litherland, Robert
Livingstone, Ken
Lloyd, Tony *(Stretford)*
Lofthouse, Geoffrey
McAllion, John
McAvoy, Tom
McCartney, Ian
Macdonald, Calum
McFall, John
McGrady, E. K.
McKay, Allen *(Penistone)*
McKelvey, William
McLeish, Henry
McTaggart, Bob
McWilliam, John
Madden, Max
Mahon, Mrs Alice
Mallon, Seamus
Marek, Dr John
Marshall, David *(Shettleston)*
Marshall, Jim *(Leicester S)*
Martin, Michael *(Springburn)*
Martlew, Eric
Maxton, John
Meacher, Michael
Meale, Alan
Michael, Alun
Michie, Bill *(Sheffield Heeley)*
Millan, Rt Hon Bruce
Mitchell, Austin *(G't Grimsby)*
Molyneaux, Rt Hon James
Moonie, Dr Lewis
Morgan, Rhodri
Morley, Elliott
Morris, Rt Hon A *(W'shawe)*
Morris, Rt Hon J *(Aberavon)*
Mowlam, Mrs Marjorie
Mullin, Chris
Murphy, Paul
Neillist, Dave
Oakes, Rt Hon Gordon
O'Brien, William
O'Neill, Martin
Orme, Rt Hon Stanley
Patchett, Terry
Pendry, Tom
Pike, Peter
Powell, Ray *(Ogmore)*
Prescott, John
Primarolo, Ms Dawn
Quin, Ms Joyce
Radice, Giles
Randall, Stuart
Rees, Rt Hon Merlyn
Reid, John
Richardson, Ms Jo
Robertson, George
Robinson, Geoffrey
Rogers, Allan
Rooker, Jeff
Ross, Ernie *(Dundee W)*
Ross, William *(Londonderry E)*
Rowlands, Ted
Salmond, Alex
Sheldon, Rt Hon Robert
Shore, Rt Hon Peter
Short, Clare
Skinner, Dennis
Smith, Andrew *(Oxford E)*
Smith, C. *(Isl'ton & F'bury)*
Smith, Rt Hon J. *(Monk'ds E)*
Smyth, Rev Martin *(Belfast S)*
Snape, Peter
Soley, Clive
Spearing, Nigel
Steinberg, Gerald
Stott, Roger
Strang, Gavin
Taylor, Mrs Ann *(Dewsbury)*
Taylor, Rt Hon J. D. *(S'ford)*
Thomas, Dafydd Elis
Thompson, Jack *(Wansbeck)*
Turner, Dennis
Vaz, Keith
Wall, Pat
Walley, Ms Joan
Wardell, Gareth *(Gower)*
Wareing, Robert N.
Wigley, Dafydd
Williams, Rt Hon A. J.
Williams, Alan W. *(Carm'then)*
Wilson, Brian
Winnick, David
Wise, Mrs Audrey
Worthington, Anthony
Wray, James
Young, David *(Bolton SE)*

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. Frank Haynes and
Mr. Frank Cook.

NOES

Alison, Rt Hon Michael
Allason, Rupert
Amery, Rt Hon Julian
Amess, David
Arbuthnot, James
Arnold, Jacques *(Gravesham)*
Arnold, Tom *(Hazel Grove)*
Atkins, Robert
Atkinson, David
Baker, Rt Hon K. *(Mole Valley)*
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Baldry, Tony
Banks, Robert *(Harrogate)*
Batiste, Spencer
Beaumont-Dark, Anthony
Bellingham, Henry
Bendall, Vivian
Bennett, Nicholas *(Pembroke)*
Benyon, W.
Bevan, David Gilroy
Biffen, Rt Hon John
Blackburn, Dr John G.
Body, Sir Richard
Boscawen, Hon Robert
Bottomley, Peter
Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Bowden, Gerald *(Dulwich)*
Bowis, John
Boyson, Rt Hon Dr Sir Rhodes
Braine, Rt Hon Sir Bernard
Brandon-Bravo, Martin
Brazier, Julian
Brittan, Rt Hon Leon
Brooke, Rt Hon Peter
Brown, Michael *(Brigg & Cl'ts)*
Browne, John *(Winchester)*
Bruce, Ian *(Dorset South)*
Buchanan-Smith, Rt Hon Alick
Buck, Sir Antony
Budgen, Nicholas
Burns, Simon
Burt, Alistair
Butcher, John
Butterfill, John
Carlisle, John, *(Luton N)*
Carrington, Matthew
Carttiss, Michael
Cash, William
Chapman, Sydney
Churchill, Mr
Clark, Sir W. *(Croydon S)*
Coombs, Anthony *(Wyre F'rest)*
Coombs, Simon *(Swindon)*
Cormack, Patrick
Couchman, James
Cran, James
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Curry, David
Davis, David *(Boothferry)*
Day, Stephen
Dicks, Terry
Dorrell, Stephen
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James
Durant, Tony
Evans, David *(Welwyn Hatf'd)*
Evennett, David
Favell, Tony
Fookes, Miss Janet
Forman, Nigel
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Forth, Eric
Fox, Sir Marcus
Gale, Roger
Gardiner, George
Garel-Jones, Tristan
Gill, Christopher
Gilmour, Rt Hon Sir Ian
Glyn, Dr Alan
Goodhart, Sir Philip
Goodlad, Alastair
Gorman, Mrs Teresa
Gow, Ian
Gower, Sir Raymond
Grant, Sir Anthony *(CambsSW)*
Greenway, Harry *(Ealing N)*
Greenway, John *(Rydale)*
Gregory, Conal
Griffiths, Peter *(Portsmouth N)*
Grist, Ian
Ground, Patrick
Grylls, Michael
Hamilton, Hon A. *(Epsom)*
Hampson, Dr Keith
Hannam, John
Hargreaves, Ken *(Hyndburn)*
Harris, David
Hawkins, Christopher
Hayhoe, Rt Hon Sir Barney
Heathcoat-Amory, David
Heddle, John
Heseltine, Rt Hon Michael
Hicks, Mrs Maureen *(Wolv' NE)*
Hicks, Robert *(Cornwall SE)*
Higgins, Rt Hon Terence L.
Hogg, Hon Douglas *(Gr'th'm)*
Holt, Richard
Hordern, Sir Peter
Howard, Michael
Howell, Rt Hon David *(G'dford)*
Hughes, Robert G. *(Harrow W)*
Hunt, David *(Wirral W)*
Hunt, John *(Ravensbourne)*
Hurd, Rt Hon Douglas
Irvine, Michael
Jack, Michael
Janman, Timothy
Jessel, Toby
Jones, Gwilym *(Cardiff N)*
Jones, Robert B *(Herts W)*
Kellett-Bowman, Mrs Elaine
Key, Robert
King, Roger *(B'ham N'thfield)*
King, Rt Hon Tom *(Bridgwater)*
Kirkhope, Timothy
Knapman, Roger
Knight, Greg *(Derby North)*
Knowles, Michael
Knox, David

Lamont, Rt Hon Norman
Lang, Ian
Latham, Michael
Lawrence, Ivan
Lawson, Rt Hon Nigel
Lee, John *(Pendle)*
Leigh, Edward *(Gainsbor'gh)*
Lennox-Boyd, Hon Mark
Lester, Jim *(Broxtowe)*
Lilley, Peter
Lloyd, Sir Ian *(Havant)*
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
Lord, Michael
Luce, Rt Hon Richard
Lyell, Sir Nicholas
Macfarlane, Sir Neil
MacKay, Andrew *(E Berkshire)*
Maclean, David
McLoughlin, Patrick
McNair-Wilson, M. *(Newbury)*
McNair-Wilson, P. *(New Forest)*
Madel, David
Major, Rt Hon John
Malins, Humfrey
Maples, John
Marland, Paul
Marshall, John *(Hendon S)*
Marshall, Michael *(Arundel)*
Martin, David *(Portsmouth S)*
Mates, Michael
Maude, Hon Francis
Mawhinney, Dr Brian
Maxwell-Hyslop, Robin
Mayhew, Rt Hon Sir Patrick
Mellor, David
Meyer, Sir Anthony
Miller, Hal
Mills, Iain
Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)*
Mitchell, David *(Hants NW)*
Moate, Roger
Monro, Sir Hector
Montgomery, Sir Fergus
Moore, Rt Hon John
Morrison, Sir Charles *(Devizes)*
Moss, Malcolm
Moynihan, Hon C.
Mudd, David
Neale, Gerrard
Nelson, Anthony
Neubert, Michael
Newton, Rt Hon Tony
Nicholls, Patrick
Nicholson, David *(Taunton)*
Nicholson, Miss E. *(Devon W)*
Onslow, Rt Hon Cranley
Oppenheim, Phillip
Page, Richard
Paice, James
Patnick, Irvine
Patten, Chris *(Bath)*
Pattie, Rt Hon Sir Geoffrey
Peacock, Mrs Elizabeth
Porter, David *(Waveney)*
Portillo, Michael
Powell, William *(Corby)*
Raffan, Keith
Raison, Rt Hon Timothy
Redwood, John
Rhodes James, Robert
Riddick, Graham
Ridley, Rt Hon Nicholas
Rifkind, Rt Hon Malcolm
Roberts, Wyn *(Conwy)*
Roe, Mrs Marion
Rost, Peter
Rowe, Andrew
Rumbold, Mrs Angela
Ryder, Richard
Sackville, Hon Tom
Sainsbury, Hon Tim
Sayeed, Jonathan
Scott, Nicholas
Shaw, David *(Dover)*
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Shepherd, Richard *(Aldridge)*
Sims, Roger
Skeet, Sir Trevor
Smith, Tim *(Beaconsfield)*
Soames, Hon Nicholas
Speed, Keith
Spicer, Sir Jim *(Dorset W)*
Spicer, Michael *(S Worcs)*
Squire, Robin
Stanbrook, Ivor
Steen, Anthony
Stern, Michael
Stevens, Lewis
Stewart, Allan *(Eastwood)*
Stewart, Andrew *(Sherwood)*
Sumberg, David
Summerson, Hugo
Taylor, Ian *(Esher)*
Taylor, Teddy *(S'end E)*
Tebbit, Rt Hon Norman
Thompson, Patrick *(Norwich N)*
Thurnham, Peter
Tracey, Richard
Tredinnick, David
Trippier, David
Trotter, Neville
Twinn, Dr Ian
Vaughan, Sir Gerard
Viggers, Peter
Waddington, Rt Hon David
Wakeham, Rt Hon John
Waldegrave, Hon William
Walker, Bill *(T'side North)*
Waller, Gary
Ward, John
Wardle, C. *(Bexhill)*
Warren, Kenneth
Watts, John
Wells, Bowen
Wheeler, John
Whitney, Ray
Widdecombe, Miss Ann
Wiggin, Jerry
Wilkinson, John
Wilshire, David
Winterton, Mrs Ann
Winterton, Nicholas
Wolfson, Mark
Wood, Timothy
Woodcock, Mike
Yeo, Tim
Young, Sir George *(Acton)*

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. David Lightbown and
Mr. Kenneth Carlisle.

Question accordingly negatived.

Mr. Portillo: I beg to move Amendment No. 11, in page 4, leave out line 34 and insert

'subsection (4A) above is to apply to the person to whom the direction relates'.

With this amendment it may be for the convenience of the House to discuss amendments Nos. 12, 13 and 38.

Mr. Speaker: So be it.

Mr. Portillo: Amendments Nos. 11, 12 and 13 have been framed by the Government mainly in order to clarify intentions relating to the power, in certain circumstances, to recover income support paid to a 16 or 17-year-old as a result of the Secretary of State's direction regarding severe hardship, and to clarify also the respective functions of the Secretary of State and the adjudication officer regarding such matters. Amendment No. 11 corrects a drafting error.

Amendment No. 12, which amplifies the existing subsection (4E), is designed to make it clear that recovery under section 20 of the Social Security Act 1986 should be broadly in line with recovery under section 53 of that Act.

Amendment No. 13 is designed to clarify the different functions of the Secretary of State who revokes his direction in relation to entitlement to income support on account of severe hardship, and the adjudication officer's role in deciding that an overpayment is recoverable.

Amendment No. 38 amends section 53 of the Act to make it clear that in such cases recovery of income support under that section applies only to parts of section 53 that are relevant.

Amendment agreed to.

Amendments made: No. 12, in page 5, line 18, at end insert

'(4EA) Section 53(2) and (5) to (9) below apply to income support recoverable under subsection (4E) above as they apply to income support recoverable under section 53(1) below.

(4EB) The other provisions of section 53 below do not apply to income support recoverable under subsection (4E) above.'.

No. 13, in page 5, leave out lines 28 to 37 and insert—

'(4G) Where a direction under this section is revoked, the Secretary of State may certify whether there has been misrepresentation of a material fact or failure to disclose a material fact.

(4GA) If he certifies that there has been such misrepresentation or failure to disclose, he may also certify—

(a) who made the misrepresentation or failed to make the disclosure; and

(b) whether or not a payment of income support has been made in consequence of the misrepresentation or failure.

(4GB) If he certifies that a payment has been made, he may certify the period during which income support would not have been paid but for the misrepresentation or failure to disclose.

(4GC) A certificate under this section shall be conclusive for the purposes of this section as to any matter certified.'

Clause 5

CONTRIBUTION CONDITIONS FOR SHORT-TERM BENEFITS

6.45 pm

Mrs. Beckett: I beg to move amendment No. 15, in page 6, line 27, at end insert—

'(2A) For the purpose of determining entitlement to unemployment benefit, contributions credited in the last two years before the beginning of the relevant benefit year by virtue of the receipt of invalid care allowance shall be treated as if they had been paid.'

Clause 5 tightens the conditions entitling someone to draw unemployment benefit should he be unfortunate enough to lose his unemployment. In that context, the

[Mrs. Beckett]

amendment draws attention to the position of carers. Most hon. Members will know that in recent months the Government have given themselves their usual generous meed of self-praise for their generosity in accepting the ruling of the European Court and extending the entitlement of invalid care allowance. Opposition Members welcome that. We are only sorry that the Government did not feel able to do it earlier than they were compelled to. Let us give credit where credit is due: the Government gave entitlement to the invalid care allowance.

The Minister will be aware, and hon. Members may have become aware in recent months, that for many who are entitled to invalid care allowance there is little financial difference if the person for whom they are caring is already drawing a dependant's addition to an invalidity benefit on their behalf. Groups such as the National Council for Carers and their Elderly Dependants have emphasised that it is still beneficial for married women who have become entitled to invalid care allowances, to which they were not entitled in the past, to claim that allowance because it gives them an entitlement to credits towards their national insurance contributions and a further entitlement to benefits as of right. It is partly a matter of independence, and therefore it is to be commended on those grounds, even to those who did not derive any financial benefit from the award of the invalid care allowance, although some did derive financial benefit.

At the time the addition was made, when the Government were telling us how good they were being, I doubt whether many people realised that within a short period the Government would tighten the conditions for contributions that would entitle people to unemployment and sickness benefits in a way that would particularly hit carers. The national council has drawn attention to its concern about this and has pointed out that when a dependent person dies carers are in a particularly vulnerable state. It is exactly at that time that they are likely most to need their entitlement to unemployment or sickness benefit, when they are struggling to cope with what is bound to be a substantial readjustment to their lives, because invalid care allowances are paid only to people who are fully committed to caring. The association says:

"such a move would be entirely opposed to the Government's expressed commitment to recognising the needs of informal carers and to supporting them. We see it as a most retrograde step."

The example has been given of someone who might have looked after an elderly and severely disabled relative, perhaps for 10 years, and by the time the relative dies the carer is in her middle years, in her forties or fifties, and is not likely to find it easy to get a job straight away, even if she wished to do so. Under the Bill such a person will be refused the right of unemployment benefit because she will not have been able to work over the past few years and will have not paid, rather than been credited with, contributions.

This is unfortunate because, quite apart from contradicting many of the things that the Government have said about carers and their commitment to them, it contradicts the origin of the award of invalid care allowance. The "Law of Social Security", the 1982 edition, refers to the way in which invalid care allowance should be paid, and to its origin. It points out that a household in which someone who is severely disabled needs attention may suffer financial hardship, not only because of the needs of the invalid, but because of the sacrifices made by other members of the household to look after the invalid. A study carried out by Sainsbury in 1970 showed that two thirds of disabled people needing care received it from a relative, and this very often interfered with the relative's earning capacity.

Apart from the fact that it is socially just to compensate people who are prepared to take that step, it makes a good deal of economic sense. If a person is able to live in the community, cared for by a relative, the state saves a substantial amount of money. If such a person needs hospital care, or must go into a home, the cost to the community is considerable. It was estimated that 11,500 people were in receipt of supplementary benefit mainly because they had left employment to care for an elderly or disabled relative.

The issue about which the Government were so pleased with themselves—the award of invalid care allowance to married women — confirms that, although we might deplore the discrimination involved in the assumption, it was intended for people who had given up paid work to become unpaid carers. The crude assumption made in excluding married women from the benefit, which was introduced basically for reasons of economy, was that married women tended not to be in the employment market. I hope that all hon. Members will deplore such reasoning today, but it confirms that the basis of the invalid care allowance is to compensate or assist people who have given up paid work to do something of great value to society and to those for whom they care.

In Committee, the Under-Secretary said:

"Of course it is recognised that people have left paid employment to care for a relative or friend. That is why they receive invalid care allowance in the first place. It is an income maintenance benefit that is paid specifically and precisely because it is recognised that people are giving up employment to perform this valuable task."—[*Official Report, Standing Committee E*, 3 December 1987; c. 412.]

In order to qualify for invalid care allowance the person must not only spend at least 35 hours a week as a carer, but must not be gainfully employed. There is a tough earnings rule to supplement that. One can earn only £12 a week while receiving invalid care allowance, and that limit has been unchanged since 1982. It is clear that invalid care allowance is designed for people who give up paid work to undertake the unpaid but very demanding task of caring for someone who is severely disabled. They are not allowed even to continue in part-time employment to maintain their toehold in the employment market. By definition, they are full-time carers.

The Government are now saying, in particular to women — because as carers women are the greatest number affected by the clause—who may have worked full time throughout their adult lives, first in paid employment and then in unpaid employment as carers, that they cannot claim unemployment benefit because their contributions record shows that they are not really in the labour market. That is insulting and is totally unrelated to the position. Not only is a carer working, but, by the Minister's definition, a carer who is claiming invalid care allowance is working full time in the role of caring. It is hard to think of another occupation in which one must work full time to qualify for unemployment benefit.

The proposed amendment is not a concession to carers. It is simply an act of justice and logic. I compare the position of two carers, one who is part time and paid, and the other who is full time and receiving only invalid care allowance. They could be doing identical work, apart from the hours involved, but if their work as carers comes to an end and they have to look for other work, the paid carer, who is not working full time in the occupation, may be able to claim unemployment benefit. The unpaid carer, whose contribution to society and the person for whom she is caring is substantially more, may not be entitled, if the Bill goes through, to unemployment or sickness benefit. We are addressing ourselves particularly to unemployment benefit in the amendment, because we believe that that is the more unjust of the two deprivations, precisely because of the relationship between invalid care allowance and paid work.

We asked the Minister about the numbers who would be affected. As I recall, he suggested that about 20,000 people now lose invalid care allowance entitlement each year, and approximately 11,000 of them might be able to claim unemployment benefit. That suggests that vast sums of money are not involved. However, a very important principle is involved and it is a principle which, in other circumstances, the Government have upheld.

7 pm

Mrs. Audrey Wise (Preston): I want briefly to reinforce the comments made by my hon. Friend the Member for Derby, South (Mrs. Beckett) on the fact that these people —mainly women—are actually working and making a contribution to the economy.

In Committee on 3 December 1987 the Under-Secretary of State for Health and Social Security referred to caring as a "valuable task" at column 412. The House should focus on the word "valuable". The task performed by the carer is valuable for the person being cared for, but it is also a direct contribution to the economy. The carer is contributing to the economy just as much as someone in paid employment because, if she did not undertake caring, the person for whom she was caring would become a cost to the state.

It has been calculated, quite conservatively, that the value to the economy of the carers amounts to about £6 billion per annum. That is the contribution that carers are making to all of us and to the taxpayer. However, they are now to be deprived of a very small benefit entitlement—not a concession, an entitlement—that the Opposition never felt would be a matter for party division.

It is deplorable, foolish and short-sighted of the Government to take this attitude. Carers perform a valuable service and they are paying a heavy cost. When they are able to re-enter the labour market, usually when they are bereaved and not at their best, they at present have a small cushion because they can claim unemployment benefit. They often find it difficult to obtain work precisely because they have been out of the paid employment market for a number of years. They have not been divorced from the economy; they simply have not been receiving wages for the work that they have carried out. They have suffered while their peers possibly have received promotion, added to their experience and so provided themselves with fresh skills to attract potential employers if they need to change jobs. The carer has fallen behind in that competition.

However, in the face of that, the Government are seeking now, when they tell us daily that the economy is in splendid shape, to tell carers, "Never mind the fact that you have made this valuable contribution and are a valuable part of our social fabric. We will strip you of this entitlement." When we asked in Committee what a carer should do if that happened, the Minister said that if a carer were entitled, he or she could claim income support. The Government are driving carers back to a means-tested benefit, thus taking away from them money and, as many carers would believe, their dignity as people who have made a solid economic contribution to the country.

I have given up hoping that the Government will step back from these deplorable steps, but I hope that we will receive the maximum possible support for the amendment. The amendment provides no improvement for people; it simply seeks to maintain the status quo against those who wish to deprive carers of the potential entitlement of claiming unemployment benefit when they are again able to seek work, if that day ever comes. I commend the amendment to the House and hope that hon. Members will vote for it.

Mr. Portillo: I want to begin by addressing a point made by the hon. Member for Preston (Mrs. Wise) at the end of her remarks. The hon. Lady made a point about the dignity, or indignity, of claiming benefits, and she made the same point in Committee. I do not know why she appears to be pushing the idea that it is not dignified to claim benefits to which one is entitled. I thought that that was a proposition that she occasionally accused Conservative Members of peddling. Of course, it is not true to say that we peddle that proposition. For her to say that there is any stigma or indignity for people without other resources to claim state benefits to which they are entitled is an extraordinary assertion.

Mrs. Wise: The indignity lies in the fact that there is an encroachment on the privacy of the person concerned. There is no indignity in making the claim, but people who claim supplementary benefit—or income support, as it will be—feel in a different position vis-a-vis the state. They are compelled to show their total financial position, and they see that as an indignity. They want a benefit that operates as if they had continued to make contributions. That is a simple matter.

Mr. Portillo: Very well; we agree that there is no indignity as such in applying for those benefits. We also agree that people who cease to qualify for invalid care allowance will be entitled to income support if they have no other means. That enables me to reject any suggestion that the Government do not recognise the position of carers. We recognise their position three times over. First, we recognise their position, because ICA is available during the time that people are caring and it is an income support benefit. Secondly, we recognise their position because during the time that they receive ICA they continue to receive credits for the long-term benefits. That should not be underestimated because it gives credits towards entitlement for retirement pension, widow's pension, sickness benefit and invalidity benefit. I remind the House that retirement pension can be awarded on the basis of a single year's paid contribution, and the rest of the entitlement can be made up of credits. Thirdly, we recognise their position because if someone coming off

[Mr. Portillo]

ICA finds himself or herself unable to claim unemployment benefit and without resources, income support is available.

I will consider the amendment now and explain to the hon. Member for Derby, South (Mrs. Beckett) that the amendment goes much further than she intended because it would enable all those who have received ICA to draw unemployment benefit without having paid any national insurance contributions at any time. I suspect that the hon. Lady wanted to revert to the present position with regard to ICA. Certainly the amendment would run contrary to our intentions.

We have argued that unemployment benefit is intended to provide a measure of compensation for people who normally work for an employer when they experience short periods of unemployment. I have thought carefully about the clause and this provision. I do not believe that one can say that someone who has been caring for a relative or another person for a number of years is in a position analogous to someone who has recently been in employment and dependent upon the income from that employment for maintenance.

The position is different. Our new contribution conditions are intended to reinforce the link between paid employment and payment of national insurance contributions. In doing so, we intend to establish equity in the treatment of all potential claimants. I raised that problem in Committee with the hon. Members for Derby, South and for Preston. Matters of equity arise if, in the case of ICA, we say that credits should count as paid contributions.

I wish to add to my comments in Committee, because I have been anxious to understand the practical consequences of the clause. I wish to put to the House and, in particular, to the hon. Members for Derby, South and for Preston, some practical examples of what the clause means. In each case, I have considered somebody who might give up work in November 1988 to go and care for somebody. After a period, that person may cease to care—in the sad event, for example, of the death of the person for whom they have been caring—and seek to return to employment. In each case, I am assuming that the person has a full record of contributions until November 1988. If that person wished to return to employment in 1989 and were seeking a job, there would be no difficulty in his claiming unemployment benefit, because the contribution record depends on the tax years 1986-87 and 1987-88, both of which are prior to the start of the ICA award.

If the person was away caring for two years from November 1988, he would cease to draw ICA from November 1990 and seek to claim unemployment benefit. Again, the claim would depend on the tax years 1987-88 and 1988-89. Unemployment benefit would be payable because the person was working for the whole of 1987-88 and would have paid the necessary contributions in that year and would have ICA credit after that period.

If a person gave up work in November 1988 and was caring for three years, he or she would cease to draw ICA in November 1991 and try to claim unemployment benefit. The claim would depend on the contribution record in 1988-89 and 1989-90. In that case, the person would have been working between April 1988 and November 1988 and so would have paid contributions on 25 times the lower earnings level during that period. Again, the clai unemployment benefit would succeed, based on tho contributions at the lower earnings level and on the credits for the balance of the year and in 1989-90.

As I do not wish to mislead anybody, I admit th I took my example for another year, the clai unemployment benefit would fail. However, I have sh that it is still possible for someone out of employmen caring for a period of up to three years to qualif unemployment benefit. The average length of awa ICA is between 18 and 28 months, depending o period that we consider. It varies a little from time to The average, therefore tends to be quite a short perio course, some people care for very long periods, equally, if the average is between 18 and 28 months, people receive ICA for only a very short period.

Long-term carers will not be able to claim unem ment benefit if they exceed the period in the example I have quoted, but those people have not depe recently on income from employment. They have d ICA for a considerable period, but they are not negle and, if they have to be supported by the state, in support is available to them.

I hope that I have helped to put the measure perspective and explained why I have concluded reluctantly, I cannot accept the amendment or ev different version which would single out ICA claiman that credits would be treated as if they were contributions.

7.15 pm

Mrs. Beckett: I wish to respond briefly to two p raised by the Minister. First, he believes that the Bil reinforce the link between paid work and unemploy benefit. He does not wish to single out those who re ICA in respect of their treatment regarding credits, b he has acknowledged, ICA is a replacement for paid w He has introduced a new definition into the approac ICA—that it is not a replacement for paid work, b replacement for paid work which has recently been Presumably, therefore, there is a period during which considered that ICA is a replacement for paid work after that, it becomes an end in itself.

Secondly, the Minister sought to press the case th does not matter that the Government are doing because only very few people will lose and the majority of carers are entitled to ICA only for an ave of 18 months to 28 months. His examples supporte argument, although he conceded that they would not supported him so favourably if he had chosen a diff year. He argues that very few people will be affected that most people will not find themselves in a diff position. If that is so, there is no harm in protecting t few people who, in many cases, left paid work befor Minister redefined ICA as a replacement for paid w He admitted that the cost to the Government of impro this disadvantageous clause would be extremely sligh has therefore encouraged me to press our amendme

Question put, That the amendment be made:

The House divided: Ayes 211, Noes 254.

Division No. 133] [7.1

AYES

Adams, Allen *(Paisley N)*	Archer, Rt Hon Peter
Allen, Graham	Armstrong, Ms Hilary
Alton, David	Ashdown, Paddy
Anderson, Donald	Ashley, Rt Hon Jack

Ashton, Joe
Banks, Tony *(Newham NW)*
Barnes, Harry *(Derbyshire NE)*
Barron, Kevin
Battle, John
Beckett, Margaret
Beggs, Roy
Bell, Stuart
Benn, Rt Hon Tony
Bennett, A. F. *(D'nt'n & R'dish)*
Bermingham, Gerald
Bidwell, Sydney
Blair, Tony
Blunkett, David
Boateng, Paul
Boyes, Roland
Bradley, Keith
Brown, Gordon *(D'mline E)*
Brown, Nicholas *(Newcastle E)*
Bruce, Malcolm *(Gordon)*
Buchan, Norman
Buckley, George
Caborn, Richard
Callaghan, Jim
Campbell, Menzies *(Fife NE)*
Campbell, Ron *(Blyth Valley)*
Campbell-Savours, D. N.
Canavan, Dennis
Carlile, Alex *(Mont'g)*
Clarke, Tom *(Monklands W)*
Clay, Bob
Clelland, David
Clwyd, Mrs Ann
Cohen, Harry
Coleman, Donald
Cook, Frank *(Stockton N)*
Cook, Robin *(Livingston)*
Corbett, Robin
Corbyn, Jeremy
Cousins, Jim
Cox, Tom
Crowther, Stan
Cryer, Bob
Cummings, J.
Cunliffe, Lawrence
Cunningham, Dr John
Dalyell, Tam
Darling, Alastair
Davies, Rt Hon Denzil *(Llanelli)*
Davis, Terry *(B'ham Hodge H'l)*
Dewar, Donald
Dixon, Don
Dobson, Frank
Douglas, Dick
Dunnachie, James
Dunwoody, Hon Mrs Gwyneth
Ewing, Harry *(Falkirk E)*
Ewing, Mrs Margaret *(Moray)*
Fearn, Ronald
Field, Frank *(Birkenhead)*
Fields, Terry *(L'pool B G'n)*
Flannery, Martin
Flynn, Paul
Forsythe, Clifford *(Antrim S)*
Fraser, John
Fyfe, Mrs Maria
Galbraith, Samuel
Garrett, John *(Norwich South)*
Garrett, Ted *(Wallsend)*
George, Bruce
Gilbert, Rt Hon Dr John
Godman, Dr Norman A.
Gordon, Ms Mildred
Grant, Bernie *(Tottenham)*
Griffiths, Nigel *(Edinburgh S)*
Griffiths, Win *(Bridgend)*
Grocott, Bruce
Hattersley, Rt Hon Roy
Haynes, Frank
Healey, Rt Hon Denis
Heffer, Eric S.
Hinchliffe, David
Hogg, N. *(C'nauld & Kilsyth)*
Holland, Stuart
Home Robertson, John
Hood, James
Howell, Rt Hon D. *(S'heath)*
Howells, Geraint
Hoyle, Doug
Hughes, Robert *(Aberdeen N)*
Hughes, Roy *(Newport E)*
Hume, John
Illsley, Eric
Ingram, Adam
Janner, Greville
John, Brynmor
Jones, Barry *(Alyn & Deeside)*
Jones, Ieuan *(Ynys Môn)*
Jones, Martyn *(Clwyd S W)*
Kinnock, Rt Hon Neil
Kirkwood, Archy
Lambie, David
Lamond, James
Leadbitter, Ted
Leighton, Ron
Lestor, Miss Joan *(Eccles)*
Lewis, Terry
Litherland, Robert
Livingstone, Ken
Livsey, Richard
Lofthouse, Geoffrey
McAllion, John
McAvoy, Tom
McCartney, Ian
Macdonald, Calum
McFall, John
McGrady, E. K.
McKay, Allen *(Penistone)*
McKelvey, William
McLeish, Henry
McNamara, Kevin
McTaggart, Bob
McWilliam, John
Madden, Max
Mahon, Mrs Alice
Mallon, Seamus
Marek, Dr John
Marshall, David *(Shettleston)*
Marshall, Jim *(Leicester S)*
Martin, Michael *(Springburn)*
Martlew, Eric
Maxton, John
Meacher, Michael
Michael, Alun
Michie, Bill *(Sheffield Heeley)*
Michie, Mrs Ray *(Arg'l & Bute)*
Millan, Rt Hon Bruce
Mitchell, Austin *(G't Grimsby)*
Molyneaux, Rt Hon James
Moonie, Dr Lewis
Morgan, Rhodri
Morley, Elliott
Morris, Rt Hon A *(W'shawe)*
Morris, Rt Hon J *(Aberavon)*
Mowlam, Marjorie
Mullin, Chris
Murphy, Paul
Nellist, Dave
Oakes, Rt Hon Gordon
O'Brien, William
O'Neill, Martin
Orme, Rt Hon Stanley
Patchett, Terry
Pendry, Tom
Pike, Peter
Powell, Ray *(Ogmore)*
Prescott, John
Primarolo, Ms Dawn
Quin, Ms Joyce
Radice, Giles
Randall, Stuart
Rees, Rt Hon Merlyn
Reid, John
Richardson, Ms Jo
Robertson, George
Robinson, Geoffrey
Rogers, Allan
Rooker, Jeff
Ross, Ernie *(Dundee W)*
Ross, William *(Londonderry E)*
Rowlands, Ted
Sheldon, Rt Hon Robert
Shore, Rt Hon Peter
Short, Clare
Skinner, Dennis
Smith, Andrew *(Oxford E)*
Smith, Rt Hon J. *(Monk'ds E)*
Smyth, Rev Martin *(Belfast S)*
Snape, Peter
Soley, Clive
Spearing, Nigel
Steinberg, Gerald
Stott, Roger
Strang, Gavin
Taylor, Mrs Ann *(Dewsbury)*
Taylor, Rt Hon J. D. *(S'ford)*
Taylor, Matthew *(Truro)*
Thomas, Dafydd Elis
Thompson, Jack *(Wansbeck)*
Turner, Dennis
Vaz, Keith
Wall, Pat
Wardell, Gareth *(Gower)*
Wareing, Robert N.
Welsh, Andrew *(Angus E)*
Wigley, Dafydd
Williams, Rt Hon A. J.
Williams, Alan W. *(Carm'then)*
Winnick, David
Wise, Mrs Audrey
Worthington, Anthony
Wray, James
Young, David *(Bolton SE)*

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. Ken Eastham and
Mrs. Llin Golding.

NOES

Allason, Rupert
Amess, David
Amos, Alan
Arbuthnot, James
Arnold, Jacques *(Gravesham)*
Arnold, Tom *(Hazel Grove)*
Atkins, Robert
Atkinson, David
Baker, Rt Hon K. *(Mole Valley)*
Baldry, Tony
Banks, Robert *(Harrogate)*
Batiste, Spencer
Beaumont-Dark, Anthony
Bendall, Vivian
Bennett, Nicholas *(Pembroke)*
Benyon, W.
Bevan, David Gilroy
Biffen, Rt Hon John
Blackburn, Dr John G.
Body, Sir Richard
Boscawen, Hon Robert
Bottomley, Peter
Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Bowden, Gerald *(Dulwich)*
Bowis, John
Boyson, Rt Hon Dr Sir Rhodes
Braine, Rt Hon Sir Bernard
Brandon-Bravo, Martin
Brazier, Julian
Brittan, Rt Hon Leon
Brooke, Rt Hon Peter
Brown, Michael *(Brigg & Cl't's)*
Browne, John *(Winchester)*
Bruce, Ian *(Dorset South)*
Buchanan-Smith, Rt Hon Alick
Buck, Sir Antony
Burns, Simon
Burt, Alistair
Butler, Chris
Butterfill, John
Carlisle, John, *(Luton N)*
Carrington, Matthew
Carttiss, Michael
Cash, William
Chalker, Rt Hon Mrs Lynda
Chapman, Sydney
Churchill, Mr
Clark, Sir W. *(Croydon S)*
Coombs, Anthony *(Wyre F'rest)*
Coombs, Simon *(Swindon)*
Couchman, James
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Curry, David
Davis, David *(Boothferry)*
Day, Stephen
Dicks, Terry
Dorrell, Stephen
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James
Dykes, Hugh
Evans, David *(Welwyn Hatf'd)*
Fallon, Michael
Fookes, Miss Janet
Forman, Nigel
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Fox, Sir Marcus
Gale, Roger
Garel-Jones, Tristan
Gill, Christopher
Gilmour, Rt Hon Sir Ian
Glyn, Dr Alan
Goodlad, Alastair
Goodson-Wickes, Dr Charles
Gorman, Mrs Teresa
Gow, Ian
Gower, Sir Raymond
Grant, Sir Anthony *(CambsSW)*
Greenway, Harry *(Ealing N)*
Greenway, John *(Rydale)*
Gregory, Conal
Griffiths, Peter *(Portsmouth N)*
Grist, Ian
Ground, Patrick
Hamilton, Hon A. *(Epsom)*
Hannam, John
Hargreaves, A. *(B'ham H'll Gr')*
Hargreaves, Ken *(Hyndburn)*
Harris, David
Hawkins, Christopher
Hayhoe, Rt Hon Sir Barney
Heathcoat-Amory, David
Heddle, John
Heseltine, Rt Hon Michael
Hicks, Mrs Maureen *(Wolv' NE)*
Hicks, Robert *(Cornwall SE)*
Higgins, Rt Hon Terence L.
Hogg, Hon Douglas *(Gr'th'm)*
Holt, Richard
Hordern, Sir Peter
Howard, Michael
Howarth, Alan *(Strat'd-on-A)*
Howell, Rt Hon David *(G'dford)*
Hughes, Robert G. *(Harrow W)*
Hunt, David *(Wirral W)*
Hunt, John *(Ravensbourne)*
Hurd, Rt Hon Douglas
Irvine, Michael
Jack, Michael
Jackson, Robert

Janman, Timothy
Jessel, Toby
Jones, Gwilym *(Cardiff N)*
Jones, Robert B *(Herts W)*
Kellett-Bowman, Mrs Elaine
Key, Robert
King, Roger *(B'ham N'thfield)*
King, Rt Hon Tom *(Bridgwater)*
Kirkhope, Timothy
Knapman, Roger
Knight, Greg *(Derby North)*
Knowles, Michael
Knox, David
Lamont, Rt Hon Norman
Lang, Ian
Latham, Michael
Lawrence, Ivan
Lee, John *(Pendle)*
Leigh, Edward *(Gainsbor'gh)*
Lennox-Boyd, Hon Mark
Lester, Jim *(Broxtowe)*
Lilley, Peter
Lloyd, Sir Ian *(Havant)*
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
Lord, Michael
Luce, Rt Hon Richard
Lyell, Sir Nicholas
Macfarlane, Sir Neil
MacKay, Andrew *(E Berkshire)*
Maclean, David
McLoughlin, Patrick
McNair-Wilson, M. *(Newbury)*
McNair-Wilson, P. *(New Forest)*
Madel, David
Major, Rt Hon John
Malins, Humfrey
Maples, John
Mariand, Paul
Marshall, John *(Hendon S)*
Marshall, Michael *(Arundel)*
Martin, David *(Portsmouth S)*
Mawhinney, Dr Brian
Maxwell-Hyslop, Robin
Mayhew, Rt Hon Sir Patrick
Mellor, David
Meyer, Sir Anthony
Miller, Hal
Mills, Iain
Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)*
Mitchell, David *(Hants NW)*
Monro, Sir Hector
Montgomery, Sir Fergus
Moore, Rt Hon John
Morrison, Sir Charles *(Devizes)*
Moss, Malcolm
Moynihan, Hon C.
Mudd, David
Neale, Gerrard
Nelson, Anthony
Neubert, Michael
Newton, Rt Hon Tony
Nicholls, Patrick
Nicholson, David *(Taunton)*
Nicholson, Miss E. *(Devon W)*
Onslow, Rt Hon Cranley
Oppenheim, Phillip
Page, Richard
Paice, James
Patnick, Irvine
Patten, Chris *(Bath)*
Pattie, Rt Hon Sir Geoffrey
Peacock, Mrs Elizabeth
Porter, David *(Waveney)*
Portillo, Michael
Powell, William *(Corby)*
Raffan, Keith
Raison, Rt Hon Timothy
Renton, Tim
Rhodes James, Robert
Riddick, Graham
Ridley, Rt Hon Nicholas
Rifkind, Rt Hon Malcolm
Roberts, Wyn *(Conwy)*
Roe, Mrs Marion
Rost, Peter
Rowe, Andrew
Rumbold, Mrs Angela
Ryder, Richard
Sackville, Hon Tom
Sainsbury, Hon Tim
Sayeed, Jonathan
Scott, Nicholas
Shaw, David *(Dover)*
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Shepherd, Richard *(Aldridge)*
Sims, Roger
Skeet, Sir Trevor
Smith, Tim *(Beaconsfield)*
Soames, Hon Nicholas
Speed, Keith
Spicer, Sir Jim *(Dorset W)*
Spicer, Michael *(S Worcs)*
Squire, Robin
Steen, Anthony
Stern, Michael
Stevens, Lewis
Stewart, Allan *(Eastwood)*
Stewart, Andrew *(Sherwood)*
Sumberg, David
Summerson, Hugo
Taylor, Ian *(Esher)*
Taylor, John M *(Solihull)*
Taylor, Teddy *(S'end E)*
Tebbit, Rt Hon Norman
Thompson, Patrick *(Norwich N)*
Thornton, Malcolm
Thurnham, Peter
Tracey, Richard
Tredinnick, David
Trippier, David
Trotter, Neville
Twinn, Dr Ian
Vaughan, Sir Gerard
Viggers, Peter
Waddington, Rt Hon David
Wakeham, Rt Hon John
Waldegrave, Hon William
Walker, Bill *(T'side North)*
Waller, Gary
Ward, John
Wardle, C. *(Bexhill)*
Warren, Kenneth
Watts, John
Wells, Bowen
Wheeler, John
Widdecombe, Miss Ann
Wilkinson, John
Wilshire, David
Winterton, Mrs Ann
Winterton, Nicholas
Wolfson, Mark
Wood, Timothy
Woodcock, Mike
Yeo, Tim
Young, Sir George *(Acton)*

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. David Lightbown and
Mr. Tony Durant.

Question accordingly negatived.

Clause 6

UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFIT AND OCCUPATIONAL

7.30 pm

Mrs. Margaret Beckett (Derby, South): I be
amendment No. 16, in line 37, after '55', insert
'and in subsection (1) after "55" there shall be i
words "and has retired from regular employment

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Mr. Harold Walker):
we shall take amendment No. 17, in page 6, line
insert—

'*(c)* in subsection (1), after "55" there shall be i
words "other than a person who has retire
police service, the fire service, or any other
occupation at the normal retirement ag
occupation".'.

Mrs. Beckett: The amendments raise the is
deprivation that will be suffered by those wh
draw occupational pension at the age of 55 as
the offset of that occupational pension ag
entitlement to unemployment benefit.

Clearly, all those who take early retirement
voluntarily or under a degree of pressure
affected. One of the amendments deals with t
group of people who may be in a position
occupational pensions and may, indeed, be f
that position. The second deals with specific gr
public service—the police and fire services. M
people may be liable, as part of contractual u
ings and conditions of employment, to retire a

Hon. Members will no doubt recall that
provision now exists for the offsetting of oc
pensions over the value of £35 a wee
unemployment benefit entitlement for those ove
may also be aware that, whether we agree with
that provision is part of a slightly different p
benefit provisions. Those over 60, as matters n
can if need be draw the long-term rate of supp
benefit. They do not have to sign on as being av
work: they are not subject to the same degree o
in that regard as younger people.

Whatever we think of that provision, there
some recognition that the Government were ar
if someone was drawing part or all of his oc
pension he was acknowledging that he had ret
have taken some steps towards recognising th
their decision by treating that person in the sam
some respects, as others who have retired and a
the age of compulsory retirement. Howev
compensating arguments do not apply if the
occupational pension against unemployment be
apply from the age of 55, as is proposed in the

The provision is in many ways inconsistent w
that the Government have taken in the past. Th
may recall that my hon. Friend the Member for
South-East (Mr. Nellist) reminded us in Comm
those forced into, or voluntarily taking, early
or redundancy were, by specific guidance and
from the Government, ruled not to have made t
voluntarily unemployed, so that they were not
for taking an action that might be helpful to so
whole — for example, where large-scale red
were threatened — although they would s

penalty of abatement of their pension against unemployment benefit. That provision also will not apply to those who are placed in such a position at 55.

That seems to imply that the Government have been saying to those over 60 who are in such a position that they are in effect retired. Now, in the Bill, the Government are telling people over 55 that if they are out of the employment market, and if, because of the level of their income, they begin to draw their occupational pension, they, too, are in effect retired.

In debating various aspects of the Bill, we have seen that the DHSS and the Department of Employment do not seem to be wholly in touch with each other. I suppose that it is just possible that it has not been in the forefront of the consciousness of Ministers at the DHSS that the *Employment Gazette* for May 1987 showed that, in 1986, although 53·4 per cent. of men aged 60 to 64 were economically active, 80·3 per cent. of men aged 55 to 59 were economically active. That presumably means not only that the vast majority of those aged 55 to 59 are fortunate enough to be economically active, but that it is much less likely that men of those years would regard themselves as retired.

As has been argued this evening in a different context, a variety of tests are available to the Government if they feel that someone is drawing benefit and is not really available for work, or seeking it. Not only are those tests available in law, but both the tests and their interpretation have been significantly tightened in recent years. It is not the case that there is no recourse open to the Government to deal with an individual who is judged with good cause to have been retired from the age of 55. However, the Government are saying that everyone over 55 who begins to draw occupational pension has retired.

People who find themselves in that position already face a financial penalty. There is the faint possibility—I believe that the Minister referred to it in Committee—that some people in fairly senior positions are fortunate enough to work for companies that are prepared to make special provision for them if they retire at 55. They may have been pushed out in the wake of some takeover, for instance. Such companies may be prepared to ensure that, although such employees take their pensions early, they do not suffer a financial penalty for so doing.

However, the vast majority of those who find themselves in that position at the age of 55 will receive no compensation from their employers for having to take an actuarially reduced pension. They are already facing a penalty, and, at 55, they are facing a greater loss than someone who is in the same position at 60. Adding insult to the injury of having to lose out on pension entitlement, the Government have decided that, because those people are drawing pension, they must not be entitled to unemployment benefit.

Many people in employment who find themselves in such circumstances will be pushed out of the labour market by the present economic climate. Their local community, and perhaps even their trade union representatives, may have encouraged them to take redundancy or early retirement if their employer requires a large number of redundancies, rather than putting younger men or women in that position. The case was cited to us of members of the Institution of Professional Civil Servants in the Devonport dockyard who may find themselves forced out of the labour market in the comparatively near future.

A young man of 26 or so, forced to take retirem might receive only about 10 months' worth compensation, and would therefore be in no positio keep his wife and family in reasonable circumstance with anything like the income that they had previo enjoyed. The IPCS, like many others in its circumsta — including employers — is encouraging its members to take retirement. Although they will s some penalty in the form of actuarial reduction of be they will be in rather better circumstances than younger people involved.

The IPCS and various others who have written t have pointed out that, because of the actuarial reduc in itself, and also because not many pension scheme as good as those of the police and fire services—I deal with public service schemes in a moment—pe may begin to draw occupational pensions not because consider that they have retired or wish to have retired, because their income would otherwise be so low that would suffer substantial difficulties. They take the gam of the actuarial reduction, and go for the short-term of drawing occupational pension rather earlier. It se entirely wrong that people in those circumstances sho lose their right to unemployment benefit, for which may have contributed for 40 years. The Government proposing to remove that right suddenly.

The Minister may have an answer to my next quest tonight—he did not in Committee. Do the Governm intend to compel these people to be covered by the res scheme and to take part in interviews during which t are questioned about their availability for work? Department of Employment is as concerned about s people as the DHSS.

The specific case concerns the police and fire servi The vast majority of people in those services are expec to retire by 55. The Minister said in Committee that peo know that when they enter those occupations. That is tr but it is equally true that, when they take up their job, t know that they pay heavy pension contributions into th occupational pension scheme while making natio insurance contributions like the rest of us. In return those contributions, they know that they will rece entitlement to an occupational pension from the age of because that is the age at which society has decided th ought to consider retiring because of the nature of th occupation. It is in society's interests that they take ea retirement. Such people will also have the expectation th they will be entitled to unemployment benefit should th need it when they have left their initial employment.

It is ridiculous for the Minister to suggest that peo in the police and fire services know the conditions of th contract. Their contract is not yet being breached. Th remain forced to retire at 55 and entitled to draw pensio for which they have contributed heavily during th working lives. The contract with the state, however, being breached in that their contributions towar unemployment benefit will no longer entitle them to th benefit should they begin to draw more than £35 occupational pension. Moreover, that sum has not be increased for many years, so it represents a much small pension than when the provision was introduce Furthermore, the provision was introduced for peop aged 60 or more.

[Mrs. Beckett]

We have found it hard to understand why the Government have picked on the age of 55. The Minister was able to assist us in Committee. He gave us the reason with admirable clarity. He said:

"it was an arbitrary line to take a step in the direction of concentrating help that was available."

Perhaps even more interesting, he said:

"I acknowledge that it has not gone the whole way". —[*Official Report Standing Committee E*; 8 December 1987, c. 456.]

I am not sure what that means. I suspect that it means that the Government thought that they might get away with choosing the age of 55. They may even have considered that at no age should people be entitled to draw unemployment benefit should they unfortunately have to draw against their occupational pension. Perhaps the Minister will tell us what he has in mind. There is no doubt, however, that 55 has been chosen arbitrarily. It is none the better for that.

7.45 pm

It was made plain to the Committee that policemen or fire fighters who accept their contract of employment, pay their contributions and retire, draw on their occupational pension and are fortunate enough now to be in work, but who lose their job after January 1989, may well lose their entitlement to unemployment benefit although they have continued to contribute to the national insurance scheme to pay for that entitlement.

There is no doubt that, if the Bill becomes law, people who retire from the police or fire services and become unemployed, usually involuntarily, will not be entitled to unemployment benefit for which they have paid, although they will be required, should they get employment, to make contributions which will not entitle them to a further penny of benefit. That is plainly ridiculous and unjust.

Although the Minister has leaned heavily on pension circumstances and the generosity of the scheme, I must remind him that the heavy contributions that have been made to pay for occupational pension benefits have been taken into account, as have the advantages of early retirement, in salary negotiations and negotiations on conditions.

I should like to demonstrate how strangely the Government are behaving. They tell us consistently—it is the Prime Minister's favourite exhortation — that people should save and take responsibility for themselves in retirement. We are told that we should not rely on the state. People who have gone into occupational pension schemes have done exactly what the Prime Minister has instructed, but such provision for retirement in early years is offset against unemployment benefit entitlement. If, however, people have not chosen, or have been forced into, an occupational pension scheme but have income from investments, they may well receive £35 a week or substantially more. That sum will be quite irrelevant to entitlement to unemployment benefit as long as national insurance contributions have been paid. Only investment by way of an occupational pension scheme, which is compulsory for people in the fire and police services, leads to this denial of rights.

The Minister did not make any case for this decision in Committee. He merely said that it was a means of saving more money. Off the top of my head, I recall that it was £65 million in a full year. That sum will be saved at the expense of 27,000 to 30,000 people who wi their full or partial entitlement to unemplo That is quite unjustifiable, and it is why we t to give the House an opportunity to reject provisions.

Dr. John G. Blackburn (Dudley, West): courtesy and honour, which the House wo me, I must declare that, for the past eight been privileged to represent the 90,000 m National Association of Retired Police parliamentary adviser.

Amendment No. 17 attracts my attention We should consider the effect of clause 6 o of the community—retired police officers. suitably qualified people to take up a caree service. They give dedicated service to the pu at the age of 55, in certain cases, depending regulation they are made redundant. It is n it is the wish of Parliament by regulation t their occupation.

How does that affect constituencies? Aft of dedicated service as police officers thes themselves made redundant at 55. I kno redundant" is an emotive expression, pensioned off and have no further useful ser the constabulary. I can say with confidence a retired police officer in every constituenc and Wales, so, when we debate this clause, e one of us is debating something that constituents.

The hon. Member for Derby, South (Mrs right to explain that these men and wome heavy price for the pensions that they event receive. In August 1982, when the House wa statutory instrument and without d contributions were increased: the pension co male police officers went up to 11 per cent., female officers went up to 7 per cent. There and no consultation. Hon. Members can re that serving police officers at that tim look receiving their pension but also felt that if t opportunity on retirement to obtain other w the safeguard of receiving benefit under the legislation. Many officers serving at that time full and certain hope that if they found diffic through the social security legislation, wou give benefit to them.

In addition, they had made a formal a enhance their pensions, particularly in respe section of pensioners, police preserved-rate particular submission went before a com police negotiating board and was fully negot agreement was reached on 25 February 198 settlement—it may surprise hon. Members in relation to pensions — was £1·41. I staggered and disappointed beyond words wh Secretary refused to accept that negotiated pensioners. As a result of parliamentary transpired that it was the first occasion in hi negotiated settlement on pensions had been c my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State Department.

We now place a further burden on the me who have served us so well for many years force. It is against that background tha

amendment justified. It is full of knowledge and common sense. In a spirit of honesty, which I hope the House will always expect of me, I must say that I find great difficulty in going into the Government Lobby tonight on this amendment. I take no pleasure in this but I am placed in this position by the clause as it stands. That is why I am delighted to see amendment 17. However, it is with sadness that I take this stand.

But that is not enough. At this late stage of debate on the Bill I plead with the Minister, with all the sincerity that I can muster on behalf of more than 90,000 police pensioners, to pay heed to this amendment and the submissions of hon. Members and to say that he will review this matter with as much charity — no, not charity, because these people do not want charity, they want justice, and I happen to believe that their case is just. They retired, knowing what the rules were, and now, having retired, they find that the regulations will be changed by a decision of the House tonight—a decision which will affect every one of them. Worse than that, it will affect those police officers who are finding difficulty in getting employment. Therefore, I have a moral decision to take tonight: I must support retired police officers and others who also have public service occupational pensions. I ask yet again that the Minister will pay heed to this for the benefit of people who are really in need. I ask that he should be as considerate as I know he can be.

The Minister for Social Security and the Disabled (Mr. Nicholas Scott): Both these amendments seek to exempt certain groups of people from the effect of the abatement provisions. The first amendment raises the general principle, and the second moves to specific groups, particularly police officers and firemen who retire at the normal retirement age for their occupation, and seeks to remove them from this provision.

I understand what is involved and, if I were in any danger of forgetting, it has been reinforced by the eloquent speech of my hon. Friend the Member for Dudley, West (Dr. Blackburn), with his usual fairness and conviction, putting forward the case that we heard in Committee, particularly on behalf of police officers and the retired members of that profession with whose interests he is concerned. I know that there are strong opinions about this, and it has been borne in upon me in representations that I have had from the Police Federation, from hon. Members and most recently from my hon. Friend the Member for Dudley, West. We are discussing here both the general point and that particular one, and I seek to address both of them.

On the general point, as we reminded ourselves in Committee, the idea of abatement of unemployment benefit against occupational pension is not new. It was first mooted by the National Insurance Advisory Committee in 1968. We knew that the then Labour Government produced regulations which would have provided for abatement from the age of 58, but were dissuaded from pursuing that course at the time. Early in their life, this Government provided for abatement from the age of 60. I well understand the point made by the hon. Member for Derby, South (Mrs. Beckett) that there is a difference between 60 and 55, for the reasons that she set out in her speech.

8 pm

In a sense, I do not rest my case on the principle that the hon. Lady enunciated. The principle that the House should bear in mind when it decides on the general is that the intention of unemployment benefit is to p a measure of income replacement because unforeseen and unexpected contingency of unemplo for those normally reliant upon earnings from em ment. We have to ask whether it should be a principle that people who know that they will reti certain age, who have made provision for it, perh enhanced contributions, and who have completed a with an occupational pension available to them, then have the opportunity to avail themselv unemployment benefit that is within the na insurance scheme precisely for the purpose of pro protection against that unforeseeable and unex contingency of unemployment. That is the principle which I rest my belief that we are right to intr abatement from age 55.

I acknowledge that the expectations of police o and firemen will be changed by the introduction clause. That is why we have given plenty of notice proposal. Nobody will be affected before January Hopefully, it will be possible for people so to arrang affairs as to minimise the effect of the change.

I return to the point that firemen, police officer others in this position know from the outset that the be required to retire at age 55. They know that they been paying an enhanced contribution towards pension to make that possible. They know that at th they will have a generous pension. Particularly in the of police officers, the training and experience that have acquired in their profession will make them fitted than many people of that age for other employ

The pattern of the police service is that policemen to join the force at the age of 18 or 19. If they serv the 30 years that would give them maximum pe entitlement of two thirds of their final salary, they w retire at age 48 or 49 and could still claim unemploy benefit for the year for which they would be entitled Anyone who joined the police service up to the age and who served for 30 years would still be able to ge maximum pension entitlement, leave the service and unemployment benefit for 12 months.

My hon. Friend asked me to give fresh consider to the matter. I have done so for a variety of rea because of the representations made by the P Federation, because of points put to me in Committee, because of my own background, being the son of a p officer and having spent quite a few years in Nort Ireland in close contact with the Royal U Constabulary. I promised in Committee that I w reflect further on the position of the police and of ot in a similar situation, and I have done that.

I fully understand the case that is made. If those pe have not actually been compelled to pay the contributi it has been part of their conditions of service that should pay contributions to a pension scheme during whole of their service, and that they should pay nati insurance contributions into the national insurance f Some may be compulsorily retired at age 55. Following proposed change, their benefit will be liable for abatem We are talking here about policemen and fire figh Such arguments could be put forward on behalf of o groups. The armed forces spring immediately to min

I said I would reconsider the point. I also made it p in Committee that I saw real difficulties about maki special case for certain occupational groups. I know

[Mr. Nicholas Scott]

it will disappoint my hon. Friend in particular, in view of the case that he put forward this evening, but I have to tell the House that, having weighed the arguments carefully, I do not believe that it would be wise to exempt policemen and firemen from the overall provisions of the scheme.

It might be worth my while pointing out to the House how the abatement scheme will work. Unemployment benefit is reduced by 10p for every 10p after which an occupational pension exceeds £35. That means that unemployment benefit will be extinguished only when a substantial pension is paid. In the case of a married man who receives the higher rate of unemployment benefit to take account of his wife, benefit will not be lost entirely until his occupational pension is £85·90 a week or more. A single man will continue to receive benefit unless his occupational pension is £66·50 a week or more.

I reiterate that the proposed change is to reduce the age at which the provision takes effect, from 60 to 55. I believe that it can be justified in part by the changing pattern of retirement. More and more people are retiring at 55. Indeed, some are retiring earlier. What is more, we are not only reflecting that pattern, but the move from 60 to 55 is in tune with the Government's determination to seek to concentrate the finite resources that are available — increased resources may become available — within the social security system more sharply on those areas where help is needed. I do not believe that those who can retire at age 55 with substantial occupational pensions would fit into that category.

On the general principle, I rest on the point that those who retire at age 55 are not confronted with the unforeseen impact of unemployment. To exempt particular occupational groups, however strong their case may be, would not be a wise decision for the House. I therefore advise the House to reject the amendment.

Mrs. Beckett: We would be happy to pick up the Minister's last point and to see no group affected by the provisions of the clause, but we feel that the Government's case is weaker in some respects than others. Obviously it is the job of an Opposition to probe the weaknesses. The Minister has made a couple of remarks which should be taken up and placed on record in the context of the debate.

The Minister referred to the generosity of the pensions. The hon. Member for Dudley, West (Dr. Blackburn) commented on the level of contributions. It has been suggested to me, and we mentioned this in Committee, that in many cases a person will draw at best a half-rate pension plus a lump sum, which may mean that, for financial reasons, that person will want, and will indeed need, to seek employment.

Mr. Scott: The pension funds for the particular groups about which we are talking provide for pensions of two thirds of final salary. There is an option to take some of that pension out as a capital sum, with very generous treatment of that capital sum by the Inland Revenue. That is an option, but most of the schemes about which we are talking will provide for a pension of two thirds of final salary after 30 years' service.

Mrs. Beckett: I do not have the papers with me, but I believe that that point was made in the context of the fire service. It may well be something to do with the pattern of employment. That observation was made in Committee and it was not queried there. I am not co that, but, when I had the papers with m had some substance.

People are not drawing sums of mon necessarily comfortable or easy to live. Th true because of the age level that we are It could be argued—this is why the Government backed down on proposals as far as the present ones—that it is mo the age of 60 family commitments will However, at the age of 55 many p dependent children, particularly those yo fit the Government's definition of depe under 25 and unfortunate enough to be receive lower rates of benefits. If they are subject to the range of provisions that we which means that the Government expect remain dependent on their parents at a sub age than many hon. Members would con At the age of 55 many people may well h need their help and support.

The Minister said that, because the pr come into effect until January 1989, the G given plenty of notice that there will be did not recognise the point that was mad and again tonight, that people who have may have been fortunate enough to find e that they may lose that employment aft caught by the provision. How on earth expected to provide for a change that possibly have expected? I suspect that, if Member had suggested to them that Government would do such a thing, th rejected such a suggestion with outrage. in which retired people or those on the bri can adjust to cope with the effects of the

In a sense, the Government are making own back. They have said, reiterated a argument, that people who leave the fire at the age of 5[illegible] have retired and mus occupational pensions for full support. T do not expect them to seek employment. T of that is that the Government are saying that those people receive in their retirement that they should not need to seek em Minister's right hon. Friend the Home Se thank him for that information.

Mr. Scott: Someone who is about to re be entitled to draw upemployment benefi 1989. That would be virtually the whole of for unemployment benefit, which runs for

Mrs. Beckett: The Minister is right, bu point that I was making. Someone on retirement now who obtains employment, January 1989, will be affected by the clau be in a position to make any adju circumstances or to his arrangements. Th are saying to such people, "You have retire your occupational pension scheme, altho paid contributions, to be generous. We co is enough for you and that you will not employment. We do not expect you to employment or need it." I suspect that consequences for the negotiations that will

on pay and conditions in the police and fire services. It is right that there should be such consequences, because the Government are reneging on one side of a deal.

Whether they work in the police or fire service, or in other occupations, people find themselves, through circumstances almost invariably beyond their control, forced into early retirement. Most men or women over 55 are still available for work, and looking for work. The clause is wholly misconceived. It is particularly misconceived in the case of people with patterns of employment such as those in the police and fire services.

Although I should have liked to press both amendments to a Division, to save the time of the House I shall withdraw amendment No. 16, but I shall formally move amendment No. 17 and press it to a Division.

I beg to ask leave to withdraw the amendment.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Amendment proposed: No. 17, in page 6, line 39, at end insert—

'(c) in subsection (1), after "55" there shall be inserted the words "other than a person who has retired from the police service, the fire service, or any other prescribed occupation at the normal retirement age for that occupation".'.—*[Mrs. Beckett.]*

Question put, That the amendment be made:—

The House divided: Ayes 210, Noes 250.

Division No. 134] **[8.15 pm**

AYES

Adams, Allan *(Paisley N)*
Allen, Graham
Anderson, Donald
Archer, Rt Hon Peter
Armstrong, Ms Hilary
Ashley, Rt Hon Jack
Ashton, Joe
Banks, Tony *(Newham NW)*
Barnes, Harry *(Derbyshire NE)*
Barron, Kevin
Battle, John
Beckett, Margaret
Beggs, Roy
Bell, Stuart
Benn, Rt Hon Tony
Bennett, A. F. *(D'nt'n & R'dish)*
Bermingham, Gerald
Bidwell, Sydney
Blair, Tony
Blunkett, David
Boateng, Paul
Boyes, Roland
Bradley, Keith
Brown, Gordon *(D'mline E)*
Brown, Nicholas *(Newcastle E)*
Brown, Ron *(Edinburgh Leith)*
Bruce, Malcolm *(Gordon)*
Buchan, Norman
Buckley, George
Caborn, Richard
Callaghan, Jim
Campbell, Menzies *(Fife NE)*
Campbell, Ron *(Blyth Valley)*
Campbell-Savours, D. N.
Canavan, Dennis
Carlile, Alex *(Mont'g)*
Clarke, Tom *(Monklands W)*
Clay, Bob
Clelland, David
Clwyd, Mrs Ann
Cohen, Harry
Coleman, Donald
Cook, Robin *(Livingston)*
Corbett, Robin
Cousins, Jim
Cox, Tom
Crowther, Stan
Cryer, Bob
Cummings, J.
Cunliffe, Lawrence
Dalyell, Tam
Darling, Alistair
Davies, Rt Hon Denzil *(Llanelli)*
Davies, Ron *(Caerphilly)*
Davis, Terry *(B'ham Hodge H'l)*
Dewar, Donald
Dixon, Don
Dobson, Frank
Douglas, Dick
Dunn, Bob
Dunnachie, James
Dunwoody, Hon Mrs Gwyneth
Eastham, Ken
Evans, John *(St Helens N)*
Ewing, Harry *(Falkirk E)*
Ewing, Mrs Margaret *(Moray)*
Faulds, Andrew
Field, Frank *(Birkenhead)*
Fields, Terry *(L'pool B G'n)*
Flannery, Martin
Flynn, Paul
Forsythe, Clifford *(Antrim S)*
Fraser, John
Fyfe, Mrs Maria
Galbraith, Samuel
Garrett, John *(Norwich South)*
Garrett, Ted *(Wallsend)*
George, Bruce
Gilbert, Rt Hon Dr John
Godman, Dr Norman A.
Golding, Mrs Llin
Gordon, Ms Mildred
Grant, Bernie *(Tottenham)*
Griffiths, Nigel *(Edinburgh S)*
Griffiths, Win *(Bridgend)*
Grocott, Bruce
Harman, Ms Harriet
Haynes, Frank
Heffer, Eric S.
Hinchliffe, David
Hogg, N. *(C'nauld & Kilsyth)*
Holland, Stuart
Home Robertson, John
Hood, James
Howarth, George *(Knowsley N)*
Howell, Rt Hon D. *(S'heath)*
Howells, Geraint
Hoyle, Doug
Hughes, Robert *(Aberdeen N)*
Hughes, Roy *(Newport E)*
Hughes, Sean *(Knowsley S)*
Illsley, Eric
Ingram, Adam
Janner, Greville
John, Brynmor
Jones, Ieuan *(Ynys Môn)*
Jones, Martyn *(Clwyd S W)*
Kilfedder, James
Kinnock, Rt Hon Neil
Kirkwood, Archy
Lambie, David
Lamond, James
Leadbitter, Ted
Leighton, Ron
Lester, Miss Joan *(Eccles)*
Lewis, Terry
Litherland, Robert
Livingstone, Ken
Lloyd, Tony *(Stretford)*
Lofthouse, Geoffrey
McAllion, John
McAvoy, Tom
McCartney, Ian
Macdonald, Calum
McFall, John
McGrady, E. K.
McKelvey, William
McLeish, Henry
McNamara, Kevin
McTaggart, Bob
McWilliam, John
Madden, Max
Mahon, Mrs Alice
Mallon, Seamus
Marek, Dr John
Marshall, David *(Shettleston)*
Marshall, Jim *(Leicester S)*
Martin, Michael *(Springburn)*
Martlew, Eric
Maxton, John
Meacher, Michael
Meale, Alan
Michael, Alun
Michie, Bill *(Sheffield Heeley)*
Michie, Mrs Ray *(Arg'l & Bute)*
Millan, Rt Hon Bruce
Mitchell, Austin *(G't Grimsby)*
Moonie, Dr Lewis
Morgan, Rhodri
Morley, Elliott
Morris, Rt Hon A *(W'shawe)*
Morris, Rt Hon J *(Aberavon)*
Mowlam, Marjorie
Mullin, Chris
Murphy, Paul
Nellist, Dave
Oakes, Rt Hon Gord
O'Brien, William
O'Neill, Martin
Orme, Rt Hon Stanle
Patchett, Terry
Pendry, Tom
Pike, Peter
Powell, Ray *(Ogmor*
Prescott, John
Primarolo, Ms Dawn
Quin, Ms Joyce
Radice, Giles
Randall, Stuart
Rees, Rt Hon Merlyn
Reid, John
Richardson, Ms Jo
Robinson, Geoffrey
Rogers, Allan
Rooker, Jeff
Ross, Ernie *(Dundee*
Ross, William *(Londo*
Rowlands, Ted
Ruddock, Ms Joan
Sheerman, Barry
Sheldon, Rt Hon Robe
Shore, Rt Hon Peter
Short, Clare
Skinner, Dennis
Smith, Andrew *(Oxfor*
Smith, Rt Hon J. *(Mor*
Smyth, Rev Martin *(B*
Snape, Peter
Soley, Clive
Spearing, Nigel
Steinberg, Gerald
Stott, Roger
Strang, Gavin
Taylor, Mrs Ann *(Dew*
Taylor, Matthew *(Trur*
Thomas, Dafydd Elis
Thompson, Jack *(Wan*
Turner, Dennis
Vaz, Keith
Wall, Pat
Wardell, Gareth *(Gow*
Wareing, Robert N.
Welsh, Andrew *(Angus*
Wigley, Dafydd
Williams, Alan W. *(Car*
Wilson, Brian
Winnick, David
Wise, Mrs Audrey
Worthington, Anthony
Wray, James
Young, David *(Bolton S*

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. Frank Cook and
Mr. Allen McKay

NOES

Alison, Rt Hon Michael
Allason, Rupert
Amess, David
Amos, Alan
Arbuthnot, James
Arnold, Jacques *(Gravesham)*
Arnold, Tom *(Hazel Grove)*
Atkins, Robert
Atkinson, David
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Baldry, Tony
Banks, Robert *(Harrogate)*
Batiste, Spencer
Beaumont-Dark, Anthony
Bellingham, Henry
Bendall, Vivian
Bennett, Nicholas *(Pem*
Benyon, W.
Bevan, David Gilroy
Biffen, Rt Hon John
Blaker, Rt Hon Sir Pete
Body, Sir Richard
Boscawen, Hon Robert
Bottomley, Peter
Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Bowden, Gerald *(Dulwi*
Bowis, John
Boyson, Rt Hon Dr Sir
Brandon-Bravo, Martin
Brazier, Julian
Brittan, Rt Hon Leon
Brooke, Rt Hon Peter

Brown, Michael *(Brigg & Cl'th)*
Browne, John *(Winchester)*
Bruce, Ian *(Dorset South)*
Buchanan-Smith, Rt Hon Alick
Buck, Sir Antony
Burns, Simon
Burt, Alistair
Butler, Chris
Butterfill, John
Carlisle, John, *(Luton N)*
Carrington, Matthew
Carttiss, Michael
Cash, William
Chapman, Sydney
Coombs, Anthony *(Wyre F'rest)*
Coombs, Simon *(Swindon)*
Cope, John
Couchman, James
Cran, James
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Curry, David
Davies, Q. *(Stamf'd & Spald'g)*
Davis, David *(Boothferry)*
Day, Stephen
Dicks, Terry
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James
Durant, Tony
Dykes, Hugh
Evans, David *(Welwyn Hatf'd)*
Fallon, Michael
Favell, Tony
Fookes, Miss Janet
Forman, Nigel
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Fox, Sir Marcus
Gale, Roger
Garel-Jones, Tristan
Gilmour, Rt Hon Sir Ian
Glyn, Dr Alan
Gorman, Mrs Teresa
Gow, Ian
Gower, Sir Raymond
Grant, Sir Anthony *(CambsSW)*
Greenway, Harry *(Ealing N)*
Greenway, John *(Ryedale)*
Gregory, Conal
Griffiths, Peter *(Portsmouth N)*
Griet, Ian
Ground, Patrick
Hamilton, Hon A. *(Epsom)*
Hannam, John
Hargreaves, A. *(B'ham H'll Gr')*
Hargreaves, Ken *(Hyndburn)*
Harris, David
Hawkins, Christopher
Hayhoe, Rt Hon Sir Barney
Heathcoat-Amory, David
Heddle, John
Heseltine, Rt Hon Michael
Hicks, Mrs Maureen *(Wolv' NE)*
Hicks, Robert *(Cornwall SE)*
Higgins, Rt Hon Terence L.
Hogg, Hon Douglas *(Gr'th'm)*
Holt, Richard
Hordern, Sir Peter
Howard, Michael
Howarth, Alan *(Strat'd-on-A)*
Howell, Rt Hon David *(G'dford)*
Hughes, Robert G. *(Harrow W)*
Hunt, David *(Wirral W)*
Hunt, John *(Ravensbourne)*
Irvine, Michael
Jack, Michael
Janman, Timothy
Jessel, Toby
Jones, Gwilym *(Cardiff N)*
Jones, Robert B *(Herts W)*
Kellett-Bowman, Mrs Elaine
Key, Robert
King, Roger *(B'ham N'thfield)*
King, Rt Hon Tom *(Bridgwater)*
Kirkhope, Timothy
Knapman, Roger
Knight, Greg *(Derby North)*
Knowles, Michael
Knox, David
Lamont, Rt Hon Norman
Lang, Ian
Latham, Michael
Lawrence, Ivan
Lee, John *(Pendle)*
Leigh, Edward *(Gainsbor'gh)*
Lennox-Boyd, Hon Mark
Lester, Jim *(Broxtowe)*
Lightbown, David
Lilley, Peter
Lloyd, Sir Ian *(Havant)*
Lord, Michael
Luce, Rt Hon Richard
Lyell, Sir Nicholas
Macfarlane, Sir Neil
MacKay, Andrew *(E Berkshire)*
Maclean, David
McLoughlin, Patrick
McNair-Wilson, M. *(Newbury)*
McNair-Wilson, P. *(New Forest)*
Major, Rt Hon John
Malins, Humfrey
Maples, John
Mariand, Paul
Marshall, John *(Hendon S)*
Marshall, Michael *(Arundel)*
Martin, David *(Portsmouth S)*
Maude, Hon Francis
Mawhinney, Dr Brian
Maxwell-Hyslop, Robin
Mayhew, Rt Hon Sir Patrick
Mellor, David
Meyer, Sir Anthony
Miller, Hal
Mills, Iain
Miscampbell, Norman
Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)*
Mitchell, David *(Hants NW)*
Monro, Sir Hector
Montgomery, Sir Fergus
Moore, Rt Hon John
Morrison, Sir Charles *(Devizes)*
Morrison, Hon P *(Chester)*
Moss, Malcolm
Moynihan, Hon C.
Mudd, David
Neale, Gerrard
Nelson, Anthony
Neubert, Michael
Newton, Rt Hon Tony
Nicholls, Patrick
Nicholson, David *(Taunton)*
Nicholson, Miss E. *(Devon W)*
Oppenheim, Phillip
Page, Richard
Paice, James
Patnick, Irvine
Patten, Chris *(Bath)*
Peacock, Mrs Elizabeth
Porter, David *(Waveney)*
Portillo, Michael
Powell, William *(Corby)*
Raffan, Keith
Raison, Rt Hon Timothy
Redwood, John
Renton, Tim
Rhodes James, Robert
Rhys Williams, Sir Brandon
Riddick, Graham
Ridley, Rt Hon Nicholas
Rifkind, Rt Hon Malcolm
Roberts, Wyn *(Conwy)*
Roe, Mrs Marion
Rowe, Andrew
Rumbold, Mrs Angela
Ryder, Richard
Sackville, Hon Tom
Sayeed, Jonathan
Scott, Nicholas
Shaw, David *(Dover)*
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Shepherd, Richard *(Aldridge)*
Sims, Roger
Skeet, Sir Trevor
Smith, Tim *(Beaconsfield)*
Soames, Hon Nicholas
Speed, Keith
Spicer, Sir Jim *(Dorset W)*
Squire, Robin
Stanbrook, Ivor
Steen, Anthony
Stern, Michael
Stevens, Lewis
Stewart, Allan *(Eastwood)*
Stewart, Andrew *(Sherwood)*
Sumberg, David
Summerson, Hugo
Taylor, Ian *(Esher)*
Taylor, John M *(Solihull)*
Thompson, Patrick *(Norwich N)*
Thornton, Malcolm
Thurnham, Peter
Tracey, Richard
Tredinnick, David
Trippier,
Trotter,
Twinn,
Vaughan
Viggers,
Wadding
Wakeha
Waldegr
Walker,
Waller,
Ward, Jo
Wardle,
Watts, Jo
Wells, B
Wheeler,
Whitney,
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Wolfson,
Wood, T
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Yeo, Tim
Young, S

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Mr. Pe
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Question accordingly negatived.

Clause 11

SCHEMES FOR DISTRIBUTION ETC. O

Mrs. Beckett: I beg to move amend
8, line 3, after 'food' insert
'including the provision of such foo
income is below a prescribed level'.

This amendment deals with welf
enables the Government to withdraw
foods that are now available to pr
young children in low-income families
we seek to ensure that some of those
because we believe that the availabi
important to them. The effect of the
to include families who are not eligi
because they are expecting their
particularly important because the
Government have tended to put in
withdrawal of that right is that there
in the rates of family credit.
compensation will not be available
their first child, although they will lo
milk. That is particularly worrying fo
others.

It is generally recognised that the
in pregnancy is of considerable i
retrograde step for the Governmen
entitlement to welfare foods in any ca
families for whom there is no
Government's argument about con
family credit having any value. That
for a family where there are already
but where there is another pregnancy.
that the family credit rates include co
loss of welfare foods, it will include co
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Rt Hon John
, Hon William
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John
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Mrs Ann
Nicholas
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George (Acton)

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WELFARE FOODS

nt No. 18, in page

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for family credit
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pensation for the
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the child and not

for the loss of milk available to the pregnant mother. As I have said, that is a particularly undesirable time for such a benefit to be withdrawn.

Apart from that, a substantial number of low-income families would be entitled to family credit on income grounds, but not even the Government expect them to claim it or it to be awarded to them. The best estimate that the Government have offered—it is based more on hope than on evidence—is that about 60 per cent. of the families entitled to family credit on income grounds will draw it. That still leaves, even on their assumptions, which are not shared by most of those who have studied the matter, some 40 per cent. of low income families who, because they will not draw family credit, for whatever reason, will not receive even the element of compensation that the Government have included, and will simply face the loss of the benefit.

It has been suggested to the Opposition that at present some 7,000 pregnant women and some 77,000 children are entitled to and receive welfare milk without being on supplementary benefit or family income supplement. Those are some of the people who will lose if the Government use the enabling power, as it has been suggested that they will. We move the amendment to ensure that such low-income families retain that entitlement.

8.30 pm

Mr. Portillo: The hon. Member for Derby, South (Mrs. Beckett) is right in most of what she says about the Government's intention to end the low-income scheme, but she has not presented the case as fully as she might have done. I should like to set out how we see the arrangements working in future.

For those on income support there is, of course, no change from the present situation. They will qualify for free milk and vitamins in the future in the same way as they do now. I should like to make one point perfectly clear in case there is any doubt about it. An expectant mother who lives in an income support household will qualify for welfare foods during her pregnancy, because the assessment of the household allows for welfare food to be given to a pregnant girl or any pregnant woman in the household irrespective of whether she is the main claimant or the main claimant's daughter. That point caused some concern in Committee, and I wanted to make it clear.

Another point that came up in Committee related to young girls under 16 who might be in local authority care. I should like to point out to the House, particularly to those who served on the Committee, that section 21 of the Child Care Act 1980 imposes a duty on local authorities to ensure that children in care are provided with accommodation and that they are well maintained. The duty on a local authority can best be summed up by saying that it is expected to act as a good parent towards the children in its care.

The hon. Member for Derby, South drew attention to the position of expectant mothers and family credit. With regard to family credit in general, the amount of money that is being built into family credit for welfare foods is £2·55. That sum has been calculated on the basis of what school meals cost over the year. With regard to children who are under school age, the sum is considerably more generous than the sum that the family will need to find to provide the milk, which we estimate to cost £1·82. The £2·55 that the family receives in family c to replace the free milk and vitamins, adequately.

It is true that a pregnant woman wil qualify for family credit if it is her first after all, that derives from the nature Family credit is a benefit for families wi proposal that family credit should be as monthly basis means that there will be adjustments to take account of any new family. Extra sums of £2·55 will be paya those extra babies as they arrive. I emphas that we see the proposal leading to many m fewer, people being helped.

The hon. Member for Derby, South about the take-up of family income su concerned about that, too; but I emphasi up of the low-income scheme has been m the take-up of family income supplem running at about 7 per cent. I reiterate t estimate that only about 6,800 expectant w entitlement of free milk under the low-inco think that most of them are women who a the first time; and most will probably hav recently and are likely now to be eligib statutory maternity pay. They will be outs the scheme based on low income.

We believe that the cash provision that go to many more children than currently foods. About 124,000 children are prese through family income supplement to fr further 77,000 receive free supplies under scheme, whereas we estimate that 300,000 the age of five in family credit families £2·55. The new arrangements will help a more children. As I emphasised, the take- income scheme has been low and disappoi

For all those reasons, while I recogni group of women will not be eligible for w they have been under the low-income schem to be able to tell the House that a much la children will benefit in future. The va expectant mothers who are on low income to be looked after under income support, a so whether the woman is the main claiman support household, or perhaps the claimant. In either case, the woman will be foods during the period of her pregnancy when the child is born.

Mrs. Beckett: I have listened with care what the Minister said. I wonder why it al be impossible for the Government to say tha a little more in family credit to 300,000 ch deciding that as a consequence they have benefit from some other people who are eq and in low-income families. I note that th not contest the figures that we gave—the 7 women and about 76,000 to 77,000 children families who are now likely to lose their welfare foods. No reason has been given f necessary. It is simply suggested that, bec number of pregnant women or children may extent, that makes it all right.

The Minister did not answer my point abo woman in a family where family credit is

[Mrs. Beckett]

where compensation might be paid for the loss of welfare foods for the children in the family but not for the loss of welfare foods for the pregnant mother.

The Minister referred to the low take-up of the scheme and said that it was all right to abolish it, as the take-up of family credit will be higher. I should be more impressed by that argument if I did not recall that, not in the Bill but as part of the pattern of changes of which this is one, the Government are making sure that low-income families in a different context will not be entitled to free school meals any more. Some 250,000 children are losing by that, although the take-up of that scheme is substantially higher than the take-up of family credit. The Government are on fairly weak ground in that element of change.

I am aware of the fact that we are under substantial pressure of time. For that reason, and for that reason only, I do not advise my hon. Friends to vote on the amendment, but I hope very much that what has been said in the House and in Committee will be noted in another place and that a little more time will be available for noble Lords to discuss the issue.

Therefore, with considerable reluctance, I beg to ask leave to withdraw the amendment.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Clause 16

Commencement

Amendment made: No. 19, in page 12, line 38, at end insert—

'Section *(Up-rating Order)*;'.—*[Mr. Portillo.]*

Mr. Portillo: I beg to move amendment No. 43, in page 12, line 41, at end insert

'and sections 29, 33 and 53 of the Social Security Act 1986'.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: With this it will be convenient to consider Government amendment No. 44.

Mr. Portillo: The effect of amendment No. 43 is to commence the amendments to sections 29, 33 and 53 of the Social Security Act 1986 which are to be made by schedule 4 to the Bill.

Amendment No. 44 has three effects. It provides for payments from the social fund in Northern Ireland and recoverable overpayments of housing benefit and other social security benefits made in Northern Ireland to be recovered by the Secretary of State from prescribed benefits in Great Britain. In the case of the social fund payments, that power is also extended to enable the Secretary of State to recover an award for a partner of the recipient and from a liable relative. The principal reason for making the power retrospective to 6 April 1987 is to apply it to amounts recovered since that date in respect to overpayments arising in Northern Ireland.

The need for the amendment arose in order to prescribe for the recovery of social fund loans made in this country when the applicant moves to Northern Ireland. The existing powers in section 33 of the 1986 Act were inadequate for the purpose, and that obviously gave rise to some doubt about the powers contained in sections 29 and 53 which provide for the recovery of housing benefit and social security overpayments. That is the reason for the proposed amendments.

Mrs. Beckett: I do not propose to detain the House, b I am sure that the Minister would be disappointed if, some stage, we did not take the opportunity to point o that one of the reasons why we have the Bill is that t Government are still correcting the legislation.

When we consider the amendments that t Government are now seeking to move, it is clear that th are substantial and I believe I am right in saying that th were tabled as late as Monday of this week. That shou go on record so that when the Minister explains to us th of course they understand what the law is doing, that th have got the wording right and that we are mistaken in o observations to suggest otherwise, that can be placed context.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 18

Citation

Amendments made: No. 20, in page 14, line 4, leave o '10' and insert *'(Up-rating Orders)'*.

No. 21, in page 14, line 6, leave out '10' and insert *'(U rating Orders)'*.—*[Mr. Portillo.]*

Schedule 3

The Social Fund

Mr. Robin Cook: I beg to move amendment No. 23, i page 17, line 15, after 'meet', insert

'the cost of community care, exceptional needs or'.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: With this it will be convenient t take the following amendments: No. 24, in page 17, lin 17, at end insert

'and to meet such other expenses as appear to the Secretar of State should be paid as of right to all persons of th prescribed descriptions in such circumstances.'.

No. 28, in page 17, line 20, after 'allocate', inse 'prescribed'.

Mr. Cook: During the Conservative party conferenc I was greatly encouraged to read reports in the press tha when the current Secretary of State for Health and Socia Security took office, he did his best to rid himself of th albatross of the social fund. Unfortunately, he could n persuade other Cabinet Ministers to let him off the hook That demonstrates that anyone who comes to this issu with a fresh mind is bound rapidly to come to th conclusion — as the Secretary of State did — that th social fund is a lunatic inheritance from his predecesso and that, in the interests of social security claimants, i should be ditched.

Unfortunately, the Secretary of State was unsuccessfu in his attempts to rid himself of the social fund, and we fin ourselves debating another batch of Governmen amendments to the social fund, which remains the mos objectionable feature — among many — of the Socia Security Act 1986. The main result of the social fund is t replace the present system of single payments to claimant with a system of loans that will be repaid by deduction from benefits. Those benefits are calculated and approve by Parliament to provide for a subsistence level of income However, after such deductions, claimants will be left t survive on income that, by definition, will be belo subsistence level.

The previous Secretary of State—granted the presen Secretary of State has not made an attempt yet —

described the new arrangement as a banking facility for social security claimants. It will certainly resemble some banks because I understand that, in those social security offices where special rooms will be set aside for social fund interviews, floor to ceiling security screens are being installed to protect the staff from the claimants' frustrations as they try to wrestle with the ins and outs of the social fund.

In the next fortnight the House will have the opportunity to debate the social fund as a result of the three orders that will be before the House. In the meantime, we wish to propose two amendments to the Bill that would remove two of the gravest defects of the proposed social fund. Amendment No. 23 would curb some of the limitless discretion available to the Secretary of State under present legislation. The amendment achieves that by subjecting the grants for community care and the loans for exceptional needs to the same regime of prescription that the schedule provides for cold weather payments.

8.45 pm

It is worth pausing to note that, although we refer to the structure as a single social fund, it is rapidly splitting into two separate funds. On the one hand, there will be a fund out of which payments will be made for maternity grants, funeral grants and severe weather payments. Those payments will be made as of legal right and as an entitlement to the claimant. On the other hand, the payments for the community care grant and exceptional needs loans will be paid at the discretion of the social fund officer.

There are other contrasts that should concern Parliament. The former fund will be regulated by parliamentary instrument, whereas the latter will be controlled simply by guidance issued by the Secretary of State. There will be no parliamentary scrutiny of that guidance. As yet, we have had no opportunity to debate the social fund guidance manual.

From the claimant's point of view, there are even more stark contrasts. Payments out of the first fund for maternity grant, funeral grant and severe weather payments are subject to appeal. They are paid as a legal right, so there are grounds for appeal. The claimant may pursue that appeal through the DHSS, through the tribunals, through the commissioners and through the Court of Appeal if he feels aggrieved. However, the claimant who is refused the exceptional needs loan has no right of appeal. The decision made in the room on the other side of the security screen is final and there is no opportunity for redress. No wonder it is felt that it would be safer to announce that final decision from behind the safety of a metal grille. Our amendment would put both funds on the same footing so that we would have one genuine, integrated social fund.

I wish to deal with another area of sharp contrast that leads me to the other amendment. Perhaps the greatest contrast of all between the two funds is that the claimant seeking a maternity grant, funeral grant or severe weather payment must be paid if he or she can establish a legal right. However, the claimant who turns up looking for a community grant or an exceptional needs loan need not be paid. Indeed, that claimant can be paid only if the money has not run out. He or she is applying for a payment from a cash-limited fund and the limits on that fund may well have run out by the time of application.

We understand that the DHSS, with prudence and perhaps forethought, has prepared a computer programme for distribution to DHSS officers to control their allocations from the fund. Unfortunately, when I last heard, the software was not up and running. Understandably, DHSS officers are worried about what they will do with their computers on 1 April without the software. Perhaps the Under-Secretary will consider that problem.

Assuming that the process of monthly budgeting works, it will mean that, in week one or week two, those who claim in those weeks might succeed in getting a payment if they manage to get on the right side of the social fund officer on the other side of the grille. However, if they turn up in week three they are liable to be told that the month's budget is getting dangerously low and that they are being refused. It will not be that they are not entitled or that they do not come within the scope of the guidance manual, but that the money just is not there.

We know how things work regarding public expenditure, and it may be that when the same claimant goes back in week four he may encounter a different attitude. The social fund officer may be anxious to meet his month norm and to dispose of his monthly budget, so it is possible that he would be more generous than he was a week before. I predict that, rapidly, all round Britain, welfare officers and social work departments will learn what is the best day of the month on which to send a claimant along to apply for a loan from a social fund.

This is bizarre. But what makes that rather outrageous procedure not entertaining, but deeply tragic, is that we now have the figures for what the cash limits will be. The most dramatic development since Second Reading in terms of the social fund is that we now have deposited in the Library what the allocation will be to every local DHSS office. We now know the figures, and they are horrendous. As many hon. Members will know, I have done some work on allocating to constituencies not just the allocation for the social fund expenditure next year, but the actual expenditure on single payments by the same office in 1986-87. Therefore, we can compare what was available to claimants on an outturn basis for last year with what will be available for the same purpose through the social fund next year. The results are alarming.

When we first saw the figures, the biggest cut was allocated to Glasgow, Provan, which was to receive only 22 per cent. of its total expenditure in 1986-87. I understand that that cut was so enormous that the Government have withdrawn those figures and announced that there was an error in the calculation, which they will amend. For the sake of Provan I am glad that that step has been taken, but it leaves me in a particularly invidious position because the DHSS office which now enjoys the unfortunate distinction of having the biggest cut is Bathgate in West Lothian, which serves my constituency. In 1986-87 it spent £2,250,000 on single payments; for 1988-89 its allocation under the social fund is £750,000 —one third of last year's expenditure.

I shall pursue the constituency point to which this gives rise elsewhere and content myself on this occasion by noting only that West Lothian is one of the half dozen travel-to-work areas in central Scotland with the highest rate of male unemployment and that my constituency, including as it does a young new town, is one of the half dozen constituencies in Scotland with the largest number of single parents. There is no conceivable index of poverty,

[Mr. Cook]

deprivation and social need by which one could single out Bathgate and Livingston for the largest cut in payment to social security claimants anywhere in Britain. Why us?

We are comforted, in so far as it is possible to find consolation in these circumstances, by the fact that we are almost not alone. We have ranked all the local offices by the size of cut and we find that there are just over 20 local offices facing a cut in expenditure which brings them down to half the level of spending of 1986-87. Those 20 local offices read like a roll-call of the areas of greatest deprivation and poverty in Britain. Let me share with the House the names of some those local offices.

First comes Bathgate and then Bloomsbury — the local office in central London which deals with most of the bed-and-breakfast cases of the homeless who are camped in Camden and one of the areas of most intense pressure on the DHSS system. The third area, for some curious reason, is the New Forest. It sticks out like a sore thumb, and I cannot explain why it has found its way on to the list of multiple deprivation. My only possible explanation is that it may be well known in the DHSS that the spokesman for the official Opposition spends every summer on holiday in the New Forest, and I am sorry if I have visited my blight on the local residents.

Fourth is Cowdenbeath, which covers central Fife—an area with one of the highest unemployment levels in Scotland, and that is saying something. Then comes Leeds, north, Leven—which covers the rest of central Fife—Glasgow, Cranstonhill, Dundee east, Kilmarnock, the Oval—the other central London office with the largest pressure on it — Thames south, Glasgow Anniesland, Glasgow Maryhill, Leeds south, Chester-le-Street, Abertillery, Edinburgh east, Sunderland south and Middlesbrough. All those offices are having their expenditure cut by half.

One can compare and contrast that list of the areas of multiple deprivation with the 20-odd local offices which do best out of the allocation. There are just over 20 which manage to receive over 80 per cent. of last year's expenditure. These are the local offices that face the smallest cuts and in half a dozen cases an actual increase over last year's expenditure. Where are they? They are Eastbourne, Folkestone, Lewes—Lewes receives 80 per cent. of last year's expenditure, whereas all the others receive more—Worthing, Guildford—that well-known black spot of unemployment — Bournemouth, Weymouth, Ipswich, Hove, Skegness and Epsom. I cannot conceive of what index of social deprivation would qualify Epsom as being one of the areas for the highest allocation for any social security budget.

The list continues with the Isle of Wight, Thanet, Exeter and—now we come to it—the local office in the whole of Britain which receives the best allocation of all from the social fund and which is singled out for the most favourable treatment and the most generous allocation —Bognor Regis. Next year Bognor Regis will get two thirds more for expenditure than it spent last year, while Bathgate will receive two thirds less. Bognor Regis is in the Arundel division. I do not know what level of mul deprivation may be found in Arundel, but it has a 19 Conservative majority. I checked it in the list ran constituencies by unemployment and discovered tha was almost 500th. Why Bognor Regis?

I observe that the Under-Secretary of State has rele two pages which explain how the calculation was don enable the allocation to be carried out. I note from calculations that six sevenths of the formula relate to historic spending pattern, but one seventh relates to w the Department expects to happen over the coming y Whether that means that the Department expects m factory closures in Bognor Regis, I do not know. should be told. I find it impossible to reconcile th figures with either the previous spending pattern of th local offices or any objective measure of social nee Bognor Regis and Bathgate.

So far I have dealt gently with the Government. I h compared the expenditure on single payments last y with the total allocation of the social fund to those of for next year. But it would be possible to make a m accurate and restricted comparison. The single paym that were paid out in 1986-87 were grants and were repayable. Most payments out of the social fund wil loans. Indeed, of the £200 million budget, £140 million be loans and only £60 million will be grants. That £ million of loans is not new money; it will come out of pockets of the claimants who will have to repay it.

It is therefore possible to sharpen the contrast and that it is really between the expenditure on single paym last year and the allocation for grants from the social f for next year. Let us take some of our major cities examine what happens if we make that comparison.

Birmingham contains the constituency with the high unemployment in Britain—that of the deputy leade the Labour party, my right hon. Friend the Member Birmingham, Sparkbrook (Mr. Hattersley). Last yea received £12·5 million for expenditure on single payme Next year, it will receive barely £2 million in gra through the social fund—a reduction to 17 per cent the previous level of expenditure. That is a comparison. It means that £10 million is being taken of Birmingham's local economy, which is a loss

9 pm

I notice that my hon. Friend the Member for Bris South (Ms. Primarolo) is present. She will be interested know that last year Bristol received £2·75 million in sin payments. Next year, it will be allocated barely £500,(in expenditure grants—a reduction to 19 per cent. of previous year's expenditure. I notice that my hon. Fri the Member for Glasgow, Rutherglen (Mr. McAvoy) i his place. Last year, Glasgow spent £26 million in sin payments; next year it will get not quite £4 million expenditure on grants under the social fund — reduction to 15 per cent. Knowing, as he does, appalling need and poverty of Glasgow, I do not think hon. Friend the Member for Rutherglen, or any other h Member, could stand up and say that Glasgow wa suitable candidate for that sharp loss of purchasing pow of more than £20 million in the local economy.

Liverpool faces a reduction from more than £8 mill to £1·5 million — a reduction to 18 per ce Manchester's allocation will fall from £6·5 million barely £1 million—again, a reduction to 18 per ce How is it possible to justify these figures? I must admit th

all the scepticism that we expressed about the social fund has been not only vindicated, but outdone by events. In retrospect, my hon. Friends and I were trusting and naive in being reluctant to believe that the position could be quite as bad as the figures show it to be.

There is a good reason why Parliament challenged the absolute right of the Crown in the 17th century. It is the same reason why, ever since, Parliament has been reluctant to give any Government absolute discretion that is not tempered by regulation. It is that absolute discretion quickly leads to arbitrary power. I choose my words with care. There is no objective arithmetical way in which one can explain the distribution and allocation that I have outlined to the House. The only possible reason for the ludicrously lopsided allocation is deliberate political bias. It represents the Government's use of unfettered power to reward their own and to penalise ours. The way in which that unfettered power had been manipulated is a scandal and an outrage, and shows that the Government are not to be trusted. Therefore, we shall vote for the amendments, which will provide some restrictions on that unfettered power.

Mr. Ronnie Fearn (Southport): The intention behind my amendment is to give the Secretary of State power to provide extra expenses to enable people at risk from severe weather to protect themselves.

I was glad to see that cold, weather payments are now to have a proper budget. However, I am extremely concerned that the abolition of single payments and their replacement with discretionary loans will cause considerable hardship to people who are already in grave danger at times when we experience exceptionally cold weather like last year's. This particularly affects elderly people, the chronically sick and disabled and very young children, who are accepted as being at risk from severe weather. Such people are already eligible for severe weather payments if they are in receipt of income supplement, but without single payments to provide essential equipment to fight the cold, many people's lives will be put at risk.

The Child Poverty Action Group has told me of a case that provides an excellent example of how the changes could put life at risk and of how my amendment could prevent that. It is that of a single parent, living on supplementary benefit and supporting a child under two years of age. She was moved from partly furnished to unfurnished accommodation because her previous flat was too small. The flat-rate grant was not enough to provide carpets and curtains for the flat. As a result, the health of her small child was at considerable risk from the cold. My amendment would give the Secretary of State the power to intervene and provide extra payments so that that single parent could live without the dangers caused by severe weather.

As well as payments for essential articles for fighting the cold, such as carpets and curtains—many of us do not consider them in that light—payments could also cover grants for blankets and mattresses. More important, grants could provide long-term protection from the cold for those at risk such as the very young, the elderly and the chronically sick. Payments could be utilised to insulate their homes, especially if they are in hard-to-heat homes in areas where they do not qualify for an energy grant. Payments could be made for draughtproofing, hot water cylinder jackets and repairs to defective appliances. Grants could also be provided to help those in need with reconnection charges in an emergency. Many such emergencies occurred last year.

The abolition of single payments will cause considerable problems and put at special risk the poorest and most vulnerable people in our society during exceptionally cold weather.

Mr. Burns: In the light of the fairly dramatic new policies that are coming from whatever name the hon. Gentleman's party now calls itself, can he give the House a categorical assurance that, in addition to wanting to put VAT on food, children's clothes and newspapers, for the next 24 hours his party will not want to put VAT on fuel bills?

Mr. Fearn: If the hon. Gentleman has read some of the statements that appeared in the press—some of them erroneous—and has watched television, he will have found that the statements made were not party statements, but a leader's statements.

Mr. Robin Cook: In that case, one should clarify to the House that the apostrophe comes after the "s" of leaders' and not before it, and that there are two leaders to choose from. The document is signed by both of them. The areas to which they propose to extend VAT include food, children's clothing, newspapers and domestic fuel. The hon. Member for Chelmsford (Mr. Burns) is therefore correct in asking for an assurance.

Mr. Fearn: I shall continue with my speech. My amendment would enable the Secretary of State to relieve hardship and to protect lives. However, as the point is covered by another amendment and I see that it is also within amendment Nos. 23 and 28, I shall not press my amendment.

Mrs. Alice Mahon (Halifax): I compliment my hon. Friend the Member for Livingston (Mr. Cook) on his remarks about the social fund. It is with some sadness that I speak in support of the amendment because Conservative Members should know and Opposition Members certainly know that we should be talking about a huge increase in benefits. My hon. Friend the Member for Livingston was a little too kind to the Minister, to the Secretary of State and indeed to Conservative Members. For weeks I listened to debates in Committee about these benefits and about the horrendous cuts that will be implemented in April. I was shocked yesterday to hear Conservative Members accuse my hon. Friend the Member for Preston (Mrs. Wise) of being emotional. I thought that I was shockproof until I heard what was said in Committee.

I made many notes of the things that the Secretary of State said in answer to vital questions about how people will live from April in the light of some of these cuts and started to consider some of the people who devised this dreadful piece of legislation. One can see where they come from by looking at the Poor Law Amendment Act 1834. Then, as now, some people thought that others should not get sufficient to live on because the principle in that Act was that if they were given as little as possible they would be forced into low-paid jobs. That is part of the Government's strategy.

When I asked the Minister how children live when they leave care and asked for solutions for this or that group of claimants, he gave benign answers of sympathy, such as, "We have listened to the hon. Lady, but"—we always

[Mrs. Alice Mahon]

had a "but" at the end. Tht is why my hon. Friend the Member for Livingston has been too kind to Government Members. I have looked into the hearts of those Conservative Members on the Committee and what I saw filled me with a cold chill, because they do not care. That is the crux of the matter. The social fund epitomises everything that went on in Committee. This is the removal of the safety net of the welfare state. Let nobody be in any doubt about that. The consensus has gone.

Over Christmas I went to various groups to meet the claimants—nursery groups and family centres. I met the men and women who use those centres, who are struggling to bring up families on benefits or on very low incomes. I have the dubious honour of representing the constituency with the lowest pay in the country, so I know what I am talking about when I talk about poverty.

I wish to quote some of the comments of those people. One person said:

"The Prime Minister can come round to my house any time. I defy her to show me how I can economise more than I am doing already. Can you tell me how to feed, clothe and care for two children and myself on £25 a week? I have a pound left in my purse. I don't know what we are going to eat for tea."

The women I spoke to, and occasionally a man, are bringing up children on benefits. One or two are on very low incomes, which is what I believe the Government want to force people into. The people feel forgotten. They told me that they are struggling to keep a decent life for themselves and their families. They hate having to live on the means-tested benefit; they do not want it.

I am glad I was not in the House when a Conservative Member referred to youngsters as being idle and not wanting to get out of bed. That is the most gross insult I can think of. During my fact-finding mission I talked to youngsters, and many of them are living on peanuts. Conservative Members could not feed themselves for even half a day on some of the incomes I am talking about.

The people I spoke to were particularly concerned about what will happen to young people when the social fund comes in. My local press ran the most heartbreaking story the week before Christmas. There was a very poignant picture of a 17-year-old woman who wrote a letter to the paper saying:

"Can anybody help me? I live in a maisonette, I have been in it since 6th December. People have helped, but I have no bed, cooker or carpet. I have borrowed a bed. I have a baby due in February and as yet social security has not been able to help me."

We all know that the payment of single benefits was removed, and she was caught in the trap.

"Until now I have been living on £18·75 a week. When the baby comes, how will I boil milk? I live on chips or anything that I can get. I come from a one-parent family and will soon be one myself. Do you think Bob Geldof can help me?"

I felt like writing back and saying, "Yes, because the Government will not." That young woman got help because she publicised her plight. My local press are not supporters of the Labour party. I suffer, as do many Labour Members, because often their values are not my values, and sometimes they come out in support of the new breed of 19th-century liberals who are governing us. Yet the paper said:

"What happened to Nicola Sykes? The pregnant teenager who spent Christmas alone without money or comfort in an empty council flat is not an isolated case. For every Nicola there are doubtless many, many others. While Nico are being met temporarily, this is going to get muc April 1988."

It went on:

"We have no confidence that things will get bet group of people or that the voluntary sector can c In fact, the voluntary sector is now being swamp going under.

9.15 pm

I want to return to the point that I made ea consider the thinking the Government Conservative Members who served on the Comm simple fact is—I emphasise this to my hon. F Member for Livingston, who let the Governme hook a little at first—thatthe Government do When I asked the Prime Minister during Quest why we have the highest infant mortality rate an are going in the opposite direction to our E colleagues, she replied that she did not kn Government do not know and Conservative Me not know. I could forgive that, but I have listen Government for weeks and the simple truth is tha not care.

Tonight's little demonstration may have alar offended the sensitivities of Conservative because there was noise. The hon. Member for Ch (Mr. Burns) is shaking his head and no doubt he a chance to speak later. Indeed, it will be a welco to hear from him because he sat in silence earlier a times during those weeks in Committee I w whether we had the deaf and dumb brigade f Government with us because Conservative Memb not willing to speak. If Conservative Membe impressed by that anger tonight, they must be aw they are storing up even more anger. I have spoke young people and I can tell the Government that pay for that anger.

We have a divided Britain, and the social f divide it even further. Conservative Members wil as swamped in their constituencies with people co them as I will be in mine. Conservative Members get away with this. The anger will manifest itself which Conservative Members will dislike.

The hon. Member for Derbyshire, We McLoughlin), who has just come into the Chamb this highly amusing. There is nothing amusing poverty. We noticed that attitude in Committee. W spoke about people trying to maintain decent l benefit, Conservative Members sat in Committee writing Christmas cards and passing each other litt That was disgraceful behaviour and it reflects w Government have done by introducing the soci The whole country will pay for the devastation t rotten legislation will produce.

Rev. Martin Smyth (Belfast, South): Gove amendments Nos. 43 and 44, dealt with debt collected from people in Northern Ireland. I want t the concerns of my colleagues and others in N Ireland about the implications of the social fund.

The hon. Member for Livingston (Mr. propounded the theory that the social fund wou Conservative constituencies. If that is so, it is amazi in Northern Ireland, if my memory is corre percentage social fund allocation to the of Ballymena is the largest of all. Very few people

contend that the hon. Member for Antrim, North (Rev. I. Paisley) is a noted supporter of the Government. However, this point highlights the real problem. There does not seem to be any rhyme or reason behind the allocation of the fund.

I want to speak for a few moments on behalf of an area that is recognised by most people to be remarkably deprived in terms of basic wages. Indeed, the region has the highest rates for housekeeping, fuel and grocery expenses. Some people wonder where the funds will come from in the future. We are still waiting for details about the social fund, although a Northern Ireland Minister gave us some information a short time ago. In most areas at least £1 million will be taken out of the purchasing economy. It is a matter not just of the recipients suffering, but of the ongoing impact on a community. Before the fund is implemented, I ask that deeper consideration be given to it. I support the concept of the amendment, which should be obligatory on the Secretary of State rather than permissive.

Mr. Jeremy Corbyn (Islington, North): I apologise to the House for not being here for the start of the debate on these amendments, but I assure the House that I was present throughout the Committee stage of the Bill, and, that of its predecessor, which was just as awful. I find it interesting to note the number of Tory Members who have gained a tongue since they came down from the Committee Corridor. Perhaps the air up there is too rarefied for them to be able to speak, and perhaps the Services Committee could attend to that. It is incredible that a major piece of social vandalism is to be visited upon the people of this country, yet not one Tory Member has a word to say about it, other than to parrot what the Minister tells him to parrot in Committee.

The people in my community will face many problems because of the introduction of the social fund. The hon. Member for Belfast, South (Rev. M. Smyth) mentioned the loss of £1 million in his community. I deplore that—it is appalling—but I wish that we were losing only £1 million from our community. There is something deeply offensive, unpleasant and unfair about the social fund. It is unfair because it takes away the right of people to gain a benefit, a single payment, and hands it over to the discretionary power of the Minister.

The Minister can hide. He will not be sitting at a counter in the Archway Tower, with a piece of plate glass between himself and applicants for social fund benefit, telling them no and watching their anger as they suddenly discover that what they could get as a right is now a discretionary matter. The Minister will be hiding away in his plush office at the Elephant and Castle. A poor, low-paid civil servant will have to face the ire of those who have lost their benefits because of the social fund.

What is even more evil about this measure is that there is no appeal against these arbitrary decisions. Applicants will go to the DHSS, desperate to get help which, at the moment, is available, and will be told, "No, the money has run out this month. Come back next month." The money will have run out again and they will be told to come back the following month. They will be at the end of a vicious queue, or they will be offered something through the loan fund. We are not even certain how the loan fund will operate, because the Minister was remarkably coy about that.

If the amendments are carried this evening — I sincerely hope that they will be, although I have my doubts —they will serve to put some semblance of fairness and order into this part of the Bill. The Minister may grin and say, "Oh, well, here the Labour party goes again, moaning about social security. Soon it will all be over and I can forget about it." I am happy to tell the Minister and the House that that is not the case because the anger and chaos are only just beginning. Pent-up frustrations will boil over on 1 April, or some time during April, when the first office runs out of its social fund grant money or when loans are refused and people suffer because the social fund is cut for the succeeding year when others cannot afford to pay back the money.

All sorts of action will be taken, but what makes me angry is the complacency and arrogance with which the Government have introduced these measures and the way in which Ministers will sit back and leave it to a dispute between local civil servants, who do not want to implement this horrible system, and local people in poor communities who do not want the system. They merely want to live with some decency and self-respect. The poverty in which they live has been visited upon them by the economic policies of a Government who do not care about these people.

It is not those people's fault. Like my hon. Friends, I want to see a social security system which will not allow a Minister to have discretion over the amount of money that he does not give to a poor inner-city area and a system which will not put low-level civil servants in the awful position of having to decide who gets that money. We want a guarantee of basic living standards and incomes for everyone in this country, which, as the seventh richest country in the world, could easily afford it.

The Government do not want to spend money on that. They do not care about poor people. They would rather give away the money in tax relief so that the very rich can build their swimming pools and buy their BMWs and their homes abroad. They would rather spend it on nuclear weapons than on the poorest people, who are desperately crying out for help.

Mr. Portillo: The hon. Member for Southport (Mr. Fearn) is worried about payments during exceptionally cold weather. He will be pleased to see that, next winter, the social fund will continue to make exceptionally cold weather payments. Although the supplementary benefits system will end, and with it the single payments system, there will continue to be exceptionally cold weather payments.

I remind the hon. Gentleman of a couple of points about the social fund which may go some way towards meeting his anxieties. He mentioned the problem of meeting the expenses of reconnection. The fuel direct scheme exists for consumers of electricity and gas. If they are in the vulnerable groups, they will be covered by the code of practice on winter disconnections. Budgeting loans will be available under the social fund to help people with their bills for the fuels that cannot be covered by the fuel direct scheme, including coal, oil and bottled gas. In some cases, community care grants — not loans — will be available for reconnection, depending upon the status of the applicant. In other cases, budgeting loans will be available for that purpose. Crisis loans may be available too, to avoid danger or damage to the health and safety of someone in the family.

[Mr. Portillo]

I do not suggest that we accept the hon. Gentleman's amendment. I simply remind him that so..ething like the exceptionally cold weather scheme will exist next winter, in the light of our experience this winter, and that those payments will not be made from the budgeted part of the social fund. I hope that that will be of interest and comfort to him.

We are speaking against the background of the total reform of the income-related social security benefits system. As part of that reform, an extra £200 million will be put into the money that is available for families. An important part of the reform is the fact that, in future, claimants will not be dependent upon bits and pieces of additional money which they can build up. Their needs will be addressed through premiums which are relevant to their circumstances. There will be premiums for families, for the disabled and for the elderly. We must look for the best way of enabling people to meet unusual and sometimes fairly large needs, and we believe that the social fund will fill the gap.

The hon. Member for Livingston (Mr. Cook) said that there were two social funds. There is only one social fund, but it is useful to think of it as being in two parts—budgeted and non-budgeted. But I did not understand the hon. Gentleman's point. He should have welcomed the fact that maternity, funeral and exceptionally cold weather payments will not be limited by the budget, but will be determined by the demand for them.

The hon. Gentleman and several other hon. Members, including the hon. Member for Islington, North (Mr. Corbyn), made great play of the fact that there would be no redress under the new system. I wearied the Committee by explaining the system of review that would be instituted. First, the social fund officer could review the case. It could be reviewed by his line manager in the local office, or by the social fund inspector. Sitting above all that will be the social fund commissioner responsible for ensuring the quality of the decisions of social fund inspectors.

Although I mentioned this several times in Committee, I do not think that I have reminded the House that, during the passage of the Social Security Bill in July 1986, Lord Denning said in another place that his experience of appeals that had come to his court was that the machinery was far too long, elaborate and costly, with

"too many insurance commissioners and the like."

He added:

"It is all very well to have that elaborate structure in the pursuit of justice, but if it is too elaborate, it ought to be replaced by simpler machinery . . . I see this new proposal coming from the Commons as being simple, fair and just machinery." — *[Official Report, House of Lords* 24 July 1986; Vol. 479, c. 426.]

The hon. Member for Livingston also raised a point about computers. The software programme is on target for helping the social fund officers to run the social fund budget, and computer training will be given next week. I wearied the Committee by explaining that the money would not run out, and I seem to have half succeeded with the hon. Member for Livingston. He now understands that it will not run out halfway through the year, and thinks that it will run out halfway through each month. That will not happen. We have a programme so that social fund officers can be aware of the priorities placed on the budget, establish their system of priorities and deal wit accordingly. That is not a very unusual proc people in this world have to operate within b

9.30 pm

Mr. Corbyn: Will the Minister tell us how h that the system of priorities will be consiste office to another, and that different decision made in different offices to fit within the cash social fund?

Mr. Portillo: The hon. Gentleman, w assiduous member of the Committee, will ha that there is a thick social fund manual, guidance. The social fund officer therefore disposal both directions from the Secretary c considerable guidance to help him to make h

In certain circumstances, the officer will be a claim for up to 28 days, so that he can com other claims coming in over the same perio thinks may have similar priorities.

Mrs. Mahon: Will the Minister explain happen in one of the cases that I mentioned to will happen to a woman with two or three ch cooker blows up and the officer holds the c days? What if it is in the middle of winter and produce any warm food?

Mr. Portillo: I am disappointed in the hon. was also a member of the Committee. She wil cookers, and mothers with children, are at th list of the social fund officer's priorities.

Mrs. Mahon: I spent some time talking to rights benefit campaign organiser in Halifax, w me—as did the citizens advice bureau orga the first pay claimants on the community gra people without homes and people coming out that the whole grant would be taken up by priority groups. They suspected that nothing w for the other cases that the Minister has men

Mr. Portillo: I can only reiterate that an a a social fund loan who is in the position that th describes will be given high priority.

Mr. Robin Cook: Some time ago th committed himself to an important propositi that the social fund would not run out. He will it is a cash-limited fund. Is he willing to give th assurance that he is confident that all pri popping up on the computer programme will that no applicant will be turned away becaus are not there to meet his case?

Mr. Portillo: Of course I am not saying saying that the highest priority cases will be n have been trying to get across to the hon. G that there is no magic day of the month—th 15th or the 28th—when the money will run o the social fund officers will manage the fund in as to meet the priorities across every month They will be able to do that because they have of single payments. Some £118 million was spe payments to 17 November 1987. That puts u for spending about £190 million on single payn year. That figure compares with the £203 mi

made available under the social fund. Perhaps another valid point is the fact that the £203 million is in addition to about £8 billion being spent on supplementary benefit.

Mr. Corbyn: I realise that the Minister is trying hard to put a thick coat of gloss paint over this nasty piece of the Bill, but he has not answered the question. The manual advises social fund officers what priority they should accord to cases that appear at their offices. He has not said how he can ensure that an applicant in Halifax is likely to get the same payment as one in Bognor Regis in any month of the year. It seems clear to many of us who have sat through the Committee stage and looked through the social fund manual that there is no mechanism—and that none is intended—to ensure equity of decisions throughout the country.

Mr. Portillo: I shall return to what the hon. Gentleman said about allocations, but he will know how we have striven to achieve balance and fairness between offices. He is trying to achieve something that is unobtainable. It is impossible to ensure that the chances of securing a council house in Islington are the same as in Hackney. Even under the single payment system one cannot ensure that outgoings are always the same, because there will always be grey cases which are treated differently. We have produced a thick social fund manual which gives clear guidance to social fund officers, which will go a long way to ensure that like cases are treated alike.

Rev. Martin Smyth: The Minister gave the figures to November. I am not sure what happens in Great Britain, but it is alleged, and the figures that I have seen confirm it, that in Northern Ireland—there is no Northern Ireland Minister here to answer my question—between April and November 1987 a different pattern was introduced for single payments, which has reduced the amount given to bring it into line with the new figures. Can the Minister give us the total of payments for the previous full year so that we may compare that figure with the social fund provisions?

Mr. Portillo: I think that the hon. Gentleman is referring to the changes in the single payment regime made in August 1986. The cost in 1985-86 was £335 million.

The allocation that is being made is such as to be broadly in line with the amount spent on single payments in the current year. I shall take the example that the hon. Member for Livingston gave—Glasgow, Provan—where the allocation for the social fund is £1·5 million, compared with expenditure on single payments from April to December 1987 of £1 million. There is little difference between the amount being made available and what was paid out in the last period for which figures are available. I regret that I do not have the figures for Bathgate, but I imagine that the picture is similar.

Mrs. Wise: Is the Minister saying that money for grants is the same as money for loans?

Mr. Portillo: I think that the hon. Lady heard me. The amount of money being made available for the budgeted element of the social fund, which is loans and grants together, is higher than the amount being paid at the moment in single payments.

The allocation between the offices was mathematically determined. It was based on the 32 weeks to April 1987. We then made some adjustment to that. The reason for what is only a limited adjustment was that we could not see any reason why single payments varied so much fr one office to another. We felt that it would not be righ base the allocation of the social fund entirely on the hist of single payments, and that we should also take ac account of the measure of underlying need. Because we not want to force the pace of any change, the extent which we allowed for that underlying need was v limited. The formula was made up of one seventh on basis of need and six sevenths on the basis of the siz payments made by an office over a recent period.

I stress to the hon. Member for Livingston that th is no estimate of what will happen in the future. I am very clear where he picked that up. We put a note in Library explaining the one seventh-six sevenths split; t is between need—one seventh—and single payment six sevenths. There is no guess what will happen in future. We wanted to know the best possible indicatio need and we took advice from the Social Policy Resea Unit. We were told that the best possible measure was supplementary benefit case load.

If the hon. Member for Livingston is saying that should have regard only to what single payments h been in the past and pay no regard to the underlying ne that we should have no regard to how many in an a receive supplementary benefit, or the make-up of th people, as between elderly, disabled and so forth, I am v surprised at what he says. I want to say very firmly t it is absolutely untrue that there has been any connivan or manipulation of these figures. We have gone to trouble of placing in the Library the exact method which the calculation was made. The hon. Gentleman I am sorry to say this to him—does not seem to h gone to the trouble of reading it carefully, because seems to have misunderstood one crucial point.

I am pleased that the hon. Member for Belfast, So (Rev. M. Smyth) recognised that there was no politi bias in this, and he gave an example of the way in wh the matter has been worked out. The hon. Member Livingston can take the piece of paper placed in Library, do the figures himself and apply the formula, a he will find that it is exactly as I have said. If he is say that just because in one area the level of single payme has run at a particular level, for no reason which he c can explain, and is not related to any recognised meas of underlying need, and that we should have no regard the supplementary benefit case load, I am very surpris

I hope that in the course of my remarks I have cove the points that were made in the debate. The social fu has now been debated extensively in Committee a before that, during the passage of the Bill which is now Social Security Act 1986. It is now time to get on w implementing the social fund and, in view of what I h said about the relative budgets of the single paym system and the social fund, we have every reason to beli that this will be a very successful scheme.

Mr. Robin Cook: The Minister said that the purpose the reform of social security introduced in 1986, which w be fully in place by this April, was to do away with extra additions to pay to those claiming welfare benef In the context of this debate, of course, never was a tr word spoken. Under the social fund, not only will there no additions; for the first time there will be compulso deductions of benefit when people repay those loans. I a aware of a certain ambivalence on my part in this deb in that I am pressing the Minister for a larger ceiling to

[Mr. Robin Cook]

social fund, pressing him for a more generous budget so that more claimants can obtain money from the fund, but at the same time I am gravely concerned about what will happen to even those claimants who succeed in obtaining money from the social fund, because there will be a very serious problem of success in their case in that, in three cases out of four, they will have to repay it. Those who succeed will in many cases be those who end up in worst hardship.

9.45 pm

We come to the biggest irony of all in the new structure — that those who are trapped in greatest hardship, because they are losing £6 a week in automatic deductions, will find when they apply for additional help that they are automatically disqualified because they will be held under the social fund manual not to have sufficient benefit to repay a further loan. Therefore, they will be disqualified from getting a further advance from the social fund. So the very people who will then be in the greatest need will be disqualified from the one available form of assistance that the Government have allowed.

I listened with great care to what the Minister said about the cash-limited fund not running out and in that respect being unique among such funds. As I understood what he told the House, the fund will not run out, because it will be rationed on a day-to-day basis. That is effectively what the Minister said. If the money seems to be inadequate to cope with the numbers coming in, the computer programme will automatically adjust the qualification by shifting the cut-off point further up the list of priorities, with the result that in some offices priority cases will succeed which down the road in a different local office, where there is tighter pressure on the budget, would not succeed.

It is not good enough for the Minister to defend that anomaly by saying that in some areas it has always been possible to get a council house more easily than in other areas. Until the invention of the social fund, there was never any area in Britain in which it was not possible to get one's legal rights to social security because that area did not have the money. Until April 1988, every claimant anywhere in Britain would have been entitled to the same payments under the same regulations without limits on the cash.

The other area where the Minister showed a breathtaking sleight of hand, although I understand that my colleagues became familiar with it in Committee, was in comparing the allocation under the social fund with the single payments expenditure after the cuts of 1986. He discovered that there was no cut and indeed prided himself on having discovered a modest increase. It is ludicrously unreasonable and unmathematical to compare the position after the cuts with the position next year rather than with the position before the Government got to work with the scissors. In 1986-87, expenditure on single payments was well over £300 million. It is that figure that has to be compared with the allocation for social fund payments of £201 million next year.

The cuts were severe. The Minister referred to a mother with children and no cooker being a priority candidate. In my constituency I have a family without a cooker who cannot get a single payment to replace that cooker because under his new rules, announced in 1986, that family will not qualify for another payment for ano because it got an inadequate payment to pu 18 months ago. That cooker has broke grant will be offered to replace or repair i

In another case, where there is a seve wets the bed, the washing machine has bro mother will not be given a single payme washing machine because she got a grant to buy it. Therefore, she will have to wait 1 she can repair the machine.

Another constituent, an invalid, no reclining chair because the reclining chair f a single payment last year collapsed. She grant to repair it for another two years unt period is up. That illustrates the real hard the cuts of 1986. It is wrong for the Mini to compare and contrast only what happe cuts with the allocation for next year.

Even if we accept that as the base point, that the allocation of that inadequate sum been fairly and evenly done. I cannot co formula that allows only one seventh fo purposes should have such a ludicrously that expenditure in my area will go down b that in Bognor Regis will go up by two t massive difference. In fact, if we subtrac other we are talking about a difference o That cannot be explained by a one-seventh formula. It has to be explained by some fac be that a political bias was not applied a were spewed out from the computer. Th may well have been applied when the form up.

In no way can the social security syste counter-agency of regional policy to redi from the north and from inner-city areas o the south coast of England, giving money when the Minister is not prepared to give offices in areas of the greatest multiple de

On any objective analysis, the effect of is ludicrously unfair and does not match that reason, Opposition Members will be d for the amendment, and in so doing expr and distaste for the social fund. It wo convenience of the House to have a reason Third Reading, so I shall divide the Hou amendment. I shall withdraw amendmen divide the House on amendment No. 28 w budget allocation, to give myself and my h opportunity to register our contempt, ang at the scandalous way in which the Go manipulated matters to penalise our consti ask leave to withdraw the amendment.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Mr. Portillo: I beg to move amendment 17, line 17, at end insert—

'2A. Subsection (3) shall cease to have ef

Mr. Speaker: With this, it will be conve Government amendments Nos. 29, 31 to 3

Mr. Portillo: The amendments c provisions which were questioned in C Committee was concerned about the di payments from the social fund which we budgeted allocation and those which were n the amendments to the House.

Amendment agreed to.

Amendment proposed: No. 28, in page 17, line 20, after 'allocate', insert 'prescribed'.—*[Mr. Robin Cook.]*

Question put, That the amendment be made:—

The House divided: Ayes 218, Noes 252.

Division No. 135] **[8.55 pm**

AYES

Adams, Allen *(Paisley N)*
Allen, Graham
Anderson, Donald
Archer, Rt Hon Peter
Armstrong, Ms Hilary
Ashley, Rt Hon Jack
Ashton, Joe
Banks, Tony *(Newham NW)*
Barnes, Harry *(Derbyshire NE)*
Barron, Kevin
Battle, John
Beckett, Margaret
Beggs, Roy
Bell, Stuart
Benn, Rt Hon Tony
Bennett, A. F. *(D'nt'n & R'dish)*
Bermingham, Gerald
Bidwell, Sydney
Blair, Tony
Blunkett, David
Boateng, Paul
Boyes, Roland
Bradley, Keith
Bray, Dr Jeremy
Brown, Gordon *(D'mline E)*
Brown, Nicholas *(Newcastle E)*
Brown, Ron *(Edinburgh Leith)*
Buchan, Norman
Buckley, George
Caborn, Richard
Callaghan, Jim
Campbell, Menzies *(Fife NE)*
Campbell, Ron *(Blyth Valley)*
Campbell-Savours, D. N.
Canavan, Dennis
Clarke, Tom *(Monklands W)*
Clay, Bob
Cleiland, David
Clwyd, Mrs Ann
Cohen, Harry
Coleman, Donald
Cook, Robin *(Livingston)*
Corbett, Robin
Corbyn, Jeremy
Cousins, Jim
Cox, Tom
Crowther, Stan
Cryer, Bob
Cummings, J.
Cunliffe, Lawrence
Dafyell, Tam
Darling, Alistair
Davies, Rt Hon Denzil *(Llanelli)*
Davies, Ron *(Caerphilly)*
Davis, Terry *(B'ham Hodge H'l)*
Dewar, Donald
Dixon, Don
Dobson, Frank
Doran, Frank
Douglas, Dick
Dunnachie, James
Dunwoody, Hon Mrs Gwyneth
Eastham, Ken
Evans, John *(St Helens N)*
Ewing, Harry *(Falkirk E)*
Ewing, Mrs Margaret *(Moray)*
Fearn, Ronald
Field, Frank *(Birkenhead)*
Fields, Terry *(L'pool B G'n)*
Flannery, Martin
Flynn, Paul
Forsythe, Clifford *(Antrim S)*
Foster, Derek
Fraser, John
Fyfe, Mrs Maria
Galbraith, Samuel
Galloway, George
Garrett, John *(Norwich South)*
Garrett, Ted *(Wallsend)*
George, Bruce
Gilbert, Rt Hon Dr John
Godman, Dr Norman A.
Golding, Mrs Llin
Gordon, Ms Mildred
Grant, Bernie *(Tottenham)*
Griffiths, Nigel *(Edinburgh S)*
Griffiths, Win *(Bridgend)*
Grocott, Bruce
Harman, Ms Harriet
Healey, Rt Hon Denis
Heffer, Eric S.
Hinchliffe, David
Hogg, N. *(C'nauld & Kilsyth)*
Holland, Stuart
Home Robertson, John
Hood, James
Howarth, George *(Knowsley N)*
Howell, Rt Hon D. *(S'heath)*
Howells, Geraint
Hoyle, Doug
Hughes, Robert *(Aberdeen N)*
Hughes, Roy *(Newport E)*
Hughes, Sean *(Knowsley S)*
Illsley, Eric
Ingram, Adam
Janner, Greville
John, Brynmor
Jones, Ieuan *(Ynys Môn)*
Jones, Martyn *(Clwyd S W)*
Kilfedder, James
Kinnock, Rt Hon Neil
Kirkwood, Archy
Lambie, David
Lamond, James
Leadbitter, Ted
Leighton, Ron
Lestor, Miss Joan *(Eccles)*
Lewis, Terry
Litherland, Robert
Livingstone, Ken
Lloyd, Tony *(Stretford)*
Lofthouse, Geoffrey
Loyden, Eddie
McAllion, John
McAvoy, Tom
McCartney, Ian
Macdonald, Calum
McFall, John
McGrady, E. K.
McKay, Allen *(Penistone)*
McKelvey, William
McLeish, Henry
McNamara, Kevin
McTaggart, Bob
McWilliam, John
Madden, Max
Mahon, Mrs Alice
Marek, Dr John
Marshall, David *(Shettleston)*
Marshall, Jim *(Leicester S)*
Martin, Michael *(Springburn)*
Martlew, Eric
Maxton, John
Meacher, Michael
Meale, Alan
Michael, Alun
Michie, Bill *(Sheffield Heeley)*
Michie, Mrs Ray *(Arg'l & Bute)*
Millan, Rt Hon Bruce
Mitchell, Austin *(G't Grimsby)*
Molyneaux, Rt Hon James
Moonie, Dr Lewis
Morgan, Rhodri
Morley, Elliott
Morris, Rt Hon A *(W'shawe)*
Morris, Rt Hon J *(Aberavon)*
Mowlam, Marjorie
Mullin, Chris
Murphy, Paul
Nellist, Dave
Oakes, Rt Hon Gordon
O'Brien, William
O'Neill, Martin
Orme, Rt Hon Stanley
Patchett, Terry
Pendry, Tom
Pike, Peter
Powell, Ray *(Ogmore)*
Prescott, John
Primarolo, Ms Dawn
Quin, Ms Joyce
Randall, Stuart
Rees, Rt Hon Merlyn
Reid, John
Richardson, Ms Jo
Robertson, George
Robinson, Geoffrey
Rogers, Allan
Rooker, Jeff
Ross, Ernie *(Dundee W)*
Ross, William *(Londonderry E)*
Rowlands, Ted
Ruddock, Ms Joan
Salmond, Alex
Sheerman, Barry
Sheldon, Rt Hon Robert
Shore, Rt Hon Peter
Short, Clare
Skinner, Dennis
Smith, Andrew *(Oxford E*
Smith, Rt Hon J. *(Monk*
Smyth, Rev Martin *(Bel*
Snape, Peter
Soley, Clive
Spearing, Nigel
Steinberg, Gerald
Stott, Roger
Strang, Gavin
Taylor, Mrs Ann *(Dewsb*
Thomas, Dafydd Elis
Thompson, Jack *(Wans*
Turner, Dennis
Vaz, Keith
Wall, Pat
Walley, Ms Joan
Wardell, Gareth *(Gowe*
Wareing, Robert N.
Welsh, Andrew *(Angus*
Wigley, Dafydd
Williams, Rt Hon A. J.
Williams, Alan W. *(Carm*
Wilson, Brian
Winnick, David
Wise, Mrs Audrey
Worthington, Anthony
Wray, James
Young, David *(Bolton S*

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. Frank Haynes and
Mr. Frank Cook.

NOES

Allason, Rupert
Amess, David
Amos, Alan
Arbuthnot, James
Arnold, Jacques *(Gravesham)*
Arnold, Tom *(Hazel Grove)*
Atkins, Robert
Atkinson, David
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Baldry, Tony
Banks, Robert *(Harrogate)*
Batiste, Spencer
Beaumont-Dark, Anthony
Bellingham, Henry
Bendall, Vivian
Bennett, Nicholas *(Pembroke)*
Benyon, W.
Bevan, David Gilroy
Biffen, Rt Hon John
Blackburn, Dr John G.
Blaker, Rt Hon Sir Peter
Body, Sir Richard
Boscawen, Hon Robert
Bottomley, Peter
Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Bowden, Gerald *(Dulwich)*
Bowis, John
Boyson, Rt Hon Dr Sir Rhodes
Braine, Rt Hon Sir Bernard
Brandon-Bravo, Martin
Brazier, Julian
Brittan, Rt Hon Leon
Brooke, Rt Hon Peter
Brown, Michael *(Brigg & Cl't's)*
Browne, John *(Winchester)*
Bruce, Ian *(Dorset South)*
Buchanan-Smith, Rt Hon Alick
Buck, Sir Antony
Burns, Simon
Burt, Alistair
Butler, Chris
Butterfill, John
Carlisle, John, *(Luton N*
Carrington, Matthew
Carttiss, Michael
Cash, William
Coombs, Simon *(Swind*
Cope, John
Couchman, James
Cran, James
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Curry, David
Davis, David *(Boothferr*
Day, Stephen
Dorrell, Stephen
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord
Dykes, Hugh
Evans, David *(Welwyn*
Fallon, Michael
Forman, Nigel
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirli*
Fox, Sir Marcus
Gale, Roger
Garel-Jones, Tristan
Gill, Christopher
Gilmour, Rt Hon Sir Ian
Glyn, Dr Alan
Gorman, Mrs Teresa
Gow, Ian
Gower, Sir Raymond
Grant, Sir Anthony *(Ca*
Greenway, Harry *(Ealin*
Greenway, John *(Ryda*
Gregory, Conal
Griffiths, Peter *(Portsm*
Grist, Ian

Ground, Patrick
Hamilton, Hon A. *(Epsom)*
Hampson, Dr Keith
Hannam, John
Hargreaves, A. *(B'ham H'll Gr')*
Hargreaves, Ken *(Hyndburn)*
Harris, David
Hawkins, Christopher
Hayhoe, Rt Hon Sir Barney
Heathcoat-Amory, David
Heddle, John
Heseltine, Rt Hon Michael
Hicks, Mrs Maureen *(Wolv' NE)*
Hicks, Robert *(Cornwall SE)*
Higgins, Rt Hon Terence L.
Hogg, Hon Douglas *(Gr'th'm)*
Holt, Richard
Hordern, Sir Peter
Howard, Michael
Howarth, Alan *(Strat'd-on-A)*
Howell, Rt Hon David *(G'dford)*
Hughes, Robert G. *(Harrow W)*
Hunt, David *(Wirral W)*
Hunt, John *(Ravensbourne)*
Irvine, Michael
Jack, Michael
Jackson, Robert
Janman, Timothy
Jessel, Toby
Jones, Gwilym *(Cardiff N)*
Jones, Robert B *(Herts W)*
Kellett-Bowman, Mrs Elaine
Key, Robert
King, Roger *(B'ham N'thfield)*
Kirkhope, Timothy
Knapman, Roger
Knight, Greg *(Derby North)*
Knowles, Michael
Knox, David
Lamont, Rt Hon Norman
Lang, Ian
Latham, Michael
Lawrence, Ivan
Lee, John *(Pendle)*
Leigh, Edward *(Gainsbor'gh)*
Lennox-Boyd, Hon Mark
Lester, Jim *(Broxtowe)*
Lightbown, David
Lilley, Peter
Lloyd, Sir Ian *(Havant)*
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
Lord, Michael
Luce, Rt Hon Richard
Lyell, Sir Nicholas
Macfarlane, Sir Neil
MacKay, Andrew *(E Berkshire)*
McLoughlin, Patrick
McNair-Wilson, M. *(Newbury)*
McNair-Wilson, P. *(New Forest)*
Major, Rt Hon John
Malins, Humfrey
Maples, John
Marland, Paul
Marshall, John *(Hendon S)*
Marshall, Michael *(Arundel)*
Martin, David *(Portsmouth S)*
Maude, Hon Francis
Mawhinney, Dr Brian
Maxwell-Hyslop, Robin
Mayhew, Rt Hon Sir Patrick
Mellor, David
Meyer, Sir Anthony
Miller, Hal
Mills, Iain
Mitcampbell, Norman
Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)*
Mitchell, David *(Hants NW)*
Moate, Roger
Monro, Sir Hector
Montgomery, Sir Fergus
Moore, Rt Hon John
Morrison, Sir Charles *(Devizes)*
Morrison, Hon P *(Chester)*
Moss, Malcolm
Moynihan, Hon C.
Mudd, David
Neale, Gerrard
Nelson, Anthony
Neubert, Michael
Newton, Rt Hon Tony
Nicholls, Patrick
Nicholson, David *(Taunton)*
Nicholson, Miss E. *(Devon W)*
Oppenheim, Phillip
Page, Richard
Paice, James
Patnick, Irvine
Patten, John *(Oxford W)*
Pattie, Rt Hon Sir Geoffrey
Peacock, Mrs Elizabeth
Porter, David *(Waveney)*
Portillo, Michael
Powell, William *(Corby)*
Raffan, Keith
Raison, Rt Hon Timothy
Redwood, John
Renton, Tim
Rhodes James, Robert
Rhys Williams, Sir Brandon
Riddick, Graham
Ridley, Rt Hon Nicholas
Rifkind, Rt Hon Malcolm
Roberts, Wyn *(Conwy)*
Roe, Mrs Marion
Rost, Peter
Rowe, Andrew
Rumbold, Mrs Angela
Ryder, Richard
Sackville, Hon Tom
Sayeed, Jonathan
Scott, Nicholas
Shaw, David *(Dover)*
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Shelton, William *(Streatham)*
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Shepherd, Richard *(Aldridge)*
Sims, Roger
Skeet, Sir Trevor
Smith, Tim *(Beaconsfield)*
Speed, Keith
Spicer, Sir Jim *(Dorset W)*
Squire, Robin
Stanbrook, Ivor
Steen, Anthony
Stern, Michael
Stevens, Lewis
Stewart, Allan *(Eastwood)*
Stewart, Andrew *(Sherwood)*
Sumberg, David
Summerson, Hugo
Taylor, Ian *(Esher)*
Taylor, John M *(Solihull)*
Taylor, Teddy *(S'end E)*
Tebbit, Rt Hon Norman
Thompson, Patrick *(Norwich N)*
Thornton, Malcolm
Thurnham, Peter
Tracey, Richard
Tredinnick, David
Trippier, David
Trotter, Neville
Twinn, Dr Ian
Vaughan, Sir Gerard
Viggers, Peter
Waddington, Rt Hon David
Wakeham, Rt Hon John
Waldegrave, Hon William
Walker, Bill *(T'side North)*
Waller, Gary
Ward, John
Wardle, C. *(Bexhill)*
Watts, John
Wells, Bowen
Wheeler, John
Whitney, Ray
Widdecombe, Miss Ann
Wiggin, Jerry
Wilkinson, John
Wilshire, David
Winterton, Mrs Ann
Winterton
Wolfson,
Wood, Ti
Woodcoc
Yeo, Tim
Young, S

Tellers fo
Mr. To
Mr. Da

Question accordingly negatived.

It being after Ten o'clock, further
Bill stood adjourned.

BUSINESS OF THE H

Ordered,

That, at this day's sitting, the Social
Income and Corporation Taxes Bil
proceeded with, though opposed, unti
Motion in the name of Mr. John W
Selection, may be proceeded with, thoug
past Eleven o'clock, or for one and a h
been entered upon, whichever is the lat

Social Security

Bill, as amended, again considered.

Amendments made: No. 29, in page
'("social fund payments")' and insert
'such as are mentioned in subsection (2

No. 31, in page 17, line 28, leave o

No. 32, in page 18, line 15, leave o
'for a social fund payment'.

No. 33, in page 18, line 18, leave o
'for a social fund payment'.

No. 34, in page 18, line 21, after '
'such as is mentioned in section 32(2
Portillo.]

Schedule 4

MINOR AND CONSEQUENTIAL A

Mr. Portillo: I beg to move amendn
19, line 5, leave out
'219(2) of the Income and Corporation
and insert
'617(2) of the Income and Corporation

This is a technical amendment
reference to the Income and Corporat
to take account of the ICTA Bill now
the House.

Amendment agreed to.

Mr. Portillo: I beg to move amendn
22, line 18, at end insert 'of 15 days'.

The amendment has been drafted s
no doubt in anyone's mind that inc
during a trade dispute is not recovera
involved in the dispute has returned t

Amendment agreed to.

Mr. Portillo: I beg to move amendn
22, line 20, leave out 'the' and insert '

The amendment ensures that th
payment referred to when I discu
amendment No. 36 shall be reco
prescribed person, employer or claim
more limited "the prescribed person", a
wording in the 1986 Act.

Amendment agreed to.

Amendments made: No. 38, in page 22, line 20, at end insert—

'21.—(1) In paragraph *(c)* of subsection (10) of section 53 (overpayments), before "income" there shall be inserted "subject to subsection (10A) below,".

(2) The following subsection shall be inserted after that subsection—

"(10A) This section only applies to income support recoverable under section 20(4E) above to the extent specified in section 20(4EA) and (4EB) above.".'.

No. 44, in page 22, line 20, at end insert—

'21. The following subsection shall be inserted after section 29(7)—

"(8) Without prejudice to any other method of recovery, amounts recoverable under any enactment having effect in Northern Ireland and corresponding to this section shall be recoverable by deduction from benefits prescribed under subsection (7) above."

22. The following subsection shall be inserted after section 33(8)—

"(8A) Without prejudice to any other method of recovery, awards recoverable under Part IV of the Social Security (Northern Ireland) Order 1986 shall be recoverable by deduction from benefits prescribed under subsection (6) above, and subsection (7) and (8) above shall have effect in relation to such awards as they have effect in relation to awards under this Part of this Act."

23. The following subsection shall be inserted after section 53(7)—

"(7A) Without prejudice to any other method of recovery, amounts recoverable under any enactment or instrument having effect in Northern Ireland and corresponding to an enactment or instrument mentioned in subsection (7) above shall be recoverable by deduction from benefits prescribed under subsection (7) above."

24. Paragraphs 21 to 23 above shall be deemed to have come into force on 6th April 1987.'.—*[Mr. Portillo.]*

Schedule 5

Repeals

Amendments made: No. 39, in page 23, line 44, leave out '(8),' and insert

', subsection (3), in subsection (4), the words "Social fund" and in subsection (8), the words "social fund", in the second place where they occur, and'.

No. 40, in page 23, line 45, column 3, at end insert—

	'In section 33(1), the words "social fund".
	In section 34(1)(a), the words "social fund", in the second place where they occur.'

No. 41, in page 23, line 51, column 3, at end insert—

	'In section 51(2), the words "social fund".
	In section 52(6), the words "social fund".
	In section 53(10), the words "social fund".

No. 42, in page 23, line 54, column 3, at end insert—

	'In section 84(1), the definition of "social fund payment".' —*[Mr. Portillo.]*

Order for Third Reading read.

Queen's consent having been signified—

10.8 pm

Mr. Scott: I beg to move, That the Bill be now read the Third time.

I am told that the Bill is a short one judged by social security standards, but it has been subject to considerable discussion in Committee and in the two days t spent on Report. Whatever the Opposition n Bill, in essence, is about three things: trainin and some element of tidying up social securit and putting it on a firmer footing. I do not wa each of those categories in any detail because they have been discussed at length in Committ course of the debates on amendments and ne Report. By training I mean the decision to r guarantee of the offer of a training place to 16 olds. In the Bill we have said that benefit available to those who are neither in education and who turn down a training place. I cannot the comments of the hon. Member for Livi Cook), who represented this as an appallin those in this age group, can be sustained. I ca that any hon. Member would wish to see you or 17 with the option of a training place tur exchange for idleness and dependence on be

Some hon. Members have characterised element of compulsion, of forcing young training schemes, but that is not right. An choice remains. If I must put the argument a I cannot see why the state should be comp benefit to those who decline the offer of a t in those circumstances. The quality of train availability of training places will be such period it will be seen that this was a wise, sen protect young people from the dangers of idl offer them real opportunities to acquire skills them for adult life.

On the question of targeting—I understa has become a dirty word for the Oppositio spend a vast sum on social security benefit. I year it will be about £48 billion. I cannot beli sensible or responsible Administration shou than seek to ensure that that money is directe needs as accurately and in as well targete possible. We are seeking to do that with so measures.

By putting the exceptionally cold weather p to a regulated basis, and by providing a statut local authority emergency payments and for t the welfare food scheme, we are also seekin existing social security legislation.

I wish to touch on only two further matt conclude. This may be a unique occasion, in to compliment the hon. Members for Cove East (Mr. Nellist) and for Preston (Mrs. Wise) although I do not see the hon. Gentleman in pursuing in Committee with insistence and cause of the under-twos on attendance allowa the way in which they pursued that issue, I wo been moved to return to the medical evide Because of that, yesterday I could give the undertaking about the need to review this wh the context of the OPCS reports and the ou survey on community care by Sir Roy Griff admit that I started by accepting the recei about the dividing line at the age of t Committee moved me to query that and it benefit of children under the age of two who disability.

In Committee, Opposition Front-Bench M particularly the hon. Member for Caern Wigley), asked about the small group of seve

[Mr. Scott]

people who come on to benefit after April and who will be less well treated than those who are at present on benefit. I had hoped that by Third Reading I would be able to come forward with specific proposals to meet their needs. If by any chance it were necessary for legislative provision to be made for this small group, I am satisfied that existing legislative powers would enable me to meet those needs.

As I said at Question Time yesterday, at present I am pursuing a solution that will depend on the voluntary sector. A small number of people are involved, and when we have the OPCS and Griffiths reports we will be able to consider a long-term solution. This will be a short-term solution for a small number of people, and it needs to be addressed in a flexible way. Perhaps the voluntary sector might be the most appropriate way of helping them. In this area, too, during the Committee and remaining stages of the Bill we have made some progress towards meeting the needs of an important group of people who are in need of extra help.

I was urged by one of my hon. Friends to find a solution for all time to a particular aspect of social security. I suspect that members of the Opposition Front Bench realise that we are likely to be back with more social security legislation in the not-too-distant future. Nothing is for ever in this area: we are spending the Government's largest single budget on it, and it would be foolish to think that one could fossilise the provision that is made. We shall constantly be trying to improve our provision and to target it better in the interests of those who are most in need of help in our community. I believe that the Bill is an important step forward in the three directions that I have identified, and I commend it to the House.

10.16 pm

Mrs. Beckett: I listened with interest to the Minister's argument and his description of the Bill's aims as being those of training, targeting and tidying up. What a pity that every one of those categories means less provision for the people covered by the Bill.

By the standards of this Administration, this is not a major social security Bill. We are not dealing here with millions of losers, nor are we discussing losses and savings of millions of pounds. However, the Bill is part of the Government's drive, as the Minister plainly said, to target help—in the Government's phrase—on those in greatest need, by which it becomes daily more apparent that they mean giving help only to those in greatest need, which is a definition that grows harsher with every year that the Government remain in power. The Minister spoke of the vast amount spent on the social security budget, and the figures are incontestable. What is equally incontestable is the greatly increased area of need, which has grown partly as a direct result of the Government's economic policies.

The Bill is not a major social security Bill. It affects only epileptics such as Dorothy Moran, who lose their chance of drawing a maximum of about £30 in attendance allowance—in the cause, as the Minister said, of tidying up the law. It affects only those whose industrial injuries were severe enough to entitle them to the maximum reduced earnings allowance, and who stand to lose more than £19 a week when they retire. It affects only young people of 16 and 17 who already have diminished prospects — not only those who, as Conservative Members have often said and as the Minster has hinted, have rejected the chance to work, train or participate in a Government training scheme.

Every young person between the ages of 16 and 17 will be deprived of his right to benefit, apart from a few who will be granted it as a graceful gesture by the Government of the basis of a few, tightly defined exceptions. Such definitions may well exclude, for example, some who have endured sexual and physical abuse at home, and result in decisions that will not be subject to appeal. For low-income families, the measures will mean that their incomes will drop by £11·50 a week—a minor matter for those who are not in poverty themselves.

The Bill covers only large numbers of women, especially carers, who will lose their right to unemployment and sickness benefit, because the Government—they tell us that it is in the cause of strengthening the national insurance scheme — are tightening up the contribution conditions. It is unfortunate that, because of the Government's desire to strengthen the national insurance basis of the scheme, so many women and others are likely to lose.

The Bill will affect only those forced into so-called voluntary early retirement because of the shortage of employment and perhaps more especially because of the paucity of unemployment benefit. That benefit is bereft of any earnings-related addition and forces people to beggar themselves in their later years by facing the severe financial penalty imposed on those who draw early on their occupational pension to which, of course, they have contributed throughout their working lives.

It will affect people in the police and fire services who have made substantial occupational pension contributions on top of their national insurance contributions. They will be told that one of these rights for which they have paid for and for which, if they stay in employment, they will continue to pay is to be unilaterally withdrawn.

It affects only the very poorest in the land who might be forced to seek help from the DHSS for needs that they cannot meet and which no previous Government have ever expected them to meet from subsistence-level weekly benefits. The resources available for their unmet needs will be cut to the bone, if not beyond it, by the minuscule budgets of the social fund, which on average—especially in the poorer areas—have been cut by about 83 per cent. as a sign of the further support available to those who are by definition the poorest.

The Minister of State told us that none of those things is being done to cut back or to save, but that they are being done to make sure that help is offered only to those who by the Government's declining standards really need it.

Some of the arguments that we heard in discussions on the Bill were pathetic. We have heard the argument that Dorothy Moran and people like her will have to lose their entitlement to benefit because the Government would like to tidy up the law. The Minister assured us that the provisions in the Bill which deal with the Moran judgment are financially neutral and of no real significance to the Government. They are of significance only to the few thousand people like Dorothy Moran who will lose the opportunity to receive that tiny bit of further help for which they would not even be seriously considered unless they were already facing substantial difficulties.

We are told, and the Minister has repeated, that the provisions which deal with 16 and 17-year-olds do not represent compulsion. Of course they do not—perish the

thought. It is just that, if the young people who are involved do not do what the Government say, they will not get any money to live on and their families will not get any money to support them. That distinction is sufficiently fine for bodies such as the Manpower Services Commission and all the youth training scheme providers to be unable to follow it.

I should like to place it on record, as we did in Committee, that we do not think that the Government are in a position to guarantee enough YTS places—even if that were an adequate measure of what should be offered to young people—by the time that this Bill becomes law, if it becomes law. We certainly do not think that there is the slightest chance of there being enough places of the right quality. As my hon. Friend the Member for Livingston (Mr. Cook) said, it was most noticeable that the Government did not begin to consider any qualification that we put forward of what might be a satisfactory offer of a place on some course rather than merely any old offer that could be found to make up the numbers. The Government will be desperate to make up the numbers before April.

It is simply not good enough for the Minister of State casually to say that of course it will be all right and that all places are of good quality. The record of injury and even of death on YTS programmes is not such that anybody can treat proposals of that sort with complacency. When we asked in Committee about the quality of YTS places and about what will happen if the restricted period of entitlement to child benefit or bridging allowance or the other elements of the provision should run out before a proper offer of a place had been made, the only answer we received was that it would not happen between January and April. The Government said that somehow the Department would find what independent estimates have suggested is possibly 100,000 extra places. The Minister assures us that they will all be high-quality places.

The justifications which have been offered for the Bill at many of its stages have been weak, and they were weakest in the debate yesterday. The Minister referred to that debate, and I am grateful to him for the tribute he paid to some of my hon. Friends who raised matters in Committee and in the House. I join him in paying tribute to the tremendous work they have done.

Although the Minister was affected by the case put, which was enormously strong and one would have thought would affect anyone, I was astonished and appalled by the spectacle we saw in the Chamber yesterday. A number of Conservative Members, some of them new Members, suggested that they could not support a provision that would give much-needed help to the families of desperately sick children under the age of two because a Labour Government did not do it. What a pathetic argument.

Those hon. Members rose magnificently above the clear indication that when the last Labour Government left office there was very little experience of the way in which the scheme was working and decided they would ignore that. Some of them argued that they could not support the proposal because they did not like the other proposals put forward by the Opposition in Committee. Presumably they feel that if they support one proposal they must support all of them. It is a novel suggestion and one which we would commend. We do not expect 100 per cent. support from Conservative Members, but we expect them to listen and sometimes to be affected by reasonable argument.

The cream of the debate was the suggestion that the measure could not be supported because some Conservative Members did not like the tone of the debate. I am sure that the parents of those desperately sick and disabled children will be very sympathetic to that argument. Are these men or mice? They seem to be incapable of responding with any sensitivity to the arguments. If their Government, for whatever reason—however poor we may think the justification—say they have to resist the amendment, that is one thing; but to treat with such contempt serious argument on problems and difficulties is frankly contemptible.

It is strange that some Conservative Members can be so easily dissuaded from pressing the Government who tell us they have money to burn, or at least money that they are prepared to give away in tax cuts, with the bias favouring those who are already the most wealthy.

That carries the seeds of danger for them as a party and a Government. It may carry the seeds of danger for our whole society. I find it hard to believe that anyone could take pride in voting for the Bill. When my hon. Friends and I consider the amendments we have discussed and the debates we have had in Committee and on Report, we know quite certainly that we are right to vote against it.

10.27 pm

Mr. Corbyn: I wish to put some things on the record. First, I refer to the expert way in which my hon. Friend the Member for Derby, South (Mrs. Beckett) led my hon. Friends in Committee and to the expertise that she brought to it. I cannot help thinking what an excellent job she would do as Minister for Social Security, because she is concerned about poverty and the need for a social security system that eliminates rather than exacerbates poverty.

Having sat through the Committee on the Bill and the previous Bill, I believe that we live in total unreality. Outside the House, only five minutes walk away, people are living in a cardboard city, with no houses to go to. People are being evicted to make way for property speculators and are living on the streets of London and every other major city. People on every housing estate throughout the country cannot make ends meet. We have the greatest poverty since the war, with 6 million people living below the European poverty threshold.

What does the Bill do? Does it address those problems? Does it say that we will examine the problems of the poor and ensure that the social security system is a genuine safety net? No. The Bill is like taking a pair of scissors to a safety net. It makes holes in the safety net and creates misery and poverty.

I have considered some of the points in the Bill. It deals with the question of the young unemployed. We have heard Tory press stories about feckless youth and young people who do not want work, who are workshy and are trying to get money from the Government. That is utter and absolute bunkum and nonsense, and the Government know it. They know that in reality young people become very depressed at school if they know that there are no jobs for them to go to. They do not become very excited at the prospect of a YTS place instead of a job. When they are told that they will be coerced on to a scheme, they become positively angry. Who can blame them for that? The Bill

[Mr. Corbyn]

is a step towards industrial conscription. The Government intend to introduce industrial conscription to low-wage jobs with a "no hope" future for young people who are the worst trained and worst educated of any industrial country. The Bill is part of that process.

Other sections of the Bill deal with income support, the treatment of people with disabilities and the need for support for carers. There is a thread running through the Bill of parsimony and nastiness in the way in which the regulations operate, until we come to the worst part of the Bill dealing with the social fund and the way in which that operates. Indeed, we have just debated that point.

This is the second Social Security Bill that we have had in a relatively short time. I believe that we will be back here again very soon because there will be much opposition to the way in which the Bill will operate. The Government are very good at producing what they call "fact sheets" on social security. They are very nicely produced, and I commend them. Indeed, they are beautifully produced. It is unfortunate that they have such an ill purpose and that they seek not to eliminate poverty, but to explain why the Government are not prepared to spend public money on eliminating poverty.

As my hon. Friend the Member for Derby, South has explained, the Government are more interested in tax concessions to allow a small minority of very wealthy people to live a life of conspicuous consumption while they allow the large number of very poor people to rot. I want a Social Security Bill to be introduced that guarantees living standards, guarantees to eliminate poverty in our society and takes away the threat of coercion implicit in this Bill.

From next April there will be an even greater division in our country between the rich and the poor. There will also be an enormous burden on the people who work in the DHSS to carry out the regulations. Those people are being given insufficient advice and training now. There are staff cuts and they are threatened by privatisation and all the other things that Tory Governments dream up for public servants. We will end up with the problem of low-paid civil servants dealing with very poor people on the other side of the counter, with all the tensions and frictions that that creates.

I feel certain that we will be back fairly soon, because the Bill is unworkable. I hope that it will be very closely monitored if, unfortunately, it receives its Third Reading and is carried into law. I hope that it will be carefully watched from the time that it becomes law and that every possible challenge will be mounted against it so that the Government will be forced to bring in regulations in respect of the social fund, forced to look again at various aspects of the Bill and forced to come back to the House with another Social Security Bill that at least recognises that the job of the DHSS is to eliminate poverty, not to create a labyrinth of legal restrictions that prevent the DHSS from paying people the support and aid that is necessary for them to enjoy a decent existence.

10.34 pm

Mrs. Wise: The Minister said that the Bill was about training, targeting and tidying up. I congratulate him on finding some pattern in the Bill, even though it is only one of alliteration. I thought that the Bill was a hotch-potch of ideas, the only connecting link of which was that it made people's positions worse. The common thread was tha made worse the position of people of different ages and different circumstances.

The Government had two lines of argument. So clauses were said to affect very few people, were important, would not cost very much and were not wo bothering about. Other clauses would affect many peo and would cost an enormous amount. They could not s "The country cannot afford it," because they keep telling us that the country is in an unparalleled state prosperity, but they certainly said, "It will cost enormous amount and we cannot do it." It was confus to take part in debates, sometimes following immediat after each other, where those mutually exclusive lines thought were advanced, but we became accustomed t in Committee and learned to deal with it.

I am slightly inhibited tonight by the Ministe generous praise of the efforts of my hon. Friend Member for Coventry, South-East (Mr. Nellist) a myself to extend the attendance allowance to babies a under two. I am grateful for that praise and I am glad t we produced some movement. I read carefully Minister's statement on the matter at the conclusion yesterday's debate. He said:

"The advice that I have received confirms that, as h Members argued in Committee, these babies have attenda needs which exceed those of a normal child."

The hon. Members to whom he referred were Opposition Members. It cannot have been easy for him concede that we were right. Having said that 3,(children a year were affected, and that to do what wanted would cost £7 million a year, the Minis concluded his useful and interesting observations saying:

"If the hon. Lady is not willing to withdraw the new clau I ask the House to reject it, but against the background c recognition that support for the families of disabled child throughout the age range will now inescapably be part of system."—[*Official Report*, 12 January 1988; Vol. 125, 237-38.]

All the Conservatives Members then voted against it.

Our problem is that we do not know what the Minis meant. Will those provisions become part of the syst now, or will they become part of it in the fulness of tir In the fulness of time, the under-twos will cease to be un two. Their parents will find it incomprehensible that Minister has considered the matter and is grateful for advice of the Opposition, yet there will be no movem until those children are aged over two. I hope the Minis means that when the Bill goes to the other place Government will introduce an amendment to put words into effect and the provision "now inescapab into the social security system.

I hope, too, that the Members of the other place consider carefully the other arguments of the Oppositi which are equally cogent and correct. They inclu arguments on carers, and on the iniquity of putting working-class poor into debt. Officially, for the first ti they will be encouraged—nay, coerced—into going i debt. Debt has been the great scourge and fear of worki people over generations. Now the state is saying, "You be in debt to us, and instead of being the final safety n the state will be your creditor."

I urge those in the other place to continue arguments, to note that there has been some movement the minds, if not the votes, of Conservative Members a

to try to rescue some elements of the social security system from the damage that the passage of the Bill will do tonight.

I echo what was said by my hon. Friend the Member for Islington, North (Mr. Corbyn) about the valiant efforts of our hon. Friend the Member for Derby, South (Mrs. Beckett). It was in some ways a joy to serve on the Committee, although the material of the Bill was so deplorable. It was good to be working as part of a team defending people who need defending, and it was in some respects a model of what Committee proceedings can be.

Of course, the Opposition always have the problem of being grossly under-resourced compared to Ministers. We delighted in seeing the scurrying, the notes and the hasty consultations between the many advisers helping the Minister, and we looked with great favour and approbation at our single, solitary adviser, Tony Lynes, without whom we could not have done the job which even the future Opposition—the present Government—must surely concede was done.

The Government should bear in mind, however, that we also had alongside us, offering us briefings and help, many voluntary organisations. I know that, being non-party political bodies, they will undoubtedly have been offering the same help to Conservative Members, but they will have noticed that the Members of Parliament who responded to their pleas, who read their briefings carefully and took account of them—indeed, understood them—were Opposition Members.

For many years the Conservative party has made the voluntary organisations appear to be its fiefdom. Those days have now gone. Voluntary organisations of all kinds, dealing with all the topics related to health, social security, disability, women—the "establishment" of the women's movement, as my hon. Friend the Member for Livingston (Mr. Cook) described them yesterday, as well as the radical elements — were putting forward items and suggestions that Opposition Members took up. That will not leave the political situation untouched.

Although the Government may defeat us in the Lobby tonight, we have consistently won every argument, day after day. It has been worth putting it on the record. The Government's numbers in the Lobby will not ultimately prevail. We will have a great deal of work to do to undo the damage that they have done, but sooner or later our day will come.

Question put, That the Bill be now read the Third time:—

The House divided: Ayes 258, Noes 225.

Division No. 136] **[10.45 pm**

AYES

Allason, Rupert
Amess, David
Amos, Alan
Arbuthnot, James
Arnold, Jacques *(Gravesham)*
Arnold, Tom *(Hazel Grove)*
Atkins, Robert
Atkinson, David
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Baldry, Tony
Banks, Robert *(Harrogate)*
Batiste, Spencer
Beaumont-Dark, Anthony
Bellingham, Henry
Bendall, Vivian
Bennett, Nicholas *(Pembroke)*
Benyon, W.
Bevan, David Gilroy
Biffen, Rt Hon John
Blackburn, Dr John G.
Blaker, Rt Hon Sir Peter
Boscawen, Hon Robert
Bottomley, Peter
Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Bowden, Gerald *(Dulwich)*
Bowis, John
Boyson, Rt Hon Dr Sir Rhodes
Braine, Rt Hon Sir Bernard
Brandon-Bravo, Martin
Brazier, Julian
Brittan, Rt Hon Leon
Brooke, Rt Hon Peter
Brown, Michael *(Brigg & Cl't's)*
Browne, John *(Winchester)*
Bruce, Ian *(Dorset South)*
Buchanan-Smith, Rt Hon Alick
Buck, Sir Antony
Burns, Simon
Burt, Alistair
Butler, Chris
Butterfill, John
Carlisle, John, *(Luton N)*
Carlisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Carrington, Matthew
Carttiss, Michael
Cash, William
Churchill, Mr
Coombs, Simon *(Swindon)*
Cope, John
Couchman, James
Cran, James
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Curry, David
Davis, David *(Boothferry)*
Day, Stephen
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James
Durant, Tony
Dykes, Hugh
Evans, David *(Welwyn Hatf'd)*
Fallon, Michael
Forman, Nigel
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Fox, Sir Marcus
Gale, Roger
Garel-Jones, Tristan
Gill, Christopher
Gilmour, Rt Hon Sir Ian
Glyn, Dr Alan
Goodlad, Alastair
Gorman, Mrs Teresa
Gow, Ian
Gower, Sir Raymond
Grant, Sir Anthony *(CambsSW)*
Greenway, Harry *(Ealing N)*
Greenway, John *(Rydale)*
Gregory, Conal
Griffiths, Peter *(Portsmouth N)*
Grist, Ian
Ground, Patrick
Hamilton, Hon A. *(Epsom)*
Hampson, Dr Keith
Hannam, John
Hargreaves, A. *(B'ham H'll Gr')*
Hargreaves, Ken *(Hyndburn)*
Harris, David
Hawkins, Christopher
Hayhoe, Rt Hon Sir Barney
Heathcoat-Amory, David
Heddle, John
Heseltine, Rt Hon Michael
Hicks, Mrs Maureen *(Wolv' NE)*
Hicks, Robert *(Cornwall SE)*
Higgins, Rt Hon Terence L.
Hogg, Hon Douglas *(Gr'th'm)*
Holt, Richard
Hordern, Sir Peter
Howard, Michael
Howarth, Alan *(Strat'd-on-A)*
Howell, Rt Hon David *(G'dford)*
Hughes, Robert G. *(Harrow W)*
Hunt, David *(Wirral W)*
Hunt, John *(Ravensbourne)*
Hurd, Rt Hon Douglas
Irvine, Michael
Jack, Michael
Jackson, Robert
Janman, Timothy
Jessel, Toby
Jones, Gwilym *(Cardiff N)*
Jones, Robert B *(Herts W)*
Kellett-Bowman, Mrs Elaine
Key, Robert
King, Roger *(B'ham N'thfield)*
King, Rt Hon Tom *(Bridgwater)*
Kirkhope, Timothy
Knapman, Roger
Knight, Greg *(Derby North)*
Knowles, Michael
Knox, David
Lamont, Rt Hon Norman
Lang, Ian
Latham, Michael
Lawrence, Ivan
Lee, John *(Pendle)*
Leigh, Edward *(Gainsbor'gh)*
Lennox-Boyd, Hon Mark
Lester, Jim *(Broxtowe)*
Lightbown, David
Lloyd, Sir Ian *(Havant)*
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
Lord, Michael
Luce, Rt Hon Richard
Lyell, Sir Nicholas
Macfarlane, Sir Neil
MacKay, Andrew *(E Berkshire)*
Maclean, David
McLoughlin, Patrick
McNair-Wilson, M. *(Newbury)*
McNair-Wilson, P. *(New Forest)*
Major, Rt Hon John
Malins, Humfrey
Maples, John
Mariand, Paul
Marshall, John *(Hendon S)*
Marshall, Michael *(Arundel)*
Martin, David *(Portsmouth S)*
Mates, Michael
Maude, Hon Francis
Mawhinney, Dr Brian
Maxwell-Hyslop, Robin
Mayhew, Rt Hon Sir Patrick
Mellor, David
Meyer, Sir Anthony
Miller, Hal
Mills, Iain
Miscampbell, Norman
Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)*
Mitchell, David *(Hants NW)*
Moate, Roger
Monro, Sir Hector
Montgomery, Sir Fergus
Moore, Rt Hon John
Morrison, Sir Charles *(Devizes)*
Morrison, Hon P *(Chester)*
Moss, Malcolm
Moynihan, Hon C.
Mudd, David
Neale, Gerrard
Nelson, Anthony
Neubert, Michael
Newton, Rt Hon Tony
Nicholls, Patrick
Nicholson, David *(Taunton)*
Nicholson, Miss E. *(Devon W)*
Oppenheim, Phillip
Page, Richard
Paice, James
Patnick, Irvine
Patten, Chris *(Bath)*
Pattie, Rt Hon Sir Geoffrey
Pawsey, James
Peacock, Mrs Elizabeth
Porter, David *(Waveney)*
Portillo, Michael
Powell, William *(Corby)*
Raffan, Keith
Raison, Rt Hon Timothy
Redwood, John
Renton, Tim
Rhodes James, Robert
Rhys Williams, Sir Brandon
Riddick, Graham
Ridley, Rt Hon Nicholas
Rifkind, Rt Hon Malcolm

Roberts, Wyn *(Conwy)*
Roe, Mrs Marion
Rost, Peter
Rowe, Andrew
Rumbold, Mrs Angela
Sackville, Hon Tom
Sainsbury, Hon Tim
Sayeed, Jonathan
Scott, Nicholas
Shaw, David *(Dover)*
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Shelton, William *(Streatham)*
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Shepherd, Richard *(Aldridge)*
Sims, Roger
Smith, Tim *(Beaconsfield)*
Soames, Hon Nicholas
Speed, Keith
Spicer, Sir Jim *(Dorset W)*
Squire, Robin
Stanbrook, Ivor
Steen, Anthony
Stern, Michael
Stevens, Lewis
Stewart, Allan *(Eastwood)*
Stewart, Andrew *(Sherwood)*
Sumberg, David
Summerson, Hugo
Taylor, Ian *(Esher)*
Taylor, John M *(Solihull)*
Tebbit, Rt Hon Norman
Thompson, Patrick *(Norwich N)*
Thornton, Malcolm
Thurnham, Peter
Tracey, Richard
Tredinnick, David
Trippier, David
Trotter, Neville
Twinn, Dr Ian
Vaughan, Sir Gerard
Viggers, Peter
Waddington, Rt Hon David
Wakeham, Rt Hon John
Waldegrave, Hon William
Walker, Bill *(T'side North)*
Walker, Rt Hon P. *(W'cester)*
Waller, Gary
Ward, John
Wardle, C. *(Bexhill)*
Watts, John
Wells, Bowen
Wheeler, John
Whitney, Ray
Widdecombe, Miss Ann
Wiggin, Jerry
Wilkinson, John
Wilshire, David
Winterton, Mrs Ann
Winterton, Nicholas
Wolfson, Mark
Wood, Timothy
Woodcock, Mike
Yeo, Tim
Young, Sir George *(Acton)*

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. Richard Ryder and
Mr. Stephen Dorrell.

NOES

Adams, Allen *(Paisley N)*
Allen, Graham
Anderson, Donald
Archer, Rt Hon Peter
Armstrong, Ms Hilary
Ashley, Rt Hon Jack
Ashton, Joe
Banks, Tony *(Newham NW)*
Barnes, Harry *(Derbyshire NE)*
Barron, Kevin
Beckett, Margaret
Beggs, Roy
Bell, Stuart
Benn, Rt Hon Tony
Bennett, A. F. *(D'nt'n & R'dish)*
Bermingham, Gerald
Bidwell, Sydney
Blair, Tony
Blunkett, David
Boateng, Paul
Boyes, Roland
Bradley, Keith
Bray, Dr Jeremy
Brown, Gordon *(D'mline E)*
Brown, Nicholas *(Newcastle E)*
Brown, Ron *(Edinburgh Leith)*
Bruce, Malcolm *(Gordon)*
Buchan, Norman
Buckley, George
Caborn, Richard
Callaghan, Jim
Campbell, Menzies *(Fife NE)*
Campbell, Ron *(Blyth Valley)*
Campbell-Savours, D. N.
Canavan, Dennis
Carlile, Alex *(Mont'g)*
Clarke, Tom *(Monklands W)*
Clay, Bob
Cleiland, David
Clwyd, Mrs Ann
Cohen, Harry
Coleman, Donald
Cook, Robin *(Livingston)*
Corbyn, Jeremy
Cousins, Jim
Cox, Tom
Crowther, Stan
Cryer, Bob
Cummings, J.
Cunliffe, Lawrence
Cunningham, Dr John
Dalyell, Tam
Darling, Alastair
Davies, Rt Hon Denzil *(Llanelli)*
Davies, Ron *(Caerphilly)*
Davis, Terry *(B'ham Hodge H'l)*
Dewar, Donald
Dixon, Don
Dobson, Frank
Doran, Frank
Douglas, Dick
Dunnachie, James
Dunwoody, Hon Mrs Gwyneth
Eastham, Ken
Evans, John *(St Helens N)*
Ewing, Harry *(Falkirk E)*
Ewing, Mrs Margaret *(Moray)*
Fatchett, Derek
Faulds, Andrew
Fearn, Ronald
Field, Frank *(Birkenhead)*
Fields, Terry *(L'pool B G'n)*
Flannery, Martin
Flynn, Paul
Forsythe, Clifford *(Antrim S)*
Foster, Derek
Fraser, John
Fyfe, Mrs Maria
Galbraith, Samuel
Galloway, George
Garrett, John *(Norwich South)*
Garrett, Ted *(Wallsend)*
George, Bruce
Gilbert, Rt Hon Dr John
Godman, Dr Norman A.
Golding, Mrs Llin
Gordon, Ms Mildred
Grant, Bernie *(Tottenham)*
Griffiths, Nigel *(Edinburgh S)*
Griffiths, Win *(Bridgend)*
Grocott, Bruce
Harman, Ms Harriet
Healey, Rt Hon Denis
Heffer, Eric S.
Hinchliffe, David
Hogg, N. *(C'nauld & Kilsyth)*
Holland, Stuart
Home Robertson, John
Hood, James
Howarth, George *(Knowsley N)*
Howell, Rt Hon D. *(S'heath)*
Howells, Geraint
Hoyle, Doug
Hughes, Robert *(Aberdeen N)*
Hughes, Roy *(Newport E)*
Hughes, Sean *(Knowsley S)*
Hume, John
Illsley, Eric
Ingram, Adam
Janner, Greville
John, Brynmor
Jones, Barry *(Alyn & Deeside)*
Jones, Ieuan *(Ynys Môn)*
Jones, Martyn *(Clwyd S W)*
Kilfedder, James
Kinnock, Rt Hon Neil
Kirkwood, Archy
Lambie, David
Lamond, James
Leadbitter, Ted
Leighton, Ron
Lestor, Miss Joan *(Eccles)*
Lewis, Terry
Livingstone, Ken
Livsey, Richard
Lloyd, Tony *(Stretford)*
Lofthouse, Geoffrey
Loyden, Eddie
McAllion, John
McAvoy, Tom
McCartney, Ian
Macdonald, Calum
McFall, John
McGrady, E. K.
McKay, Allen *(Penistone)*
McKelvey, William
McLeish, Henry
McNamara, Kevin
McTaggart, Bob
McWilliam, John
Madden, Max
Mahon, Mrs Alice
Mallon, Seamus
Marek, Dr John
Marshall, David *(Shettleston)*
Marshall, Jim *(Leicester S)*
Martin, Michael *(Springburn)*
Martlew, Eric
Maxton, John
Meacher, Michael
Meale, Alan
Michael, Alun
Michie, Bill *(Sheffield Heeley)*
Michie, Mrs Ray *(Arg'l & Bute)*
Millan, Rt Hon Bruce
Mitchell, Austin *(G't Grim*
Molyneaux, Rt Hon James
Moonie, Dr Lewis
Morgan, Rhodri
Morley, Elliott
Morris, Rt Hon A *(W'shaw*
Morris, Rt Hon J *(Aberavo*
Mowlam, Marjorie
Mullin, Chris
Murphy, Paul
Nellist, Dave
Oakes, Rt Hon Gordon
O'Brien, William
O'Neill, Martin
Orme, Rt Hon Stanley
Patchett, Terry
Pendry, Tom
Pike, Peter
Powell, Ray *(Ogmore)*
Prescott, John
Primarolo, Ms Dawn
Quin, Ms Joyce
Randall, Stuart
Rees, Rt Hon Merlyn
Reid, John
Richardson, Ms Jo
Robertson, George
Robinson, Geoffrey
Rogers, Allan
Rooker, Jeff
Ross, Ernie *(Dundee W)*
Ross, William *(Londonderry*
Rowlands, Ted
Ruddock, Ms Joan
Salmond, Alex
Sheerman, Barry
Sheldon, Rt Hon Robert
Shore, Rt Hon Peter
Short, Clare
Skinner, Dennis
Smith, Andrew *(Oxford E)*
Smith, Rt Hon J. *(Monk'ds E*
Smyth, Rev Martin *(Belfast S*
Snape, Peter
Soley, Clive
Spearing, Nigel
Steinberg, Gerald
Stott, Roger
Strang, Gavin
Taylor, Mrs Ann *(Dewsbury)*
Taylor, John M *(Solihull)*
Thompson, Jack *(Wansbeck)*
Turner, Dennis
Vaz, Keith
Wall, Pat
Wallace, James
Walley, Ms Joan
Wardell, Gareth *(Gower)*
Wareing, Robert N.
Welsh, Andrew *(Angus E)*
Wigley, Dafydd
Williams, Rt Hon A. J.
Williams, Alan W. *(Carm'then*
Wilson, Brian
Winnick, David
Wise, Mrs Audrey
Worthington, Anthony
Wray, James
Young, David *(Bolton SE)*

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. Frank Cook and
Mr. Frank Haynes.

Question accordingly agreed to.

Bill read the Third time and passed.

Income and Corporation Taxes Bill

[Lords]

Order for Second Reading read.

10.56 pm

The Solicitor-General (Sir Nicholas Lyell): I beg to move, That the Bill be now read a Second time.

The Bill consolidates enactments relating to income tax and corporation tax. The last such consolidation took place in 1970 and the additions and amendments to the law made by each subsequent Finance Act have made a new consolidation exercise necessary. The Bill is pure consolidation. No amendment to the present law is made.

The House will recognise, if only from the massive bulk of the Bill—it contains 845 clauses and more than 1,000 pages — that the work of consolidation represents a formidable achievement on the part of those concerned. We owe a debt of gratitude especially to the draftsman who worked for over four years to produce the Bill. She had to deal not only with the legislation as it existed but with all the Finance Acts each year, including two Finance Acts last year. If I were a farmer, I would give the Bill a pat.

I should, however, make it clear that there are a number of technical amendments which will have to be dealt with in Committee in the fairly near future. I make that clear for the technical experts who scrutinise the text in the meantime.

The Bill has been passed in another place where, in the usual way, it was referred to the Joint Committee on Consolidation, &c., Bills. That Committee reported that the Bill is pure consolidation. I commend the Bill to the House.

10.58 pm

Mr. John Fraser (Norwood): It is not right that either laymen or lawyers should have to pick their way through the coded messages put through the House over a period of 17 years. I am a strong and long-standing enthusiast of consolidation.

I want to ask the Minister only one question. The Bill says that there will be a table of derivations. May we also have a table of destinations so that we may know legislatively not only where we have been but where we are going?

This is one of those occasions when one can ingratiate oneself with the Speaker and hope to be encouraged to speak again, and one can ingratiate oneself with one's Scottish comrades. I so do, and I commend the Bill to the House.

Question put and agreed to.

Bill accordingly read a Second time.

Bill committed to a Committee of the whole House. —*[Mr. Lightbown.]*

Committee tomorrow.

Committee of Selection (Special Report)

Motion made, and Question proposed,

That this House takes note of the Special Report from the Committee of Selection of 9th December, relating to the Scottish Affairs Committee.—*[Mr. Lightbown.]*

Madam Deputy Speaker (Miss Betty Boothroyd): Mr. Speaker has selected the amendment standing in the name of the Leader of the Opposition.

11 pm

Sir Marcus Fox (Shipley): My contribution to this debate will be much shorter than the one I made in the debate on 2 December because of the need to hear what colleagues and friends from Scotland on both sides of the House and other hon. Members have to say in this short debate. There is a major difference between the previous debate when we were seeking approval for our nominations and this debate when we are merely asking for advice and instruction. It is not often that Committees come to the House with that objective in mind.

I shall briefly recount the reasons why the Committee felt the need to produce its special report. As the House will know, the Committee of Selection has the duty of bringing before the House motions for the nomination of the 14 departmental Select Committees. On 2 December, I moved motions relating to 13 of those Committees and they were approved by the House. The Committee of Selection has not yet invited the House to consider a similar motion in respect of the Select Committee on Scottish Affairs—[HON. MEMBERS: "Why?"] Patience is a virtue that will be rewarded shortly.

On 9 December the Committee agreed a short special report stating that we found ourselves unable to nominate a Scottish Affairs Select Committee which, in our opinion, would have the support of the House and, therefore, proposed to take no further action on the matter unless instructed by the House to do so. With the permission of the House, I shall explain briefly the background to that report and why the Committee is now seeking this debate.

In a series of meetings last autumn we considered, along with the many other items on our agenda, how best to set up the Select Committee on Scottish Affairs. We accepted that there should be a Government majority on the Committee in accordance with the conventions of the House and with the fact that we are members of a unitary Parliament representing the whole of the United Kingdom. To achieve that, it was necessary to reduce the size of the Committee from 13 to nine and I understand that, through the usual channels, that was agreed. On 12 November the Committee's motion, with the names of the Conservative and minority party Members, was tabled. The Labour names were not ready at that stage but were added on 19 November. We thought that the resulting motion was a compromise with which both sides of the House could live.

However, the Committee received a letter from one of the hon. Members named in the motion — my hon. Friend the Member for Tayside, North (Mr. Walker)— saying that he was not willing to serve on the Committee. As Standing Order No. 104 requires the Committee of Selection to ascertain whether an hon. Member will give his attendance, we felt that we had no option but to amend our motion further to remove the hon. Gentleman's name. This left on the Order Paper a motion nominati eight hon. Members to the Select Committee on S Affairs. The options seemed to be having a Comm eight that did not reflect the Government's majorit House, which we recognised would not be in acco with the conventions and practices of the Hous Committee that included at least one hon. M representing an English constituency. We underst that time—there may have been developments s that the second option would not be acceptable principal Opposition party.

The Committee of Selection never discussed thi on the basis that it was not its role to make a ruli I made clear in a previous debate that embraced Select Committees, it is for each party to decide whic Members it will nominate.

By early December 1987 we had reached an im The Committee of Selection felt that any proposal mi[illegible]t put forward would prove unacceptable to o of [illegible] House or the other. It was against that backg that it made its special report. The report is not an a to block or prevent the setting up of a Select Com on Scottish Affairs. It is merely an acknowledgem real difficulties. The report is intended to leave all o open with a view to seeking further guidance fro House. The Committee of Selection will be delighted given guidance that will lead to the setting up of a Committee on Scottish Affairs with a composition will be broadly acceptable to the House.

11.7 pm

The Lord President of the Council and Leader House of Commons (Mr. John Wakeham): I am sur the House will be grateful to my hon. Friend the Me for Shipley (Sir M. Fox) for his outline of the Comm of Selection's consideration of this matter and for th in which the Committee tried to reach an agreed sol in what were clearly difficult and changing circumsta

As is so often the case in matters relating to the H the problem is not entirely new. Select Committee Scottish Affairs have presented special problem occasions in the past. A series of Sessional Scottish S Committees lapsed without exciting much comment i early 1970s, following some years of activity. No fu Committee was appointed for several years until despite the momentous Scottish issues before the H and the nation during that time. In 1979 the establish of the Select Committee on Scottish Affairs followed time after that of the other departmental S Committees. I hope that in this case, too, we shall simi succeed in completing our Committee structure.

The deliberations of the Committee of Selection ar course, private. However, from what my hon. Friend Member for Shipley has said, and from the var motions which have appeared in his name on the O Paper, my understanding of the Committee's position follows. On 18 November 1987, the Committee Selection tabled a motion to set up a Select Comm which it believed would be generally acceptable and w it knew was in accordance with the traditions of the Ho Instead of the maximum 13 members, only nine w nominated. That enabled the Committee to reflect Government's majority in the House while compri only Members representing Scottish constituencies. Committee of Selection was then told by my hon. Fri the Member for Tayside, North (Mr. Walker) that he

not prepared to serve on the Select Committee on Scottish Affairs, and he was accordingly removed from the list of nominees. That left a motion to set up a Committee of only eight members, and a dilemma.

We have heard from my hon. Friend the Member for Shipley the problem facing the Committee of Selection. It was required to take account of the refusal of my hon. Friend the Member for Tayside, North to serve, but a Select Committee of the eight other Members nominated would not have been in accordance with the conventions of the House because it would not reflect the Government's majority. Yet the Government's majority on the Committee could be achieved only by nominating a Committee which was not exclusively made up of Members representing Scottish constituencies, which the Committee of Selection believed would be unacceptable to the Opposition. It seems to have had good reason for that belief. The Opposition parties were represented on the Committee, and so were able to suggest or support a non-Scottish element as a way forward if that had been acceptable to them. There is also the fact that the Labour party did not nominate its members of the Committee until the week after it had seen the original motion nominating as the Conservative Members my five hon. Friends who sit on the Back Benches representing Scottish constituencies. The Committee of Selection therefore adjourned its consideration of the matter and reported to the House.

I accept, of course, that if my hon. Friend the Member for Tayside, North had felt able to serve on the Select Committee we might already have set it up. But he is within his rights to refuse, and indeed Standing Order No. 104 clearly implies that some Members will not wish to serve in this capacity. No doubt my hon. Friend may well seek to catch your eye, Mr. Speaker, later in this debate.

I am sure it would be generally accepted that the responsibility for determining whether a Select Committee be appointed should not be left to one Member's personal decision whether he will serve. Nor need it be. In this unitary Parliament it is a principle that Members from all parts of the United Kingdom have an equal right to be heard. Likewise, all Members are equally eligible to be considered for membership of any Select Committee. If a party finds that it has more volunteers for a Select Committee than places available to it, some further form of selection is necessary. It is not surprising that in the past all members of the Select Committee on Scottish Affairs have been Members for Scottish constituencies. But on this occasion the refusal of my hon. Friend the Member for Tayside, North to serve means that those of my hon. Friends who sit for constituencies outside Scotland and who are interested in serving on the Scottish Affairs Committee, as they are perfectly entitled to do, find their chances of being put forward greatly increased. I can see nothing wrong with that.

Mr. Andrew Rowe (Mid-Kent): I do not know whether this is the right moment to raise this matter, but I am nervous about how long my right hon. Friend will continue. At the outset, my right hon. Friend said that there was no Scottish Affairs Select Committee between 1974 and 1979. Have I understood my right hon. Friend correctly?

Mr. Wakeham: That is absolutely right. I am trying to be as non-partisan as I can, but between 1974 and 1979 no Select Committee on Scottish Affairs was set up.

So far as the Opposition are concerned, whatever their earlier views, in their amendment to the motion I see welcome signs that they may be prepared to accept the principle that all hon. Members should be equally eligible to be considered for Select Committee nomination. If that is indeed the case, I look forward to hearing their more detailed proposals for constructive guidance to the Committee of Selection, and I hope that we may soon see the Select Committee established. I share their regret that it has not yet been possible to appoint it.

Mr. Donald Dewar (Glasgow, Garscadden): I am not as well versed in the etiquette of the House as the right hon. Gentleman and I genuinely hope that I am not transgressing in any way. I believe that he might agree that, whatever the Committee of Selection's interpretation, events have certainly moved on in terms of the exchange of views through the usual channels. I put it as broadly as that. It is clear that if the Government felt that they could man the Select Committee on Scottish Affairs by topping up with the introduction of perhaps one hon. Member who did not represent a Scottish constituency, the Opposition view was that that should be put to the House. There was a certain implication in that offer.

Mr. Wakeham: I understand the hon. Gentleman, and there is a difference between us. Our view is that in a unitary Parliament Members from either side of the House are entitled to serve on any Committee. I am not prepared to accept the proposition that that is what the hon. Gentleman has called "topping up". However, I am perfectly happy to listen to the debate.

I believe that the Opposition's amendment and their analysis of the failure to set up the Committee does not take proper account of the more complex questions of principle involved, particularly now that we have heard the account of my hon. Friend the Member for Shipley. Nor do I believe it to be a proper way forward simply to refer the question back to the Committee of Selection without clarifying the way in which we wish it to proceed in its consideration.

Although it has not been selected, I hope it will be in order to turn briefly to the amendment in the name of the hon. Member for Angus, East (Mr. Welsh) and his colleagues in the Scottish National party. I recognise their particular interest in this, and I am grateful to the hon. Member for Angus, East for his courtesy in writing to my right hon. Friend the Patronage Secretary setting out his party's position on the membership of the Committee. I shall listen with great care to what he says tonight. But I have to say that I do not believe that the suggestion that the Committee of Selection should base its decisions on the general election result rather than the composition of the House is one that provides a generally acceptable way forward for further discussions.

Mr. Andrew Welsh (Angus, East): The proposition that those elected by the Scottish people who wish to serve on the Committee should be excluded because others who were elected by similar Scottish votes do not wish to serve is ludicrous. In place of the Scottish Members who are willing to serve on the Committee we are to have English Members, who do not have one Scottish vote to back them up, being dragged in to serve on the Committee. That is ludicrous and it goes against basic democratic rights.

Mr. Wakeham: On democratic rights, we are all elected as Members of the United Kingdom Parliament. By the

[Mr. Wakeham]

conventions of the House and by any democratic arrangement the party with the largest number of seats in the House is entitled to a majority on the Committee. Therefore, it is not possible to meet the demands of the SNP and recognise the fundamental principle of the way that all Select Committees work. The Select Committee on Scottish Affairs is not a second-class Committee; it is as important a Select Committee as any other and should be formed in the same way.

This debate is an opportunity, which the Committee of Selection could not have when it made its special report, to hear the views of the House. I will listen to the debate for confirmation that both sides of the House endorse the principle of equal eligibility in a unitary Parliament which I mentioned earlier. Provided that this principle is accepted, I hope that we may find a common basis for continuing discussion about how we should proceed. The House can then return to this matter at an appropriate moment and give the Committee of Selection the clear guidance that it will require.

11.17 pm

Mr Frank Dobson (Holborn and St. Pancras): I beg to move, to leave out from "House" to the end of the question and to add instead thereof:

'regrets the failure to establish a Select Committee on Scottish Affairs in view of the significant role it has to play in scrutinising the activities of the Scottish Office; recognises that the difficulties of the Committee of Selection are the direct result of the reluctance of Conservative honourable Members from Scotland to serve, and calls on them to reconsider their decision; notes the willingness of honourable Members from the other parts of the House to join the Committee and to seek a constructive solution to present difficulties; and, in the light of the above, instructs the Committee of Selection to nominate a Select Committee on Scottish Affairs.'

The present position is unsatisfactory and cannot be allowed to persist. It would be wrong for the Leader of the House to attempt to lay the blame for the failure of the House to establish a Select Committee on Scottish Affairs at the door of either the Committee of Selection or the Opposition. The fault lies with the Government, and the Leader of the House made that crystal clear this evening when he said that, on the basic principle that this is a unitary Parliament, the Government can appoint whom they like to represent them on the Committee. Why has he not got on with it and done that? If he had done that before Christmas we could have had the Committee in operation at the same time as the others.

I hope that neither the Leader of the House nor any of his hon. Friends will start pleading anything that happened before the departmental Select Committees were established as a precedent for not having a Select Committee on Scottish Affairs. The fact is that departmental Committees were established by the House because it was believed by the House as a whole—this unitary Parliament — that there should be Select Committees monitoring every major Department of State, and the Scottish Office is a major Department of State.

The reason why the Committee was not established was that the Government could not, at that time, find enough Tories whom they regarded as suitable to serve on it. As we all know, that problem stems from the commendable good sense of the people of Scotland, who reduced the number of Tory Members of Parliament in Scotland to an unrepresentative rump of 10. We are now i position that almost twice as many Tory h who were born in Scotland represent seats in Wales as dared to stay in Scotland and leave fate to be decided by their compatriots. The that the place of birth of 32 Tory MPs is whatever that means—but of those whose p is recorded, no fewer than 17 hon. Members seats in England and Wales were born in Sc is understandable that ambitious Tories born leave their native land, because it clearly al their chances of being elected to the House.

With five Scottish Tories in the Governme five Back Benchers left to serve on the Select the Government's business managers were number of choices, which they could have exe time they liked. The Opposition, with 100 vot the Government, could do nothing to stop could have allowed the Select Committee Affairs to reflect the views of the people of S not have a Tory majority. At least that woul it easier for them, following the Committee ment, to dismiss its recommendations and co irrelevant and prejudiced against the Gove understand that the Government's busines considered that, but the Prime Minister coul the idea.

Conservative hon. Members, with childho public school, form the party of discipline, an have thought that they might—as another a have persuaded all five Tory Back Benchers serve on the Committee. I should have thought of them — including the hon. Member fo North (Mr. Walker) — had an obligatio constituents and to the people of Scotland discharge their duties in the House. It would the hon. Member for Tayside, North is going with a speech tonight, but he is not prepared to slogging on the Select Committee.

Mr. Bill Walker (Tayside, North): The hon. should not continue too far in that vein. Has time in his parliamentary career, served on t Committees at the same time? I have.

Mr. Dobson: I have neither the hon. G vaulting ambition nor his towering intellect, a not seek to do so. I say that he has an obliga constituents and to the people of Scotland to div of his other interests and start representing th Select Committee.

The Government's other alternative—they power to do this—would have been to recru those English Tory Members from Scotland— footballing terms as the Anglos — to serv Committee. After all, some of them have bee participate in Scottish Question Time. Some Co Members are willing to clown about in the Cha not to do the heavy work in Committee. In ad

Mr. Rowe: I wonder whether the principles the hon. Gentleman has constructed his admira embrace the fact that his hon. Friend the M Workington (Mr. Campbell-Savours) has tabled day motion, signed by a large number of his Sco Friends, commenting on community care in Ke

Mr. Dobson: They have obviously accepted the principle enunciated by the Leader of the House that this is a unitary Parliament, and they are exercising the rights that ensue from that.

The other alternative was for the Government to follow the example of Glasgow Rangers and import for the Committee a few English Ministers who were actually born in England. However, that would probably have been entirely unacceptable to them.

Mr. Brian Wilson (Cunninghame, North): No Catholics.

Mr. Dobson: In deference to my hon. Friend, I can assure him that in researching where Tory Ministers were born I did not inquire into their religious beliefs. We all know what they are: they all worship Mammon.

The Government have the power to follow the principle enunciated by the Leader of the House, but they have not done any of the things that I have suggested. They have not established the Select Committee and are treating the people of Scotland with contempt by preventing proper scrutiny of the activities of the Scottish Office. That is why the Secretary of State for Scotland is so pleased that the Committee has not been established.

The Opposition recognise the importance of the Select Committee on Scottish Affairs and think that, ideally, its membership should reflect the views of the people of Scotland, which were so overwhelmingly expressed at the general election. We also recognise force majeure in the shape of a Tory majority of 100. We do not expect ideal arrangements of any sort to be brought into operation. Therefore, all along we have sought to get the Committee established as soon as possible, and preferably with a wholly Scottish membership, but not necessarily if the Tory Whips cannot get all the Scottish Tory Members to do their duty.

What the Government are doing, or failing to do, is an insult to the people of Scotland, but it is also important for individual hon. Members, for the House and for people in the rest of the United Kingdom. If the Government get away with not establishing one departmental Select Committee, it will not be long before they try to get rid of another one because it is also inconvenient. Therefore, there is a basic principle at stake. Anybody who is interested in the scrutiny of the Executive will agree that this Committee must be established.

The Select Committee on Scottish Affairs has much work to do. The regional policy announcements made yesterday will clearly have an impact on Scotland and will need to be looked at. Yesterday the Secretary of State for Scotland, in response to a question by me, supplied me with a list. This is the list, and it weighs no less than 3¼ lb. It is a list of all those public appointments in Scotland for which he is responsible. I know that my right hon. and hon. Friends are keen to start scrutinising this list, if only to find out how many Tories have been appointed to these positions. They especially want to see how many ex-Tory Members of Parliament are getting on to the public payroll in Scotland, having denounced public expenditure until some of it was put in their pockets.

Mr. Patrick McLoughlin (Derbyshire, South): Is the hon. Gentleman saying that the Labour party needs Select Committees to organise us?

Mr. Dobson: I do not know whether the hon. Gentleman's parents hail from Northern Ireland or Scotland, but he ought to know that while it is possib individual hon. Members to do work, Select Comm have a special role to play.

I am sure that the Select Committee on Scottish A would be interested in all these public appointmen Scotland. However, there are far more important ma than public appointments to be considered and that the urgent attention of the Select Committee.

The Government should listen to this debate and the Committee of Selection. They should do their duty pick their team, however mixed its origins or ability. of the problems is that they know in their heart of h that, whatever team they pick, Labour's Scottish team play them off the park.

11.30 pm

Mr. James Wallace (Orkney and Shetland): The nothing to be gained from labouring the point, but political reality in Scotland following the last electio that the Government party is in a substantial mino Scotland has 50 Labour Members, 10 Conserva Members, nine alliance Members and three Sco National party Members.

Mr. Wilson: Is that the auld alliance?

Mr. Wallace: It was those who fought the gen election under the manifesto "Britain United". composition of the Scottish Affairs Select Comm should reflect the number of Scottish seats held in House by the various political parties.

In July last year, after the election, my hon. Friends I tabled early-day motion 87, which proposed that composition of the Select Committee should be Labour Members, three Conservative Members, alliance Members and one Scottish National p Member. If anything, that was a little generous to Conservative party, given that it had only one more than the combined forces of the alliance.

Nevertheless, as the hon. Member for Holborn and Pancras (Mr. Dobson) said, we recognise force maje If the Government do not wish to have an Opposit majority, they have the majority in the House to vot down. It is perfectly clear that a Committee withou Government majority would not be accepted. One understand why the Government do not want Committee with an Opposition majority, because Committee would have the power to summon Minis every fortnight, or even more regularly, and lambast th with the policies currently afflicting Scotland.

There is something to be said for a Committee with Opposition majority, although the Scottish public wo find it tedious if Government Ministers were consta hauled over the coals before the Committee. The pu would expect a Committee, particularly one with Opposition majority, to be more responsible and to h a probing role into the affairs of the Scottish Office.

The Government have had difficulty in getting Committee with a majority of their Members. The h Member for Tayside, North (Mr. Walker) has declined serve and there is an indication that the hon. and learn Member for Perth and Kinross (Mr. Fairbairn) unwilling to serve, as is the hon. Member for Eastwo (Mr. Stewart). I see that the Member for Eastwood nodding assent. Undoubtedly those hon. Members ha the right under the Standing Orders to decline to serve, b

[Mr. Wallace]

hon. Members should not claim only rights; they also have responsibilities. The Back-Bench Members of a Government who have so few Scottish Members, but who nevertheless claim to have a mandate to govern Scotland, have a duty to bear some responsibility and be prepared to take part in the Select Committee on Scottish Affairs, if that is the cost of setting up the Committee.

The Committee of Selection, on which I serve as the representative of the minority parties, when it was clear that the Government would not have a majority of Scottish Members, suggested that it was still possible to get a Committee of four Conservative Members, three Labour Members, one Liberal Member and one Scottish National party Member. I accept the point made by the hon. Member for Angus, East (Mr. Welsh) that it is unfair that the Scottish National party has Members who are anxious to serve but are denied the right to do so, when Conservative Members for Scottish seats have declined to serve.

The other possibility was that the Government could supplement its numbers from English Members. The hon. Member for Shipley (Sir M. Fox) said that no proposal was put before the Committee of Selection that included the name of any hon. Member for an English constituency.

I tried to follow the exchanges. Using a football analogy, the hon. Member for Holborn and St. Pancras suggested that the Labour party would be prepared to accept an hon. Member for an English constituency—preferably an hon. Member with Scottish origins. [HON. MEMBERS: "No."] Then perhaps it is any hon. Member for an English seat. [HON. MEMBERS: "Any will do."] The Opposition do not intend to be racist about it. An hon. Member for a Welsh seat would be acceptable. I hope that the Leader of the House has noted that suggestion.

Mr. Dewar: May I make it abundantly clear that we believe that by far the best solution would be if the Select Committee on Scottish Affairs could be constituted along traditional lines, with Scottish Members of Parliament serving on it. There are a number of ways in which that could be done. Given the Government's view of the matter, the only way in which the Committee is likely to be set up is if we are prepared to adopt a more flexible view. It would be better to have a Select Committee on Scottish Affairs than to have no Committee. We should expect a solid contribution from Scottish Members of Parliament on the Government side, but if the only way in which the Committee can be saved is by some form of dilution—we do not seek to dictate to the Government who should serve on the Committee; it would be neither proper nor constructive to do so — we should be prepared to pay that price.

Mr. Wallace: The whole House is indebted to the hon. Member for Glasgow, Garscadden (Mr. Dewar) for setting out the position so clearly. No hon. Member can be in any doubt now about the position.

Among a number of other issues that we have considered during the course of a rather busy day, we have agonised over whether it would be better to have no Committee at all rather than a Committee that included hon. Members from south of the border. We have come, regretfully, to the same conclusion as the hon. Member for Garscadden: that it would be far better to have a Committee than to have no Committee at all.

A Committee that was bound to di party political lines would make contribution, but hon. Members from Sc cies would be able to identify a large nu and issues that affect Scotland that nee divide the Committee along party po example, the state of Scottish prisons, w since the setting up of the Scottish legal months ago and the clash between enviro and industrial interests. If the Committ constructively, it could make an importa the government of Scotland and also to t the United Kingdom as a whole.

My right hon. and hon. Friends agre Opposition's view, and I hope that th House will be able to respond construct been said from this side of the House.

11.38 pm

Mr. Bill Walker (Tayside, North): C days, I find it rich that a Liberal spokes to Conservative Members about re working together. Really!

I welcome the opportunity to speal because I am thereby given the means of the reasons why I am not prepared to se of the Scottish Affairs Committee. I hav decision lightly, and it is not a decision th at overnight. I should also explain that only one letter on this matter while it discussion. I hope that by detailing my demolish the bogus allegations that have my position and motives.

Mr. Dewar: I am sure that the hon. a factual comment about his mailbag. Ho not give the impression to those hon. M who may not be so familiar with the Sc there is no concern in Scotland about Scottish Affairs Select Committee. There and it is reflected in every quarter. Is th of that in the fact that the Scottish C Unionist Association expressed its disqui the attitude taken by the hon. Member fo (Mr. Walker)?

Mr. Walker: Actually, that was the o received.

As I said earlier, I hope, by detailing demolish the bogus allegations that have b my position and motives. At the same tim dispel the myths that have been spread b of the Scottish media. I cite for example in the *Glasgow Herald*. It states:

"Some Scottish Conservative Back Benc small residue who have not been pressed service have shown hostility to the idea of the Scottish Affairs Committee—

"as lobby fodder"—

and that is the important phrase. What n

Every hon. Member knows that Select Back-Bench Committees. They are Committees and they do not create legis not have Ministers and Whips and, u Committees, they do not contain Members fodder. Select Committees consist of Me Opposition or the Government; they

fodder. Those Select Committees that have been seen to be effective are those in which Back-Bench Members have not been Lobby fodder. In those Committees, Members have submerged party loyalty in the interests of being good and effective House of Commons men and women and good Select Committee members.

I have had the good fortune to serve on two such Select Committees, one of which—the Select Committee on the Parliamentary Commissioner for Administration—was chaired by my hon. and learned Friend the Member for Colchester, North (Sir A. Buck). I served on that Select Committee in two Parliaments and I hope that the hon. Member for Glasgow, Garscadden (Mr. Dewar) is aware of that. That Select Committee is a splendid example of an effective House of Commons Select Committee. In it partisan loyalty is given second place to Committee loyalty and it has achieved much good work and has presented good reports to Parliament. The result is that the Committee is respected by those it interviews and, more importantly, the Government take the Committee's recommendations seriously. They have led to changes in the law and to changes and improvements in the management of Government Departments and Health Service administration. That is as effective a Select Committee as the House could wish to see.

Sadly, I have to advise the House that the Select Committee on Scottish Affairs fell far below the standards of the Select Committee on the Parliamentary Commissioner for Administration. The result was that Committee members were often unhappy with its conduct. On three occasions during the previous two Parliaments I was obliged to move what were effectively votes of no confidence in the Chair or in the conduct of the Select Committee on Scottish Affairs.

I was deeply saddened by that, because I believed genuinely that it would be possible to have high investigative standards similar to those achieved in the Select Committee on the Parliamentary Commissioner for Administration. I was doubly saddened because I had volunteered to serve on the Select Committee. As a convinced supporter of a unitary Parliament, I wanted Scottish matters to be handled in a modern, sympathetic and realistic manner. But however hard we tried, and however energetically I and others worked on the inquiries, often reading complex evidence that had been presented to the Committee, I became convinced that the Committee was a misuse of scarce and valuable parliamentary time.

The crunch came with the inquiry into Gartcosh. It soon became evident that members had not read the evidence submitted, or that they did not understand the evidence submitted, or that they had already decided what the Committee's report would say, regardless of the evidence that was presented. This culminated in my speaking to the first amendment to the Chairman's first draft report. Everyone knows that there is no time limit on speeches in Select Committees. The objective of my speech was to insert some flexibility into the draft report so that it would reflect more accurately the evidence that had been submitted to the Committee. I am pleased to tell the House that, after I had been speaking for a considerable time, a colleague of mine was able to negotiate changes to the report.

Mr. Malcolm Bruce (Gordon): I appreciate that the hon. Gentleman is trying to tell us that the Select Committee would work much better if he were a member of it, but is it not true that, in the inquiry, it was a question not of Conservative being at odds with Opposition Members, but of Gentleman being at odds with other membe Conservative group?

Mr. Walker: Sadly, I must admit the truth shall tell the hon. Gentleman and the House wh that my record of opposing skullduggery, from it comes, is known to the House. When a Com presented with evidence, and that evidence co [HON. MEMBERS: "You."] I know exactly contained: profit and loss accounts, cash accou

Mr. Dick Douglas (Dunfermline, West): On order, Mr. Speaker. Time is limited in this debate like intervening in any hon. Member's speech, bu an obligation to give some instructions and guida Committee of Selection, and I wonder whether t of the hon. Member for Tayside, North (Mr. W helping us in that regard.

Mr. Speaker: Every hon. Member m responsibility for his own speech. I think that Member for Tayside, North (Mr. Walker) was by a question that was put to him. I hope tha return to the main topic.

Mr. Walker: I had not intended to go into this If hon. Members wish to have the details of that they should read the evidence that was reporte House. All that I will say is that an attempt w deliberately to mislead the Committee, and I wou a party to it.

The result of all this was that the Committee longer command the respect of Ministers. Cons I felt—in this I am at one with Liberal Membe it was time that I left the Committee, and I wro Chairman of the Committee of Selection at th arrived at my decision not as a result of the genera of 1987, but because I was unhappy with the co the business of the Scottish Affairs Select Co Hon. Members who were members of that Co and who honestly believe in their hearts that we c should have done a good job for Scotland, would pressed to say that we were doing that. We were hours and hours indulging in what were ofte party-political battles.

I also find it offensive that snide remarks ha made—even, on occasion, from the Oppositio Bench—suggesting that my attitude has somethi with the fact that I am not sitting on the Treasur Anyone who cares to study my history will fin arrived in the House very seriously injured: it is su that I was able to stand at all. Moreover, anyone w to study the position that I have taken on Scottish will know that I have always intended to be inde and constructive. That is hardly the recipe for clim greasy pole of preferment, but I chose that deliberately, as I have done this evening.

I also find it rich that the Scottish Nation should be telling us how much it cares about the Affairs Committee, when everyone knows that in two Parliaments Gordon Wilson and Donald refused to serve on it. Anyone who cares to investi

[Mr. Walker]

find that some interesting comments were made by both gentlemen, none of which was in favour of the Committee. Indeed, they all opposed it.

In the light of what I have said, and the sad history of the Scottish Affairs Committee, I feel that the House would be well advised to take note of what the Committee of Selection has told it this evening. Hon. Members should remember that, if we are to make such Committees work, we cannot do so on the purely partisan lines that have been followed in the Scottish Affairs Committee in the last two or three Parliaments.

11.52 pm

Mr. Andrew Welsh (Angus, East): If anything is an advertisement for Scottish self-government, I think that these proceedings are such an advertisement. If nothing else, it would at least relieve English Members of this kind of conduct.

I note that the hon. Member for Tayside, North (Mr. Walker) is opposed to the Scottish Affairs Select Committee, not because he failed that Committee, but because it failed to reach his high standards. Bearing that in mind, my sympathies are entirely with those who served on the Committee with him. The hon. Gentleman is the most Unionist of Conservative Members, and he of all people should be taking part in what is a British institution of the House. It is disgraceful that he has held up our proceedings in such a fashion. He should be volunteering to serve.

This is very much the late-late show: it is rather knockabout stuff. I find it a disgraceful way to treat a very serious matter which concerns the government of Scotland. It is not so much a debate as some kind of punishment that we are all asked to undergo. As midnight approaches, I find it very difficult to explain to the Scottish people exactly how the House conducts its business and considers the government of our country at this late hour and in such a cursory fashion.

At the end of this so-called debate, reality will set in, because to the vote will be added the mass of English Tory Members who will make the final decision. It is a harsh system. When we come to a vote, the English majority will arrive and decide what happens, and the Scots will have to go along with it. People playing for Rangers nowadays must experience a rather similar feeling. But that is the principle of English Tory Members deciding what goes on in Scotland. That principle was enunciated very clearly by the Leader of the House. It should be unacceptable to Scots.

Mr. John Marshall (Hendon, South): Will the hon. Gentleman tell me how it is different when Scottish Members are willing to vote on Sunday trading in England and Wales and impose on England and Wales conditions that do not apply in Scotland, and to vote on the abolition of the Greater London council, which could scarcely be described as a Scottish issue?

Mr. Welsh: The hon. Member is asking the wrong person. I would not have taken part in those decisions. We do not expect to run England, and we would rather not have England run our affairs.

This is a coroner's hearing. I choose an English procedure, because that is how the House is run. It is a coroner's hearing without the corpse, which disappeared with the previous Parliament. Unle themselves organised, that will be of the Scottish Affairs Select Com not be good enough.

This is not a debate, because we Government will decide through t saying that the matter will be sen Selection, for the Government w majority there. This is no way in v business, especially on a take not device—which is designed to put into limbo, which is what the Gov

We are discussing fundamental are considering the right of hon. Ministers and bring them to accou in my party, among all Opposition Conservative Back Benchers about treated by the Government, who rights. The Select Committees are t happened recently as they have give some rights.

Mr. Tom Clarke (Monklands, listening carefully to the hon. Gent put the matter into historical perspe House to explain why, if his party so seriously and gives it the true pe given it, his former colleagues— Stewart — steadfastly refused to Committee.

Mr. Welsh: My colleagues are w Committee because we believe it more, no less. The Labour party's First, it did not want any English M accept some English Members, and English Members.

We are here because Labou Conservatives' game. The Governm Select Committee. They have been the Opposition along. The Governm of wilting lillies. This is the Governm "Spycatcher" anywhere, any time, continent. They sent secret police offices in Glasgow in connection w This Friday, they will put a th Conservative Back Bencher's Bill. If the Government will take it.

The Government do not want t because that suits their purpose. The of any Select Committee. What Gov

Mr. Tim Smith (Beaconsfield Gentleman give way?

Mr. Welsh: Not yet.

The Conservatives are electorally were almost wiped out in Scotland, a blame them for not wanting the Selec at what is going on in the Scottish C they do not want Malcolm and the much more in public, but I wou scrutinised and criticised by Scottish

Mr. Tim Smith *rose*——

Mr. Welsh: The Scottish Select C important, because Scots Back Bench once in five weeks to tackle the Secret

questions, which have been tabled a fortnight before. He holds nine portfolios which in England have separate Ministers and separate days for oral questions. How can Scots Back Benchers scrutinise the Government properly if they do not have the Select Committee?

I ask the Government, as it is they who will eventually decide, to get on with this matter. Scotland needs the Committee. It needs a means of holding the Government accountable to the House. The Government should stop this nonsense and get the Committee going so that we can scrutinise what they are doing in our country.

11.59 pm

Mr. Allan Stewart (Eastwood): My right hon. Friend the Lord President of the Council and Leader of the House of Commons has spelt out the position to the House fully and very fairly. It is my view that Select Committees can do an extremely valuable job, but they do it when hon. Members join in independent, non-partisan and reasoned examination of issues and policies pursued by the Executive. My position, as perfectly accurately stated to the House by the hon. Member for Orkney and Shetland (Mr. Wallace), is that setting up the Scottish Select Committee in this Parliament would, in the absence of evidence to the contrary, be a complete waste of time.

My name is on the Order Paper for a number of reasons, the main one being that, not having the expertise of my hon. Friend the Member for Tayside, North (Mr. Walker), I did not realise that I could be taken off by the simple expedient of writing to my hon. Friend the Member for Shipley (Sir M. Fox). In the absence of assurances to the contrary, I do not believe for a single moment that there would be any real prospect of the Labour Members of such a Committee behaving in a reasoned, constructive manner, in accordance with the traditions of the House.

Mr. Sam Galbraith (Strathkelvin and Bearsden) *rose*——

Mr. Stewart: In relation to my own constituency, I can only tell the House that if my hon. Friend the Member for Tayside, North has received one letter, that is one more than I have received. Everyone in the constituency of Eastwood to whom I have spoken has supported my position that good constituency Members should not waste their time.

The basic reason why the Select Committee has not yet been set up is not the objections of my hon. Friend the Member for Tayside, North, but the failure, at least until tonight, of the Labour party to accept the unitary principle. We were told by hon. Members again and again that it was unacceptable to have English Members on the Scottish Select Committee.

Mr. William McKelvey (Kilmarnock and Loudoun): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. The hon. Member for Eastwood (Mr. Stewart) is saying that he was privy to information to which no other hon. Members were privy. How did he get this information?

Mr. Speaker: Order. Mr. Allan Stewart.

Mr. Allan Stewart: Mr. Speaker, I was referring to *Hansard*. It was stated by hon. Members that having English Members on the Committee was unacceptable. To take one example, the hon. Member for Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley (Mr. Foulkes), a luminary of the Scottish Labour party, certainly said that in answer to a question

That principle of the unitary Parliamen accepted by Scottish Labour Members or other occasions. Only this week the hon. M Lothian (Mr. Home Robertson) said tha intolerable if English Members were Committee to consider the Housing (Scotla the same time a Scottish Labour Member h on a Committee to consider a Bill affecting and Welsh matters, the Licensing Bill, and the hon. Member for Kirkcaldy (Dr. Moo a valuable contribution to the debates on th you will recall, Mr. Speaker, Labour Memb House after the first Scottish Question Parliament because they believed that it was hon. Friends from English seats to seek to during Scottish questions.

The hon. Member for Glasgow, Gar Dewar) does not accept the unitary principl the official business of the House, because this Session he announced the Scottish Labo —doubtless to ringing cries about the "m Scottish people, comrades" — that the L would not discuss business matters with m the Member for Penrith and The Border (solely because his constituency happened wrong side of Gretna Green.

I believe that the attitude that has con taken on the unitary principle by the Labou Parliament is reprehensible and wrong. If it a result of the focusing of minds by this iss House tonight, it will be a positive gain. I House will support the motion moved by r Friend. If there is to be any progress, I hope on a reasoned basis. Certainly no assuranc received as yet on that from the Labour pa

12.4 am

Mr. Harry Ewing (Falkirk, East): I listen Member for Eastwood (Mr. Stewart) when him on television that he should serve Committee on Scottish Affairs. That eveni put forward any of the reasons that he has House in expressing reservations abo Committee on Scottish Affairs. His reason t rather pompous — that he was now a Bencher and no Patronage Secretary could to do. The purpose of my raising that at th point out the fact that the hon. Member North (Mr. Walker)—what a narrow esca Committee on Scottish Affairs had — a Member for Eastwood shifted their position that they would want a Scottish Affairs Sele provided there were English Tory Back Ben saying that they do not want a Scottish A Committee in any circumstances. If the deb nothing else, it has brought out the true reas hon. Member for Eastwood's obstruction Committee and the hon. Member for Tayside wanting to serve at all.

The Leader of the House was less than fair there had been no Select Committee on Sc between 1974 and 1979. That is true, but t knowledge when the Conservatives were i between 1974 and 1979 there was no requ Opposition for a Select Committee to be e any subject.

[Mr. Harry Ewing]

The Leader of the House should know that in those days the nature and purpose of Select Committees were totally different from the nature and purpose of the Select Committee we are discussing tonight. The last Select Committee under the old arrangement was chaired by John Brewis, the predecessor but one of the Minister of State, Scottish Office. That Select Committee was set up to consider land use in Scotland. The Tory Opposition in Scotland between 1974 and 1979 did not raise one subject that they thought was worthy of examination by such a Select Committee.

The position now is different. As the whole House knows, we are talking about departmental Select Committees set up to examine Ministers and civil servants and the functions that they carry out. They are totally different. They were established by Norman St. John Stevas. The Leader of the House was less than forthcoming in that part of his speech.

The hon. Member for Eastwood wants an assurance from the Opposition that we accept that this is a unitary Parliament. I give an absolute assurance that I accept that this is a unitary Parliament. I will go further. I predict that if we get much more of the carry-on that we have had from the Tory party tonight, it will not be a unitary Parliament much longer. The one sure way to let the SNP, which is even less of a rump than the Tory party in Scotland, get its way in Scotland is to conduct these debates in the way in which the Leader of the House, the hon. Member for Tayside, North and the hon. Member for Eastwood have conducted the debate tonight.

It ill becomes the hon. Member for Angus, East (Mr. Welsh) to lecture anyone in any part of the House about English Members dictating to people. He is the provost of Angus district council, but not once has he had the courage or the guts to defy the Secretary of State for Scotland on rent increases——

Mr. Andrew Welsh *rose——*

Mr. Ewing: I will give way to the hon. Gentleman when I have finished with him. The hon. Gentleman criticises the Labour party and Labour councils. When the Secretary of State told him to put rents up, he asked, "How much do you want us to put them up?" When he was told to spend within spending guidelines, his answer was, "That's all right, Malcolm; I'll do that as well." We do not want any rubbish from the hon. Member for Angus, East lecturing us about being dictated to by English Members.

Mr. Andrew Welsh: Perhaps the hon. Gentleman should listen to the lectures because he has chosen the wrong issue. Under my control Angus district council had the lowest rents increase in a decade and record spending on behalf of its council tenants. We have lower combined rents and rates than any Labour council, except one, and at one time that council was SNP controlled. If the hon. Gentleman gave his tenants the same good deal as Angus district council has given its tenants under SNP control, they would be much better off today.

Several Hon. Members *rose——*

Mr. Speaker: Order. We should not go too far down that line. Let us get back to the debate.

Mr. Ewing: That is part of the debate. I am not going to allow the Scottish Tories to dictate the position in Scotland, and I am certainly not going to allow three SNP Members to dictate to the Labour party in Scotland. It is time someone told them that they do not have much of a representation in Scotland. It is time someone told them about the record of their predecessors in the previous Parliament. We will not take lectures from the SNP.

Mr. Alex Salmond (Banff and Buchan): Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Ewing: I gave way to the deputy leader of the SNP, but I will not give way to the hon. Gentleman.

Mrs. Margaret Ewing (Moray): Presumably the hon. Gentleman comes from part of the same clan as myself in view of our surnames. May I ask him directly whether it is his view that a party that contested the general election as a democratic party should be denied the right to have a seat on the Select Committee on Scottish Affairs?

Mr. Ewing: I am not particularly interested as to whether the SNP is represented on the Select Committee. I am saying that I will not be dictated to by three hon. Members who just scraped in here by the skin of their teeth. When the hon. Member for Moray (Mrs. Ewing) was a Member of the House previously, she voted with the Tory party—*[Interruption.]* The SNP does not have a very good record. The hon. Lady mentioned the similarity in our names. I do not blame her for changing her name since she was here last.

There are far too many important issues that the Scottish Office wants to sweep under the carpet. It is far better to set up a Select Committee in order to consider and investigate those matters than to go down the narrow road advocated by the SNP and the hon. Members for Eastwood and for Tayside, North and not have a Committee at all. The Chairman of the Committee of Selection said that he was here to listen and would accept guidance. The Leader of the House is under an obligation, having heard the guidance, to come forward within the next week or 10 days with a motion on the Order Paper to set up the Select Committee on Scottish Affairs and let it get to work.

12.13 am

Sir Hector Monro (Dumfries): I will not get involved in the inter-party squabbles on the Opposition Benches. If the people of Scotland could see that rabble tonight operating in Edinburgh, they would say, "Heaven help us from ever having devolution."

One interesting point raised tonight was that the Chairman of the Committee of Selection has to ascertain one's wish to attend the Select Committee. I am sure that if some of us had known that years before, the situation might be very different.

The Opposition's amendment is factually incorrect when it asserts that Conservative Members are reluctant to serve on the Select Committee on Scottish Affairs. Two or more of us were not reluctant and would have been prepared to serve upon it had it been set up. That is still the position.

The Opposition have tried to present themselves as whiter than white in the handling of this issue through the usual channels since the general election. It should not be forgotten that early in November the Labour Opposition had submitted no names to the Committee of Selection. Perhaps that is a reflection of their internal problems. We were then introduced to an impasse. In these instances we

live by rumour—that is often the way of the House—because no minutes are produced to reflect the discussions of various party committees. At this stage the Labour Opposition were anxious to dictate which Conservative Member should be selected to serve on the Select Committee. That was considered by the House to be intolerable and unacceptable. That was certainly the view of Conservative Members.

This evening the hon. Member for Glasgow, Garscadden (Mr. Dewar) has become flexible in an effort to retrieve some credibility following the behaviour of the Labour party over the past two months. I heard no mention of flexibility during November or December. During that period the Labour Opposition were determined to have the Members who they chose to serve on the Select Committee and not the Members selected by the Committee of Selection. Now the Opposition are claiming that they wanted from the start to see the setting up of the Select Committee. They claim now always to have been flexible and always prepared to listen to reason, but that was not their position during November and December. It was during that period that they lost the right to see the establishment of the Committee. The requirements that they were dictating to the Committee of Selection were unacceptable to that Committee, and they would have been shown to be unacceptable to the House had a motion reflecting them been put before the House.

Mr. Douglas: Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Sir Hector Monro: I shall not give way to the hon. Gentleman because there is a shortage of time. The hon. Gentleman has intervened once already in another hon. Member's speech.

It is the duty of the House to support the Chairman of the Committee of Selection, my hon. Friend the Member for Shipley (Sir M. Fox), and his motion and to reject the Opposition's bogus amendment, which is factually incorrect and unacceptable.

12.18 am

Mr. William McKelvey (Kilmarnock and Loudoun): I shall not bore the House by recounting my activities, or lack of them, during the period that I served as a member of the Select Committee on Scottish Affairs. I merely say that if there is a right for any Select Committee to be established in this place, that right must embrace the setting up of a Select Committee on Scottish Affairs. We must bear in mind the extensive powers of the Secretary of State for Scotland and the activities of the Scottish Office in acting on his behalf. It would be a scandal if the representatives of the people of Scotland were denied the right to survey the Government's activities in Scotland. That would lead to increased frustration on the Opposition Benches, especially among my right hon. and hon. Friends who represent Scottish constituencies. The people of Scotland see it as their right that there should be established a Select Committee on Scottish Affairs to proceed with any investigations that it sees fit to initiate.

Previous Select Committees on Scottish Affairs, irrespective of whether Members enjoyed serving on them, undertook some valuable work. Many comments to that effect have been made by the spokesmen of both Front Benches.

The frustration of the people of Scotland is growing. Perhaps they are not writing to tell us that they want to see the establishment of a Select Committee on Scottish Affairs, but it cannot be denied that when the previous Committee went about its business in Scotland there was keen local interest in what was taking place. There was press coverage of the discussions that took place on many of the important issues that involved the lives of the people of Scotland.

I will conclude by quoting two sentences from an editorial in the *Glasgow Herald*. One refers to

"Scotland, a partner of the United Kingdom and not simply a UK region."

Hon. Members on both sides of the Chamber must understand that. They must also appreciate that, at the moment, Scotland is a willing partner, but that may not always be the case. It may not necessarily be the SNP who will convey that message from the Scottish people. [HON. MEMBERS: "Oh!"] The Scottish people will determine whether they will remain a willing partner. The scandalous and outrageous way in which the people are treated by the Government may determine them to change their minds in the coming years. That will occur unless the Government recognise the needs and the rights of the Scottish people.

A further sentence from the *Glasgow Herald* editorial gives a marvellous analogy of the situation:

"The rocky outcrop of Tantallon Castle, historical centre of English influence in Scotland, dominates the wild east Lothian coast; so too does Thatcherism dominate Scottish politics".

That castle now stands in ruins and Thatcherism, the large rock that juts out in Scottish politics, dominates a people who rejected it. Unless the rights of those people are recognised, frustration will grow into a tide that will overwhelm the desire, shared by all of us, for a united kingdom.

12.21 am

Mr. Donald Dewar (Glasgow, Garscadden): We have listened carefully to some lively debate, but we are discussing a serious issue. I know from contacts on the Government Benches that they also consider this a serious matter, and I give credit for that.

I have not enjoyed all the speeches. I listened carefully to the speech of the hon. Member for Eastwood (Mr. Stewart). In private he is the most amiable of men, but I must tell him that I find him less and less pleasant as a public figure. I served as Chairman of the Scottish Affairs Select Committee when it was reconstituted in 1979 and I find it curious—I use a neutral word—that the hon. Gentleman should object to partisan conduct in Select Committees. I remember his role and that of other Conservative Members during the Committee's investigation into the the SDA's attempts to attract industry to Scotland. That is just one example. I am sorry—I hope that the hon. Gentleman accepts that my sorrow is genuine—that he has joined the refuseniks on this issue. He does not do himself justice.

I accept the important point that the hon. Member for Tayside, North (Mr. Walker) did not enjoy his days on the Committee. He was an embattled minority of one, cut off from his own side. I accept that that must have been an unpleasant experience, although one with which perhaps, on occasions, he has had to live. However, there is no case for saying that we should not have a Select Committee because in the past one or two hon. Members—rightly or wrongly — have not enjoyed their service on a Committee. If we proceeded on that basis, we would

[Mr. Donald Dewar]

abolish a Select Committee on any subject if it had a bad run. The Select Committees would represent a diminishing part of the parliamentary scene.

The hon. Member for Dumfries (Sir H. Monro) has had long experience of the ways of the House. I do not believe that it was fair to say that we tried to dictate, at any point, who should be on the Committee. I am not aware of any such effort. I do not believe that the hon. Member for Shipley (Sir M. Fox) gave the impression that he felt that Labour Members had dictated to him. Indeed, he fairly said that the matter had not been discussed by the Committee of Selection because it felt that it was a matter for the business managers on both sides as to who should serve on the Scottish Affairs Select Committee. The claims by the hon. Member for Dumfries are the stuff of myths and represent specious special pleading that does not give credit to the debate.

The Select Committee on Scottish Affairs is important because it is part of the parliamentary process. It would be a better irony if the Scottish Office were the one major Department of State that was not subject to the scrutiny of a Select Committee. We and the majority of the Scottish people believe that the Government's policies for Scotland are insensitive and inappropriate. It is essential that the Ministers responsible should be called to account by a Select Committee.

Once more I must make it clear that our overriding concern is that the Select Committee should be established. I have explained that our preference would be for a Committee made up of Members representing Scottish seats. That could be achieved if Scottish Tory Members were prepared to serve or by increasing the number of Scottish Members from other parties. There will be no shortage of volunteers from the Scottish Labour group if that route is to be followed. Sadly—and I must accept this as a practical politician—it appears that the Government are insisting on a Conservative majority, but they cannot deliver the numbers required to achieve that from the Scottish Conservative ranks.

We could allow ourselves the luxury, which the SNP is taking, of saying that it must be a Select Committee and it must comprise only Scottish Members. But in the real world of the present that is impossible. In effect, it is to say that there will not be a Select Committee and we have rejected that.

Mr. Salmond: Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Dewar: No. I am anxious that the Leader of the House should have a chance to respond, so I have only a couple of minutes at most.

If the Scottish Conservative ranks will not deliver sufficient hon. Members, the future of the Select Committee is at risk as a direct result. Given the difficulties in the Conservative camp, Labour has taken a constructive approach. We argue that the Government have a duty to set up the Committee. If, in addition to the Scottish Tory Members who are prepared to serve, that involves nominating Members from other parts of the United Kingdom, the House should be given the opportunity to take that decision. We would consider any such solution an eloquent condemnation and comment on the Government's weakness in Scotland. But our preference is and must be for a Select Committee in being and working rather than for no Select Committee.

If the only way to set up the Select Committee i include a minimum of hon. Members representing Eng constituencies, Labour will accept reluctantly that price must be paid. We hope that the reluctant Scot Tory Members will reconsider their position as, indee remind the hon. Member for Tayside, North, the Scot Conservative and Unionist Association has urged him. however, there is no movement, the Government hav duty to respond to the clear wish of Scottish public political opinion that a way forward be found.

The hon. Member for Shipley made it clear that he seeking the advice of the House and the views of the par within it. I hope that I have made the position of my ri hon. and hon. Friends clear. Who should be nominate a matter for the business managers. In view of what I h said, I do not believe that there is any virtue in semant about our constitutional structure, behind which Leader of the House appeared, at least momentarily, shelter. He knows our view. I hope that he will now prepared to act on it and find enough Tory Members w believe in the Select Committee system and in the need have comprehensive coverage and scrutiny of Scotti affairs to ensure that we make progress shortly.

12.27 am

Mr. Wakeham: It has been a noisy and good-humour debate. I have listened carefully to the Opposition a important issues underlie these matters. Some of t comments of the hon. Member for Glasgow, Garscadd (Mr. Dewar) were more encouraging and flexible tha earlier comments, but they were certainly inconsistent wi what my hon. Friend the Member for Shipley (Sir M. Fo said and what was said by Opposition Members in t Committee of Selection. They were even more inconsiste with the Opposition amendment on the Order Paper. Eac position is different, none is consistent one with the othe Therefore, I believe that we are right to take note of th special report and to reject the amendment in the nam of Opposition Members.

12.28 am

Mr. Brian Wilson (Cunninghame, North): The speec from the Leader of the House is regrettable. He doe nothing to enhance his reputation by his economy with th truth, which might earn him a peerage but certainly wil not earn him the respect of Labour Members.

When my hon. Friend the Member for Glasgow Garscadden (Mr. Dewar) said specifically that there wa no conflict between what he was saying and what the hon Member for Shipley (Sir M. Fox) said, as far as I could see the hon. Gentleman agreed with those sentiments. Yet the Leader of the House has contradicted the hon. Gentleman. There is a need for clarification. There can be no doubt on this issue. There is only one black and white issue: of 370 Members who sit on the other side, the Government cannot find five to serve on this Committee——

Mr. Don Dixon (Jarrow) *rose in his place and claimed to move,* That the Question be now put.

Question, That the Question be now put, *put and agreed to.*

Question put accordingly, That the amendment be made:—

The House divided: Ayes 160, Noes 198.

Division No. 137] **[12.30 am**

AYES

Archer, Rt Hon Peter
Armstrong, Ms Hilary
Barnes, Harry *(Derbyshire NE)*
Barron, Kevin
Battle, John
Beckett, Margaret
Beggs, Roy
Beith, A. J.
Bermingham, Gerald
Blair, Tony
Boyes, Roland
Bradley, Keith
Bray, Dr Jeremy
Brown, Gordon *(D'mline E)*
Brown, Nicholas *(Newcastle E)*
Brown, Ron *(Edinburgh Leith)*
Bruce, Malcolm *(Gordon)*
Buchan, Norman
Buckley, George
Caborn, Richard
Callaghan, Jim
Campbell, Menzies *(Fife NE)*
Campbell, Ron *(Blyth Valley)*
Campbell-Savours, D. N.
Canavan, Dennis
Carlile, Alex *(Mont'g)*
Clarke, Tom *(Monklands W)*
Clay, Bob
Cleiland, David
Clwyd, Mrs Ann
Cook, Frank *(Stockton N)*
Cook, Robin *(Livingston)*
Cousins, Jim
Crowther, Stan
Cryer, Bob
Cummings, J.
Cunliffe, Lawrence
Dalyell, Tam
Darling, Alastair
Davies, Ron *(Caerphilly)*
Davis, Terry *(B'ham Hodge H'l)*
Dewar, Donald
Dixon, Don
Dobson, Frank
Doran, Frank
Douglas, Dick
Dunnachie, James
Eastham, Ken
Evans, John *(St Helens N)*
Ewing, Harry *(Falkirk E)*
Ewing, Mrs Margaret *(Moray)*
Fields, Terry *(L'pool B G'n)*
Foster, Derek
Fyfe, Mrs Maria
Galbraith, Samuel
Galloway, George
Garrett, John *(Norwich South)*
Garrett, Ted *(Wallsend)*
Godman, Dr Norman A.
Gordon, Ms Mildred
Griffiths, Win *(Bridgend)*
Grocott, Bruce
Haynes, Frank
Hinchliffe, David
Hogg, N. *(C'nauld & Kilsyth)*
Home Robertson, John
Hood, James
Howarth, George *(Knowsley N)*
Hoyle, Doug
Hughes, Robert *(Aberdeen N)*
Hughes, Sean *(Knowsley S)*
Illsley, Eric
Ingram, Adam
Jones, Martyn *(Clwyd S W)*
Kinnock, Rt Hon Neil
Kirkwood, Archy
Lambie, David
Lamond, James
Leadbitter, Ted
Lewis, Terry
Litherland, Robert
Livingstone, Ken
Lloyd, Tony *(Stretford)*
Lofthouse, Geoffrey
McAllion, John
McAvoy, Tom
McCartney, Ian
Macdonald, Calum
McFall, John
McGrady, E. K.
McKay, Allen *(Penistone)*
McKelvey, William
McLeish, Henry
McNamara, Kevin
McTaggart, Bob
McWilliam, John
Mahon, Mrs Alice
Mallon, Seamus
Marek, Dr John
Marshall, David *(Shettleston)*
Marshall, Jim *(Leicester S)*
Martin, Michael *(Springburn)*
Martlew, Eric
Maxton, John
Meale, Alan
Michael, Alun
Michie, Bill *(Sheffield Heeley)*
Michie, Mrs Ray *(Arg'l & Bute)*
Millan, Rt Hon Bruce
Mitchell, Austin *(G't Grimsby)*
Molyneaux, Rt Hon James
Moonie, Dr Lewis
Morgan, Rhodri
Morley, Elliott
Mowlam, Marjorie
Mullin, Chris
Murphy, Paul
Nellist, Dave
O'Brien, William
O'Neill, Martin
Orme, Rt Hon Stanley
Patchett, Terry
Pendry, Tom
Pike, Peter
Powell, Ray *(Ogmore)*
Prescott, John
Primarolo, Ms Dawn
Quin, Ms Joyce
Reid, John
Robertson, George
Rogers, Allan
Ross, Ernie *(Dundee W)*
Ross, William *(Londonderry E)*
Rowlands, Ted
Ruddock, Ms Joan
Salmond, Alex
Short, Clare
Skinner, Dennis
Smith, Andrew *(Oxford E)*
Smith, Rt Hon J. *(Monk'ds E)*
Smyth, Rev Martin *(Belfast S)*
Snape, Peter
Spearing, Nigel
Steinberg, Gerald
Stott, Roger
Strang, Gavin
Taylor, Mrs Ann *(Dewsbury)*
Taylor, Rt Hon J. D. *(S'ford)*
Thompson, Jack *(Wansbeck)*
Turner, Dennis
Wall, Pat
Wallace, James
Wareing, Robert N.
Welsh, Andrew *(Angus E)*
Wilson, Brian
Winnick, David
Wise, Mrs Audrey
Worthington, Anthony
Wray, James
Young, David *(Bolton SE)*

Tellers for the Ayes
Mr. Allen Adams and
Mr. Nigel Griffiths.

NOES

Allason, Rupert
Amess, David
Amos, Alan
Arbuthnot, James
Arnold, Jacques *(Gravesham)*
Arnold, Tom *(Hazel Grove)*
Atkins, Robert
Atkinson, David
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Baldry, Tony
Bennett, Nicholas *(Pembroke)*
Bevan, David Gilroy
Biffen, Rt Hon John
Blackburn, Dr John G.
Boscawen, Hon Robert
Bottomley, Peter
Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Bowden, Gerald *(Dulwich)*
Bowis, John
Brandon-Bravo, Martin
Brazier, Julian
Brooke, Rt Hon Peter
Brown, Michael *(Brigg & Cl't's)*
Bruce, Ian *(Dorset South)*
Buchanan-Smith, Rt Hon Alick
Buck, Sir Antony
Burns, Simon
Burt, Alistair
Butler, Chris
Butterfill, John
Carlisle, John, *(Luton N)*
Carlisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Carrington, Matthew
Carttiss, Michael
Cash, William
Coombs, Simon *(Swindon)*
Cran, James
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Curry, David
Davis, David *(Boothferry)*
Day, Stephen
Dorrell, Stephen
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James
Durant, Tony
Dykes, Hugh
Fallon, Michael
Forman, Nigel
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Fox, Sir Marcus
Gale, Roger
Garel-Jones, Tristan
Gow, Ian
Greenway, John *(Rydale)*
Gregory, Conal
Griffiths, Peter *(Portsmouth N)*
Grist, Ian
Ground, Patrick
Hamilton, Hon A. *(Epsom)*
Hannam, John
Hargreaves, A. *(B'ham H'll Gr')*
Hargreaves, Ken *(Hyndburn)*
Harris, David
Hayhoe, Rt Hon Sir Barney
Hicks, Mrs Maureen *(Wolv' NE)*
Higgins, Rt Hon Terence L.
Hogg, Hon Douglas *(Gr'th'm)*
Holt, Richard
Hordern, Sir Peter
Howard, Michael
Howarth, Alan *(Strat'd-on-A)*
Hunt, David *(Wirral W)*
Hunt, John *(Ravensbourne)*
Irvine, Michael
Jack, Michael
Jackson, Robert
Janman, Timothy
Jessel, Toby
Jones, Gwilym *(Cardiff N)*
Jones, Robert B *(Herts W)*
King, Roger *(B'ham N'thfield)*
Kirkhope, Timothy
Knapman, Roger
Knight, Greg *(Derby North)*
Knowles, Michael
Knox, David
Lang, Ian
Latham, Michael
Lawrence, Ivan
Leigh, Edward *(Gainsbor'gh)*
Lester, Jim *(Broxtowe)*
Lightbown, David
Lilley, Peter
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
Lord, Michael
Lyell, Sir Nicholas
Macfarlane, Sir Neil
MacKay, Andrew *(E Berkshire)*
McLoughlin, Patrick
McNair-Wilson, P. *(New Forest)*
Malins, Humfrey
Mariand, Paul
Marshall, John *(Hendon S)*
Marshall, Michael *(Arundel)*
Martin, David *(Portsmouth S)*
Mates, Michael
Maude, Hon Francis
Mawhinney, Dr Brian
Maxwell-Hyslop, Robin
Mayhew, Rt Hon Sir Patrick
Meyer, Sir Anthony
Miller, Hal
Mills, Iain
Miscampbell, Norman
Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)*
Mitchell, David *(Hants NW)*
Moate, Roger
Monro, Sir Hector
Montgomery, Sir Fergus
Morrison, Sir Charles *(Devizes)*
Morrison, Hon P *(Chester)*
Moss, Malcolm
Moynihan, Hon C.
Neale, Gerrard
Nelson, Anthony
Neubert, Michael
Newton, Rt Hon Tony
Nicholls, Patrick
Nicholson, David *(Taunton)*
Nicholson, Miss E. *(Devon W)*
Oppenheim, Phillip
Page, Richard
Paice, James
Patnick, Irvine
Pattie, Rt Hon Sir Geoffrey
Pawsey, James
Peacock, Mrs Elizabeth
Porter, David *(Waveney)*
Portillo, Michael
Powell, William *(Corby)*
Raffan, Keith
Redwood, John
Renton, Tim
Rhodes James, Robert
Rhys Williams, Sir Brandon
Riddick, Graham
Ridley, Rt Hon Nicholas
Rifkind, Rt Hon Malcolm
Rowe, Andrew

Ryder, Richard
Sackville, Hon Tom
Sayeed, Jonathan
Shaw, David *(Dover)*
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Sims, Roger
Smith, Tim *(Beaconsfield)*
Soames, Hon Nicholas
Speed, Keith
Spicer, Sir Jim *(Dorset W)*
Squire, Robin
Stanbrook, Ivor
Stern, Michael
Stevens, Lewis
Stewart, Allan *(Eastwood)*
Stewart, Andrew *(Sherwood)*
Stradling Thomas, Sir John
Sumberg, David
Summerson, Hugo
Taylor, Ian *(Esher)*
Taylor, John M *(Solihull)*
Thompson, D. *(Calder Valley)*
Thompson, Patrick *(Norwich N)*
Thornton, Malcolm
Thurnham, Peter
Tracey, Richard
Tredinnick, David
Trippier, David
Trotter, Neville
Twinn, Dr Ian
Viggers, Peter
Waddington, Rt Hon David
Wakeham, Rt Hon John
Waldegrave, Hon William
Walker, Bill *(T'side North)*
Waller, Gary
Ward, John
Wardle, C. *(Bexhill)*
Warren, Kenneth
Watts, John
Wells, Bowen
Wheeler, John
Whitney, Ray
Widdecombe, Miss Ann
Wilkinson, John
Wilshire, David
Wolfson, Mark
Wood, Timothy
Young, Sir George *(Acton)*

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. Mark Lennox-Boyd and
Mr. David Maclean.

Question accordingly negatived.
Main Question put:—
The House divided: Ayes 197, Noes 159.

Division No. 138] **[12.41 am**

AYES

Allason, Rupert
Amess, David
Amos, Alan
Arbuthnot, James
Arnold, Jacques *(Gravesham)*
Arnold, Tom *(Hazel Grove)*
Atkins, Robert
Atkinson, David
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Baldry, Tony
Bennett, Nicholas *(Pembroke)*
Bevan, David Gilroy
Biffen, Rt Hon John
Blackburn, Dr John G.
Boscawen, Hon Robert
Bottomley, Peter
Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Bowden, Gerald *(Dulwich)*
Bowis, John
Brandon-Bravo, Martin
Brazier, Julian
Brooke, Rt Hon Peter
Brown, Michael *(Brigg & Cl't's)*
Bruce, Ian *(Dorset South)*
Buchanan-Smith, Rt Hon Alick
Buck, Sir Antony
Burns, Simon
Burt, Alistair
Butler, Chris
Butterfill, John
Carlisle, John, *(Luton N)*
Carlisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Carrington, Matthew
Carttiss, Michael
Cash, William
Coombs, Simon *(Swindon)*
Cran, James
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Curry, David
Davis, David *(Boothferry)*
Day, Stephen
Dorrell, Stephen
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James
Durant, Tony
Dykes, Hugh
Fallon, Michael
Forman, Nigel
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Fox, Sir Marcus
Gale, Roger
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Greenway, John *(Rydale)*
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Ground, Patrick
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Hargreaves, Ken *(Hyndburn)*
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Knight, Greg *(Derby North)*
Knowles, Michael
Knox, David
Lang, Ian
Latham, Michael
Lawrence, Ivan
Leigh, Edward *(Gainsbor'gh)*
Lennox-Boyd, Hon Mark
Lester, Jim *(Broxtowe)*
Lilley, Peter
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
Lord, Michael
Lyell, Sir Nicholas
Macfarlane, Sir Neil
MacKay, Andrew *(E Berkshire)*
McLoughlin, Patrick
McNair-Wilson, P. *(New Forest)*
Malins, Humfrey
Mariand, Paul
Marshall, John *(Hendon S)*
Marshall, Michael *(Arundel)*
Martin, David *(Portsmouth S)*
Mates, Michael
Mawhinney, Dr Brian
Maxwell-Hyslop, Robin
Mayhew, Rt Hon Sir Patrick
Meyer, Sir Anthony
Miller, Hal
Mills, Iain
Miscampbell, Norman
Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)*
Mitchell, David *(Hants NW)*
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Montgomery, Sir Fergus
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Morrison, Hon P *(Chester)*
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Nelson, Anthony
Neubert, Michael
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Nicholson, David *(Taunton)*
Nicholson, Miss E. *(Devon W)*
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Pattie, Rt Hon Sir Geoffrey
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Portillo, Michael
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Raffan, Keith
Redwood, John
Renton, Tim
Rhodes James, Robert
Rhys Williams, Sir Brandon
Riddick, Graham
Ridley, Rt Hon Nicholas
Rifkind, Rt Hon Malcolm
Rowe, Andrew
Ryder, Richard
Sackville, Hon Tom
Sayeed, Jonathan
Shaw, David *(Dover)*
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Sca*
Shepherd, Colin *(Heref*
Sims, Roger
Smith, Tim *(Beaconsfie*
Soames, Hon Nicholas
Speed, Keith
Spicer, Sir Jim *(Dorset*
Squire, Robin
Stanbrook, Ivor
Stern, Michael
Stevens, Lewis
Stewart, Allan *(Eastwoo*
Stewart, Andrew *(Sherw*
Stradling Thomas, Sir J
Sumberg, David
Summerson, Hugo
Taylor, Ian *(Esher)*
Taylor, John M *(Solihull*
Thompson, D. *(Calder V*
Thompson, Patrick *(Nor*
Thornton, Malcolm
Thurnham, Peter
Tracey, Richard
Tredinnick, David
Trippier, David
Trotter, Neville
Twinn, Dr Ian
Viggers, Peter
Waddington, Rt Hon Dav
Wakeham, Rt Hon John
Waldegrave, Hon William
Walker, Bill *(T'side North*
Waller, Gary
Ward, John
Wardle, C. *(Bexhill)*
Warren, Kenneth
Watts, John
Wells, Bowen
Wheeler, John
Whitney, Ray
Widdecombe, Miss Ann
Wilkinson, John
Wilshire, David
Wolfson, Mark
Wood, Timothy
Young, Sir George *(Acton*

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. David Lightbown a
Mr. David Maclean.

NOES

Archer, Rt Hon Peter
Armstrong, Ms Hilary
Barnes, Harry *(Derbyshire NE)*
Barron, Kevin
Battle, John
Beckett, Margaret
Beggs, Roy
Beith, A. J.
Bermingham, Gerald
Blair, Tony
Boyes, Roland
Bradley, Keith
Bray, Dr Jeremy
Brown, Gordon *(D'mline E)*
Brown, Nicholas *(Newcastle E)*
Brown, Ron *(Edinburgh Leith)*
Bruce, Malcolm *(Gordon)*
Buchan, Norman
Buckley, George
Caborn, Richard
Callaghan, Jim
Campbell, Menzies *(Fife NE)*
Campbell, Ron *(Blyth Vall*
Campbell-Savours, D. N.
Canavan, Dennis
Carlile, Alex *(Mont'g)*
Clarke, Tom *(Monklands W*
Clay, Bob
Cleiland, David
Clwyd, Mrs Ann
Cook, Frank *(Stockton N)*
Cook, Robin *(Livingston)*
Cousins, Jim
Crowther, Stan
Cryer, Bob
Cummings, J.
Cunliffe, Lawrence
Dalyell, Tam
Darling, Alastair
Davis, Terry *(B'ham Hodge*
Dewar, Donald
Dixon, Don
Dobson, Frank
Doran, Frank

Douglas, Dick
Dunnachie, James
Eastham, Ken
Evans, John *(St Helens N)*
Ewing, Harry *(Falkirk E)*
Ewing, Mrs Margaret *(Moray)*
Fields, Terry *(L'pool B G'n)*
Foster, Derek
Fyfe, Mrs Maria
Galbraith, Samuel
Galloway, George
Garrett, John *(Norwich South)*
Garrett, Ted *(Wallsend)*
Godman, Dr Norman A.
Gordon, Ms Mildred
Griffiths, Win *(Bridgend)*
Grocott, Bruce
Haynes, Frank
Hinchliffe, David
Hogg, N. *(C'nauld & Kilsyth)*
Home Robertson, John
Hood, James
Howarth, George *(Knowsley N)*
Hoyle, Doug
Hughes, Robert *(Aberdeen N)*
Hughes, Sean *(Knowsley S)*
Illsley, Eric
Ingram, Adam
Jones, Martyn *(Clwyd S W)*
Kinnock, Rt Hon Neil
Kirkwood, Archy
Lamble, David
Lamond, James
Leadbitter, Ted
Lewis, Terry
Litherland, Robert
Livingstone, Ken
Lloyd, Tony *(Stretford)*
Lofthouse, Geoffrey
McAllion, John
McAvoy, Tom
McCartney, Ian
Macdonald, Calum
McFall, John
McGrady, E. K.
McKay, Allen *(Penistone)*
McKelvey, William
McLeish, Henry
McNamara, Kevin
McTaggart, Bob
McWilliam, John
Mahon, Mrs Alice
Mallon, Seamus
Marek, Dr John
Marshall, David *(Shettleston)*
Marshall, Jim *(Leicester S)*
Martin, Michael *(Springburn)*
Martlew, Eric
Maxton, John
Meale, Alan
Michael, Alun
Michie, Bill *(Sheffield Heeley)*
Michie, Mrs Ray *(Arg'l & Bute)*
Millan, Rt Hon Bruce
Mitchell, Austin *(G't Grimsby)*
Molyneaux, Rt Hon James
Moonie, Dr Lewis
Morgan, Rhodri
Morley, Elliott
Mowlam, Marjorie
Mullin, Chris
Murphy, Paul
Nellist, Dave
O'Brien, William
O'Neill, Martin
Orme, Rt Hon Stanley
Patchett, Terry
Pendry, Tom
Pike, Peter
Powell, Ray *(Ogmore)*
Prescott, John
Primarolo, Ms Dawn
Quin, Ms Joyce
Reid, John
Robertson, George
Rogers, Allan
Ross, Ernie *(Dundee W)*
Ross, William *(Londonderry E)*
Rowlands, Ted
Ruddock, Ms Joan
Salmond, Alex
Short, Clare
Skinner, Dennis
Smith, Andrew *(Oxford E)*
Smith, Rt Hon J. *(Monk'ds E)*
Smyth, Rev Martin *(Belfast S)*
Snape, Peter
Spearing, Nigel
Steinberg, Gerald
Stott, Roger
Strang, Gavin
Taylor, Mrs Ann *(Dewsbury)*
Taylor, Rt Hon J. D. *(S'ford)*
Thompson, Jack *(Wansbeck)*
Turner, Dennis
Wall, Pat
Wallace, James
Wareing, Robert N.
Welsh, Andrew *(Angus E)*
Wilson, Brian
Winnick, David
Wise, Mrs Audrey
Worthington, Anthony
Wray, James
Young, David *(Bolton SE)*

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. Allen Adams and
Mr. Nigel Griffiths.

Question accordingly agreed to.

Resolved,

That this House takes note of the Special Report from the Committee of Selection of 9th December, relating to the Scottish Affairs Committee.

Firbeck Hospital

Motion made, and Question proposed, That this House do now adjourn.—*[Mr. Lennox-Boyd.]*

12.52 am

Mr. Kevin Barron (Rother Valley): I am pleased that I have been granted this Adjournment debate tonight to bring to the attention of the House the closure of Firbeck hospital in my constituency. Firbeck hall was bought by the Miners Welfare Commission in December 1945 after being used during the second world war by the Sheffield hospitals board. It was converted into a rehabilitation centre with accommodation for 50 patients, and the first cases were received in April 1947. By 1950 the capacity had been increased to 95 beds through the building of a new wing comprising a gymnasium, hydrotherapy pool, treatment rooms and workshops.

The centre was transferred to the Ministry of Health in 1952 and it was agreed that it would have its own management committee within the NHS, but by virtue of the National Health Service Reorganisation Act 1973 the committee was abolished and the centre came under the control of the Rotherham area health authority in 1974. It has kept a Firbeck hospital committee, with members from neighbouring health authorities, British Coal, Rotherham community health council and coal mining trade unions. It has changed its views to treat many patients from all walks of life, including amputees, who are referred to it from the artificial limb and appliance centre at Sheffield. Those patients have been allocated beds where concentrated courses of treatment and care take place.

On 12 November 1987 the Rotherham health authority agreed to circulate a formal consultation document and an option appraisal on the rehabilitation services in Rotherham. According to that document, the authority believes that the closure of Firbeck hospital is justified. I disagree with that decision. The option appraisal identified three possible choices: to upgrade Firbeck hospital; to provide rehabilitation services at Badsley Moor lane hospital; and to provide such services at the district general hospital at Rotherham. The authority decided to favour the second option, and then sent the matter out for consultation. The consultation document mentions the number of miners who have been treated during the past decade and the changes in attendance, which have meant that

"the number of patients treated has increased over recent years, particularly in the day and sessional out-patients categories."

The document says that more patients could use the hospital, including those who are not receiving treatment because of their inability or unwillingness to make the long journey to Firbeck. That caused me to smile, because I have with me the minutes of a meeting held in August 1945 of the local trade union associations and the Miners Welfare Commission, when it was decided to purchase Firbeck. Mr. A. Nicholl, the community surgeon to the commission, stated that a centre should not be more than 25 or 30 miles from patients' homes. I assure the House that private and public travel facilities have improved a great deal since 1945, when the historic decision to buy the hospital was made.

The penultimate paragraph of the consultation document states:

[Mr. Kevin Barron]

"Having considered the option appraisal, and recognising the need to provide services effectively and in the most efficient manner, the Authority believes closure of Firbeck Hospital is justified because the service can be provided more effectively elsewhere to a wider range of patients. Significant revenue savings can be achieved which will be available for other service developments."

Let me deal with those two assertions: first, that money will be saved. That is the case on revenue costs, but not on capital costs. Indeed, the other two options would have a much higher capital cost. The actual difference when capital costs are taken into account is small when compared with the area health authority budget. We must offset that small cost against the treatment and care the hospital can provide now and in the future.

The hospital has helped many thousands of miners to get back into work after serious injury. My father and brother have had in-patient treatment at the hospital following industrial accidents. The health problems of mineworkers are different from those of the general population, and the requirement for orthopaedic-related services is much greater. About 45 per cent. of disabilities in the mining industry are in the trauma of musculo-skeletal categories.

In a report written in 1983, Mr. E. B. Macdonald, then the National Coal Board's principal medical officer for Yorkshire, who is an honorary consultant in rehabilitation and rheumatology, said:

"Medicine in the United Kingdom is primarily orientated towards acute treatment rather than prevention and rehabilitation. Rehabilitation has always been recognised as the 'Cinderella' among the medical specialties. Furthermore, treatment services have evolved such that they tend to be centralised around large district general hospitals which are designed to provide most facilities necessary for the majority in the community . . . Prolonged unnecessary absence from work takes its toll psychologically. It is well recognised in sociological studies that after as little as three months off work a man or woman can lose their drive and volition to work. This in itself makes the rehabilitation process more difficult because of these and other psychological effects. These patients do not respond well to short sessions of treatment in hospital outpatient departments in between which they lapse back into the apathy of the sit-at-home, visit-the-club routine. These patients tend to make very good progress at Firbeck . . . I believe that it is important for men and women working in heavy industry to get prompt and effective treatment for their disability, not only for their own benefit but for the good of the community as their unnecessary absence from work has enormous economic effects."

Mr. Macdonald believed that Firbeck should be fully integrated into the National Health Service as part of the continuing rehabilitation process. That is evidence from a leading expert who is recognised in south Yorkshire and in most other areas.

The hospital was previously under scrutiny in 1983-84, in the Trent regional review. Rotherham community health council visited the hospital in August 1984, and I can summarise its report as follows:

"'Small is beautiful' and small organisations can cater more for a specific person. Firbeck develops competition between patients. Patients may lose their identity and become 'lost' in a large unit . . . The setting at Firbeck is ideal and inspires patients to communicate with nature. Firbeck should be developed to a greater extent . . . Firbeck provides a very valuable service to the local heavy industries and encourages patients to get themselves fit for work . . . As opposed to a District General Hospital environment Firbeck has the time and facilities to concentrate on cybernetics and the human involvement."

The neighbouring Bassetlaw community heal also visited the hospital in October 1984, and in its report:

"There is no hesitation whatsoever in recommer Firbeck Rehabilitation Centre be continued ar expanded as members are convinced, after h opportunity of talking to both patients and staff, th and facilities provided at Firbeck could not be equ DGS site."

When visiting Firbeck, I spoke to a person wh both his lower limbs in an industrial accident. T certainly no doubt in my mind that the treatment that he was receiving was going a long way rehabilitating him to the realities that a young m such traumatic injuries must face. I recall that h same age as me, and he also had a young fam extended course that he was undergoing as an was doing much to adjust him to the psycholog induced by what had happened to him. The points out that some patients are removed from home environments after difficult times followi and benefit from the excellent environment at F

Even Rotherham health authority has in recognised the unique facilities at Firbeck f treatment and care. The environment of the h aptly described in its own words in a leaflet that a few years ago. It said:

"the grounds lend themselves to a variety of therap pleasure uses. There are footpaths laid out thr woodlands to demand varying degrees of effort patients, a bowling green, putting green and crick field, and numerous areas suitable for ad hoc rec activities such as volley ball, netball etc. While ma the emphasis on recovery by means of purposeful exe activity, relaxation and social affairs are also the enjoyed. A games room is provided for both therap leisure activities. Snooker tables are available and the a covered skittle alley."

In 1952 the conveyance from the Miners Commission to the Ministry of Health contai following clause:

"The Minister hereby undertakes with the Comm use and maintain the property hereby conveye Rehabilitation Centre primarily for the use of injured in or about coal mines and to use the same for purpose until such time as after consultation Commission he is satisfied that not less adequate al facilities are available to such workers".

Rotherham health authority has failed to main hospital. In its own appraisal, it admits to rec report in May 1983 suggesting that building fab engineering services were in need of refurbishi replacement. We can only assume that it has done since then. The appraisal also states, in paragraph page 22, in relation to the authority's preferred o

"this provision would meet the clause in the deeds re adequacy of alternative provision."

I strongly dispute that. The care given at F especially to amputees, and its beautiful environm never be matched in either of the two alternative c

I travel on the motorway regularly when going b the House and my Yorkshire constituency. I happ listen to a phone-in programme presented by Nic in December last year, in which the Minister took wonder whether the hon. Lady remembers a call t received from a Mr. Paramoor from Exeter, who s the hospital and ward closures that were then takin In answer to his question the hon. Lady spoke of

cottage hospital in South Molton, north Devon, where I understand her relatives came from. She said that closure had been talked of, and:

"then they realised it's nice for people to have not treatment but care."

She went on to describe that care as very valuable and very nice.

The very same phrases could be applied to the many thousands of people who have been in Firbeck hospital over the years; and, indeed, to the patients who are there now, receiving the same treatment and care, rather than simply being brought into a major hospital—perhaps a district general—and being given one or two days a week of out-patient physiotherapy. Firbeck can provide services which can be found nowhere else in the health authority area. They certainly cannot be provided under the options drawn up by the area health authority. I urge the Minister to support me in asking Rotherham health authority to change its mind and keep open and improve—for the benefit of all in the area—the rehabilitation service and the excellent standard of work in the amputee unit at Firbeck.

1.5 am

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Health and Social Security (Mrs. Edwina Currie): I congratulate the hon. Member for Rother Valley (Mr. Barron) on his success in the ballot. It gives me my opportunity to answer my 41st Adjournment debate since coming to this post. I always feel that it is a privilege to have the opportunity to respond to the interests and concerns of hon. Members' constituents in this way, and I shall endeavour to do so again tonight.

The subject that the hon. Gentleman has chosen is of interest to his constituents and the National Union of Mineworkers, which is his sponsor in the House, given Firbeck hospital's origins as a miners' rehabilitation centre. It still provides a service for miners, as do many hospitals in mining areas, including mine. It numbers pit men and ex-pit men among its past and present patients.

It would probably be helpful if I were to explain the procedure concerning variations in services. If there is a substantial variation in health services — it may be something other than closure, such as a change of use—health authorities must consult widely on their plans and consider all the comments. The local community health council must be consulted, and it should submit counter proposals if it disagrees. Any such counter proposals must be carefully considered by the district health authority. The hon. Gentleman will note that I said "must" and not "should".

If the district health authority rejects the counter proposals and reaffirms its original plans, the matter must be referred to the regional health authority. In the case of Firbeck, it would be Trent region. If the regional health authority supports the district's decision and the community health council still objects, the proposal must be referred to Ministers for a final decision. Effectively, therefore, whether a closure comes to Ministers depends on the community health council's view, but we prefer decisions to be taken locally wherever possible.

I can assure the hon. Gentleman that, before reaching a decision, Ministers are scrupulous to take into account and give weight to all of the comments. It is therefore important that we do not commit ourselves in advance bu hear all the arguments. I am glad to have this opportunity to hear at least some of them.

I can outline the facts as they have been represented t me, especially by the district health authority. I understan that Firbeck hospital is situated some nine miles south o Rotherham near the health authority boundary. It is in very attractive area and surrounded by pleasant parkland It was transferred to the NHS nearly 35 years ago Progressively fewer miners have used the hospital, partly because the number of people employed in mining ha reduced substantially during that time, partly because th accident rates in mining are lower—which I am sur everyone here will welcome—and partly because th provision of modern hospitals with improved rehabilita tion facilities elsewhere means that more miners can b treated as out-patients near their homes. That also mus be generally welcome as it is part of an improvement i service.

In 1974, 265 miners received residential treatment. I the first six months of last year, only 58 did. The hospita now also provides residential rehabilitation and out patient and day services for other groups—mainly men but also some women. Their numbers have increased steadily and they now heavily outnumber the miners. I 1982, there were 321 residential and 99 day patients. Since then, patterns of treatment have changed again and, by September 1987 there had been 294 resident and 211 day patients. The shift has gone far more towards day patients.

I understand that a number of problems have prompted the Rotherham district health authority to review the rehabilitation services provided in the district, including that provided at Firbeck but not just the Firbeck service. For example, many of those who use Firbeck come, I understand, from the southern and central parts of the district. It is said that many patients do not receive appropriate rehabilitation treatment because of their inability or unwillingness to make the long journey to Firbeck.

While I take on board entirely what the hon. Gentleman says about improved transport services since 1945, it is a fact that people's expectations of what constitutes a short or a long journey have also shifted since that time, when perhaps people were more prepared to make longer journeys for scarcer services than they are sometimes now. I am told that this problem particularly affects women because public transport to Firbeck is not easily accessible and, of course, many of the women we are talking about are older ladies who may not have the use of a car. Travel to Firbeck can take a considerable time.

At present only limited provision exists in the district for rehabilitation treatment of people with disabling diseases, such as rheumatic conditions, strokes and back injury. The service appears to have developed substantially in response to accidents, and that is welcome, but increasingly the people that we need to care for in this kind of service are those of whom age and infirmity have simply taken their toll. It is felt, I understand, that the maximum benefit to these patients can be obtained by beginning intensive treatment as soon as possible after the onset of illness. The need to be resident at Firbeck hospital or to travel considerable distances for out-patient treatment there causes difficulty.

Apart from that, a condition survey has revealed the need for considerable renovation at Firbeck, despite the expenditure of considerable sums, referred to by the hon.

[Mrs. Edwina Currie]

Gentleman, in the recent past. It has been estimated that the cost could be £750,000. On completion, revenue costs would remain at over £400,000 a year, and even then it would not be possible to use the whole of the building.

A district health authority appraisal has been carried out of the best way to provide services in future—and it is a question of ensuring that these services are provided in the future. I am sure that the hon. Gentleman would not dream of misleading any of his constituents by implying that these services would simply vanish. At a meeting in October 1987 the Rotherham DHA decided against upgrading Firbeck in favour of developing the rehabilitation service at Badsley Moor lane hospital. It was the authority's view that Badsley Moor lane hospital was better situated, since it is in Rotherham itself, and could, with some capital investment, provide a more comprehensive rehabilitation service for the whole of Rotherham—and it would end up costing only £200,000 a year.

Mr. Barron: I am sure that the hon. Lady has no intention of misleading the House on the matter of costs. I said that the actual revenue costs would be higher; but of the three options discussed, the capital costs are certainly higher on the other two than for the refurbishing of Firbeck hospital. What I said was that, if one looked at the revenue costs and the £200,000 a year difference, it is not a lot in terms of the overall budget of the Rotherham area health authority. The real question must be whether £200,000 out of some £30 million is a lot to take into account when one thinks of this long treatment that can be given to amputees. I know that the health authority in any of its appraisals—which, I assure the hon. Lady, I have read in great detail—has not convinced anybody that there is any long-term treatment for amputees. This is not just for the Rotherham area, of course, but for the whole region.

Mrs. Currie: Happily, I reassure the hon. Gentleman and his constituents that nobody is planning to do away with a long-term service to amputees. If they require a medical service, they will get it. The question, as I understand it, is whether they should get it at Firbeck or somewhere else, and whether they can at the same time see some improvement of the service not only to amputees but to people suffering from other forms of disease. I merely offer him the figures that I have been given. I note his view that £200,000 a year difference in running costs is not much——

Mr. Barron: They would be saving on capital expenditure.

Mrs. Currie: Perhaps the hon. Gentleman would allow me to continue, as I have not quite finished.

I was interested also to hear what the hon. Gentleman said about bowls and skittles and the facilities at Firbeck. That is really quite remarkable. I do not think that many hospitals in this country spend National Health Service money on excellent services like that. In my area they are provided either by the miners' welfare or by other organisations. I merely offer that as a thought to the House. The district health authority is now consulting those concerned locally and has invited comments and, if necessary, counter proposals by 29 February. So it rests with the people concerned locally to contact the health authority with their views.

I should stress that the argument is provide care most efficiently and appropri the least stress and trouble to the peo particularly in travelling. It is not about t care provided. The staff at Firbeck are to their dedication and their effort towards p

Obviously I cannot anticipate what the authority will decide, but I understand Gentleman has already discussed the issue authority on 8 January. I will ensure that tonight are brought to the authority's atte they are borne in mind.

I described the procedure earlier, but t one slight variation in the case of Firbecl Gentleman says, the conveyance under whic was handed over to the Health Service som states:

"The Minister hereby undertakes with the Commission to use and maintain the pr conveyed as a Rehabilitation Centre . . . and for no other purpose until such time as afte with the commission he is satisfied that no alternative facilities are available to such wor

We will obviously look at this point ca allowing any change in the service.

I understand also that the Nation Mineworkers may ask for the building bac is taken to close it. If I have to, I will take l that. I offer the hon. Gentleman this th property were to be disposed of through the authority, the proceeds would go strai National Health Service, not to the Treasury else. We would expect a sum of at least £2 would, I understand, stay in Rotherham hea I am sure that most of the hon. Gentleman' would agree that that is a wise procedure an in improvements for the public good. I an agree that the health services in Rotherham I have no information on what the Natio Mineworkers might do either with the buildi money if it was sold by the union.

Mr. Barron: The Minister brings up the q National Union of Mineworkers claiming back. It was the money of coal owners and co bought the hospital. I have had discussi NUM. I have never heard any of the official union wants it back. We want the facility to c used.

Mrs. Currie: I am most grateful to the ho for giving us that information. All the mone release from the sale of assets that are no lo we need in the Health Service, particularly Rotherham. His assurance will be welc constituents. However, we are nowhere nea advice or other decisions on it.

It is important to remember that the H needs to change and to keep up with new d need to develop and improve services within available. We need to realise resources in a been going on to quite an extent in Yorkshire regions. We need to meet changing healt Sometimes we need to recognise the diffe distribution of local people from the tim hospitals were built.

Most changes are agreed locally and m result from the improved services which are pr

appropriately and more economically from a different location. It would not be acceptable to the House, in my judgment, to continue to provide inferior health services from old and outdated buildings when better ones could be provided in better or more modern facilities. That is the basis upon which much of the change has been agreed locally.

The Government attach the highest priority to improving and modernising the estate. Since 1979 at least 176 schemes costing more than £1 million have been completed in the Health Service, providing over 20,000 new beds. There have also been many smaller facilities completed. There have been closures, but the service in terms of patients treated has increased enormously being provided broadly speaking from more mode better located hospitals and other facilities.

The process will continue. About £1 billion will b this year on capital projects. Throughout England 470 schemes, each costing over £1 million, with value of over £3 billion, are at various stages of pla design and construction. In Rotherham, as elsewh hope to see the benefits of that massive record b programme. We hope—we are assured—that, wh decisions are taken about Firbeck, they will be entirely in the interests of the patients concerned.

Question put and agreed to.

Adjourned accordingly at twenty minutes pas o'clock.

House of Commons

Thursday 14 January 1988

The House met at half-past Two o'clock

PRAYERS

[MR. SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

PRIVATE BUSINESS

CITY OF WESTMINSTER BILL
Read the Third time, and passed.

GREATER MANCHESTER (LIGHT RAPID TRANSIT SYSTEM) BILL *[Lords] (By Order)*

GREATER MANCHESTER (LIGHT RAPID TRANSIT SYSTEM) (NO. 2) BILL *[Lords] (By Order)*
Orders for consideration, as amended, read.
To be considered upon Tuesday 19 January 1988.

LONDON REGIONAL TRANSPORT BILL *(By Order)*
Order read for resuming adjourned debate on consideration [10 December].
That the Bill be now considered.
Debate further adjourned till Thursday 21 January.

TEIGNMOUTH QUAY COMPANY BILL *(By Order)*

YORK CITY COUNCIL BILL *[Lords] (By Order)*

HAMPSHIRE (LYNDHURST BYPASS) BILL *[Lords] (By Order)*
Orders for Second Reading read.
To be read a Second time upon Thursday 21 January.

BRITISH RAILWAYS (LONDON) BILL *[Lords] (By Order)*
Order for Second Reading read.
To be read a Second time upon Wednesday 20 January at Seven o'clock.

Oral Answers to Questio

NATIONAL FINANCE

OECD Countries (Expansion)

1. **Mr. O'Brien:** To ask the Chancellor Exchequer what discussions he has had with Ministers abroad concerning expansion targets Organisation for Economic Co-operation Development economies.

5. **Mr. Wray:** To ask the Chancellor of the Ex what discussions he has had with Finance M abroad concerning expansion targets for the Orga for Economic Co-operation and Development eco

16. **Mr. Holland:** To ask the Chancellor Exchequer what discussions he has had with Ministers abroad concerning expansion targets Organisation for Economic Co-operation Development economies.

The Economic Secretary to the Treasury (Mr Lilley): The OECD does not set expansion Therefore, my right hon. Friend discusses more matters with his fellow Finance Ministers.

Mr. O'Brien: Is the Minister aware that bef Venice conference last year the United States T Secretary, James Baker called upon OECD Gover to try to set a recovery target? Since then stock have crashed and the statement by the Group o countries did nothing, so Governments had to int Is it not time that the United Kingdom Gove started to intervene and to set up a programme recovery in this country?

Mr. Lilley: Since the fall in stock markets it has apparent that most major economies were growin rapidly than seemed to be the case at the time. We confident that there will not be a recession in 1988. United Kingdom economy, we predict 3 per cent. in the non-oil economy, which is very healthy inde major countries of the world have co-operated in e that the difficult period following the financial crisis has been coped with.

Mr. Wray: Does the Minister agree that the estimates state clearly and categorically that the rate will fall from 2·75 per cent. to 1·75 per cent. i Is the Chancellor really saying that after he has sol the country's assets there will not be a recessio slump, when there is an estimated balance of pa deficit of £5·2 billion?

Mr. Lilley: I do not think that anyone categorical about growth rates in 1989. However, be reasonably assured that there will be some gr 1988, albeit perhaps more modest than in the pa said, the British economy looks set to do particula in spite of the gloom that the hon. Gentleman h convey to the House.

Mr. Holland: Surely the fact is that towards the last year the Chancellor said that there was no p having a Group of Seven meeting unless the agreement. There was no meeting, and there

agreement on anything significant. The statement at the end of December did not stabilise the markets until Governments intervened. The whole of OECD is now slowing down, and the effects of cuts in the United States budget deficit will aggravate that. How on earth can the Government be confident that the United Kingdom economy will continue to grow when the rest of the world is slowing down? Why do they not hold a meeting of the G7 countries to meet those targets for recovery asked for by United States Treasury Secretary Baker last year?

Mr. Lilley: The G7 statement did help to stabilise financial markets.

Mr. Holland: Why did the Government intervene?

Mr. Lilley: We never comment on intervention by the British Government. If the hon. Gentleman believes statements that other countries were intervening, he can draw that inference from the G7 statement. We are reasonably confident that the British economy will do well in future because the policies that have brought us prosperity are precisely the policies needed in times of difficulty, if difficulty should arise.

The Opposition's response to the past three questions sounds rather like the Noel Coward song that bad times are just around the corner.

Mr. John Townend: Does my hon. Friend agree that, because of the twin deficits—the trade deficit and the federal deficit in America—America cannot continue to be the engine of the world's economy? Britain is playing its part; its high growth rate has resulted in a small balance of payments surplus. Does my hon. Friend think that the two surplus countries of Japan and Germany are doing enough to fill the gap left by America?

Mr. Lilley: My hon. Friend is quite correct. It is important that the surplus countries as well as the deficit countries play their part in removing the imbalances that have plagued the world economy. The Japanese economy is growing strongly in terms of domestic demand and we hope to see a strengthening of growth in Germany as well. My hon. Friend is right. The British economy has been the strongest growing major economy in the western world.

Mr. Beith: Do not the Chancellor's autumn forecasts depend on major corrections in the United States economy and on an expansion in domestic demand in West Germany and Japan? As that has been the subject of the Foreign Secretary's discussions with the Japanese Government, how can the Minister regard it as a fruitless subject for discussion?

Mr. Lilley: No country in the OECD sets quantitative targets for GDP growth. That was the basis of the question that I answered initially. The outlook in Japan is for quite strong domestic growth, which will contribute to the removal of imbalances between Japan and the United States, and that is something that I welcome. I also welcome the presence of the hon. Member for Berwick-on-Tweed (Mr. Beith) today. I was sorry that he was not in the Select Committee yesterday when we were discussing, among other matters, VAT. We would have been interested to hear his views on where he would apply it.

Mr. Soames: Does my hon. Friend agree that growth within the OECD is inextricably linked to free trade? Will he assure the House that, together with our OECD partners, we will do all that we can to promote free trade with Japan?

Mr. Lilley: My hon. Friend has
important aspects of the future of
We must resist all pressures
protectionism. Free trade brings pro
and we are foremost in promoting

Civil Service (Information

2. **Mr. Dalyell:** To ask the Chanc
if he has issued any guidance on info
in the Civil Service, as a result of less
since the Westland affair; and if he

The Paymaster General (Mr. Pet

Mr. Dalyell: I gave the Paymaste
days' notice of my question in the
reply. Does the Minister dispute th
Kenneth Clucas, who is a distinguis
on 4 January the Prime Minis
Armstrong in a very difficult posit
unethical for the Cabinet Secretar
inquiry to which he knew the answe

Mr. Brooke: I have nothing to ad
been said by my right hon. Friend th
other Ministers, in statements and i

Mr. Marlow: Is my right hon. Fr
system of information control withi
sufficiently robust to prevent the lea
information to the hon. Member
Dalyell)? If not, will he do somethin

Mr. Brooke: I think that my hon.
his question had a rhetorical purpos
purpose was caught.

Inflation

3. **Mr. Bill Walker:** To ask th
Exchequer if he will make a statement
for inflation.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer
The forecast in the Autumn Stateme
would be 4½ per cent. in the fourth qu
present a new forecast at Budget time

Mr. Walker: Can my right hon. F
the last time on which the rate of grow
of inflation, as it did in the third quar
he also confirm that low prices are g
jobs and the economy?

Mr. Lawson: My hon. Friend is
pointing to the central importance of
for the strength of the economy
performance of the British economy i
past few years has been achieved b
inflation at the forefront of our p
comparison that my hon. Friend mad
inflation and the rate of growth, it is m
at the figures for a whole year than fo
not had the final figures for 1987 ye
them for a little while, but it may w
prove to have been the first year for a
the rate of growth has exceeded the

Dr. Reid: In view of the optimi
Economic Secretary that good times

on one of the most
Western economy.
move towards
erity to all partners

nagement)

or of the Exchequer
ation management
s learnt during and
make a statement.

Brooke): No, Sir.

eneral's office four
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nunciation by Sir
civil servant, that
put Sir Robert
, and that it was
to embark on an
efore he started?

o what has already
rime Minister, and
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he Civil Service is
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Linlithgow (Mr.
bout it?

end will agree that
nd that rhetorical

Chancellor of the
the latest outlook

r. Nigel Lawson):
was that inflation
ter of 1988. I shall
the usual way.

nd tell the House
exceeded the rate
of last year? Can
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olutely correct in
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The very good
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cies. As for the
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quarter. We have
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be that 1987 will
neration in which
of inflation.

remarks of the
just around the

corner, will the Chancellor confirm that Treasury forecasts show that next year there will be a higher rate of inflation, a lower rate of growth and a worse payments crisis than last year? What does he think Noel Coward would have said about that?

Mr. Lawson: I will not answer the last part of the question, because to sing it would be out of order. Certainly the forecast is for a slightly higher rate of inflation in the fourth quarter—not for the whole year, because we do not make that forecast—of 1988 than there was in the fourth quarter of 1987. Nevertheless, that rate of inflation forecast for the fourth quarter of 1988 is not merely one quarter of the average rate of inflation when the Labour Government were in office, but is only about one half of the lowest figure that they achieved in any month during the whole of their period in office. As for the forecast rate of non-oil growth, it may be lower than last year, but it is higher than the Labour Government ever achieved in any year of their term of office.

Sir William Clark: Is my right hon. Friend aware that most thinking people are well aware that one of this country's main achievements under his guidance has been the low rate of inflation?

Mr. Holland: What about mass unemployment?

Sir William Clark: Does my right hon. Friend further agree that the one thing any Government can do to help people on fixed incomes—pensioners and the like—is to keep the rate of inflation down so that the value of their money does not deteriorate, as it did in the 1970s?

Mr. Lawson: My hon. Friend is absolutely right. During his very thoughtful and accurate question I heard a sedentary interjection from one of the junior Opposition spokesmen that there is mass unemployment. I should have thought on this day, when we have the figures showing that there has been a fall in unemployment over the past year of over 500,000, the highest ever fall in unemployment, that at least would have been welcomed by the Opposition.

Mr. Chris Smith: If the Chancellor places such importance on the rate of inflation—as he clearly does, because he said yesterday to the NEDC that avoidance of inflation was at the "very heart" of Government economic policy—why have he and his Government taken a series of decisions in the past three months deliberately to fuel inflation by pushing up electricity prices, rents in the private and public sectors, water rates and nationalised industry prices? Is he proud of that?

Mr. Lawson: I afraid that the hon. Member does not have the first idea of what causes inflation or what the rate of inflation is. The rate of inflation now is far lower than anything achieved by the Labour Government during their period in office. Not only does it compare very well with our past, but our relative inflation performance compared with other major countries has improved substantially.

Council of Finance Ministers

4. Sir Anthony Meyer: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer when he next intends to meet his counterparts in the European Council of Finance Ministers; and what matters he expects to discuss.

15. Mr. Cash: To ask the Chancellor of t
when he next intends to meet his counte
European Council of Finance Ministers; and
he expects to discuss.

Mr. Brooke: The next meeting of t
Community's Economic and Finance Coun
to be on 9 February. The agenda has not yet

Sir Anthony Meyer: May I ask my righ
—and also say what a pleasure it is to desc
—whether, given Her Majesty's Governm
ment to achieving a single European marke
will discuss with his European colleagues arr
the reduction and eventual elimination o
examination of passengers and goods trave
countries in the European Community?

Mr. Brooke: My hon. Friend will recall t
Single European Act we have retained contr
border arrangements on drugs, terrorism a
think that my hon. Friend will recognise t
relevance of Customs and Excise to that ta
I am most grateful to him for his initial

Mr. Cash: Will my right hon. Friend
Select Committee on European Legisla
produced a report drawing attention to the
of the EEC proposals on value added tax?
will he note that we have absolutely no
agreeing to those proposals, any more th
Hampden had of paying ship money back
century, and that we regard them as gravel
to the powers of our Parliament and its right,
of the Government, to decide and allocate ta
the interests of our people?

Mr. Brooke: The Government are
proposals made by the Commission for
approximations, but have made it clear that
accept any proposals that would restrict
Kingdom's right to use zero-rating. The Uni
is not alone in having difficulty with the pr
changes can be agreed only where there is u

Mr. Winnick: When the meeting with
Ministers takes place, will they be told of the
the SDP and Liberal leaders for VAT to apply
clothing, food, fuel and newspapers? Will the
that, while the British Government's economi
increasingly discredited in this country, it s
leaders of the SDP and the Liberal party hav
been converted to Thatcherism?

Mr. Brooke: There are a number of non se
hon. Gentleman's question, but I, too, ha
interesting but courageous proposals put fo
alliance yesterday.

Mr. Campbell-Savours: When the Minis
European counterparts, will he raise with t
that the Kuwaitis are increasingly purchasing
of shares in European companies? Is the M
that, despite assurances given by the Chan
House the other day, the Kuwaitis have n
their holdings in British Petroleum, and are u
broking firms to do so? Will he act now, in
interest?

Mr. Brooke: Under the internal market,
Government are in favour, British newspap

available throughout the Community. I have every confidence that my colleagues among Finance Ministers in the Community will have read of the developments concerning share purchasers to which the hon. Gentleman referred.

Mr. Watts: Will my right hon. Friend impress on his European colleagues that there is no need for any increase in EEC own resources and that their priority should be the imposition of firm budgetary control, which was promised at Fontainebleau but for which we are still waiting?

Mr. Brooke: Whichever Minister represents the British Government at Ecofin, he will certainly bear in mind what my hon. Friend has said. However, as the European Council will be meeting in Brussels the following week, there will be an even more adequate opportunity then.

Mr. Gordon Brown: On the question of the EEC's VAT proposals, and notwithstanding the new proposals of the third party, the fourth party and the fifth party in British politics, does the Minister agree that, outside the alliance and Lord Cockfield, there is no public support for any attempt to impose VAT on vital necessities? Will he give us the assurance, which he has not yet given that the Government will implement none of Lord Cockfield's demands.

Mr. Brooke: We have made a number of specific pledges concerning zero-rating, and the House would not expect me to add to them today.

Industrial Productivity

6. **Mr. Stevens:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what has been the growth of industrial productivity in the British economy over the last 12 months.

The Chief Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. John Major): In the three months to October 1987 manufacturing output per head is estimated to have been 7¼ per cent. higher than a year earlier.

Mr. Stevens: Does my right hon. Friend agree that that substantial increase in productivity is a major factor in keeping British industry internationally competitive? Will he also confirm that manufacturing output is growing faster than at any time since the early 1970s?

Mr. Major: I certainly confirm what my hon. Friend has said. I should add that manufacturing output has now recovered from its loss during the recessionary period of 1980-81. Output is now above pre-recession levels and is rising sharply. We expect that it will continue to do so.

Mr. Morgan: Would the Minister care to comment on the statement made last week in Dundee by the governor of the Bank of England, who said that growth in the British economy was unsustainably rapid? Before the governor made that statement, were his views discussed with the Government or, as his train passed through Nottingham on the way to Dundee, did he have the idea of forming his own branch of the UDM—the union of disgruntled monetarists?

Mr. Major: I certainly cannot say whether the latter point is true. However, the governor was echoing what my right hon. Friend said to the Select Committee on the Treasury and Civil Service some time before. Specifically, my right hon. Friend said that the rate of growth prior to October, which was substantially above trend, was not likely or expected to be sustained next year. However, output next year in the non-oil economy is expected to be 3 per cent. and that represents a substantial level of growth and is substantially higher than that achieved at any stage under the previous Labour Government.

Mr. Neil Hamilton: Does my right hon. Friend agree that one reason for this rapid increase in output and growth is that, today, it is worth working because one can keep more of what one earns? Therefore, while it is welcome that the Labour party supports reducing the proportion of GNP that is taken in taxes by cutting spending, is it not unfortunate that it is only the New Zealand Labour party which supports that policy?

Mr. Major: I understand that, from time to time, attempts have been made to introduce some of the ideas of the New Zealand Labour party to the Labour party of this country, but with minimal success. My hon. Friend is entirely right about the supply side effects of lower taxation, and my right hon. Friend the Chancellor is acutely aware of those effects.

Mr. John Smith: If the Minister is claiming success for the Government's industry policies, can he explain why a balance of trade surplus of £5 billion has been turned into a deficit of £8 billion? What is the Government's strategy for correcting that difficulty?

Mr. Major: The right hon. and learned Gentleman will know that in the period since 1981, and for the first time in many years, export volumes have grown at a similar rate to the world trade in manufactures. That feat was not achieved at any time during 1974-79. The right hon. and learned Gentleman — uncharacteristically in my judgment—is selling British manufacturing short. It is doing exceedingly well, and the size of our export volumes is the clearest possible illustration of that success. The size of the import volumes has a direct relationship with the fact that the British economy is growing substantially faster than that of our competitors. The right hon. and learned Gentleman should be well aware of that.

Industry (Costs)

7. **Mr. Ian Taylor:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what estimate he has made of the relative benefit to British industry of *(a)* 1 per cent. off interest rates and *(b)* 1 per cent. off pay rises.

Mr. Lilley: A 1 per cent. moderation in pay rises would be worth roughly four times as much to British industry as a 1 per cent. reduction of interest rates, even if that were sustained for a full year.

Mr. Taylor: I am grateful to my hon. Friend for those extremely interesting figures. Does he believe that industry could help itself by keeping a tighter grip on its unit pay costs and thereby ensure that inflation falls, which would lead to a decline in interest rates? Does he also believe that the statistics would be extremely helpful if those on the Opposition Front Bench understood what causes inflation?

Mr. Lilley: My hon. Friend is absolutely right to highlight the importance of industry keeping control of its pay costs. I should especially like to pay tribute to the management and employees of the export industries, because the strong rise in productivity that they have

achieved has enabled them to keep their pay costs stable up to now, despite the considerable increases in the real earnings of the employees.

Mr. Grocott: On the subject of interest rates, has the Minister had a chance to see the evidence from the National Consumer Council on consumer credit, which shows that eight chain stores are charging rates of interest between 32 and 39·9 per cent.? Does he not agree that that is a swindle, and what will he do about it?

Mr. Lilley: I have not seen the figures to which the hon. Gentleman referred, but I shall examine them. It is now obligatory on those offering credit to make clear the terms on which they offer that credit. The best guarantee that people are not swindled is that they have competitive alternatives to which they can turn.

International Finance Ministers

8. **Mr. Tim Smith:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer when he is next due to meet the Finance Ministers of the other major industrial countries to discuss the international financial situation.

10. **Mr. Bowis:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer when he is next due to meet the Finance Ministers of the other major industrialised countries.

Mr. Lawson: I am in regular contact with my opposite numbers in other G7 countries.

Mr. Smith: Does my right hon. Friend agree that one of the factors that makes it difficult for managers in industry and commerce, especially those involved in exports, to forecast and plan ahead is the volatility of exchange rates? What measures will he be urging upon his counterparts at the next meeting to try to achieve greater stability in exchange rates?

Mr. Lawson: I agree with my hon. Friend. What are needed within a climate of low inflation all round are domestic policies that will sustain reasonable stability in exchange rates, which is of the first importance to successful trade and industry. I hope to say a little more about that in the debate that will follow later today.

Mr. Bowis: Does my right hon. Friend agree that it is good news that we have had five consecutive years of growth in the Group of Seven industrialised countries? It is doubly good news that Britain is at the top of the league for such growth. It is a pity that Britain is at the top of another league table—the league table of the Opposition parties, who see nothing but unremitting gloom and despondency every time that something goes right.

Mr. Lawson: That is a characteristic of the Opposition, and a rather sad one. It is not doing them any good, or doing any credit to the country as a whole. I found it particularly interesting at the meeting of NEDC yesterday, which I had the honour of chairing— *[Interruption.]* This is a very moving moment in the history of the House, with the entry of the right hon. Member for Tweeddale, Ettrick and Lauderdale (Mr. Steel), but we are still one short.

It was very striking that at the meeting of NEDC yesterday afternoon the TUC openly acknowledged the economic success and the economic strength of Britain at present. The argument was over priorities. Our priorities were different from its priorities, but it acknowledged Britain's economic success and strength.

Mr. Robert Sheldon: Has the Chancellor of the Exchequer seen today's reports that the United States is selling special drawing rights for yen? That is the nearest thing to selling gold for yen. Does the Chancellor believe those reports, and if he does, does he think that the United States will properly defend its currency?

Mr. Lawson: I have seen those reports and I have no idea at present whether they are true, but clearly that would be a move consistent with a determined American attempt to defend the dollar.

Mr. Mullin: What does the Chancellor think would be the career prospects for a Finance Minister in Europe or in Kuwait who sold 20 per cent. of his country's largest company to a foreign power at knock-down prices?

Mr. Lawson: The shares were sold by Her Majesty's Government at a very good price indeed. It was certainly not a knock-down price, and the British taxpayer did very well as a result of that. Contrary to what the right hon. and learned Member for Monklands, East (Mr. Smith) predicted, we have had to buy back only a tiny proportion, less than 2 per cent. It is true that following the stock market fall those shares fell considerably, along with many others, and the Kuwait Investment Office took the opportunity to buy, not all of them, but a substantial block of those shares. Anybody could have done that. However, as I told the House on Monday, it has given an assurance that it has no intention of seeking control of BP, nor any management role.

Mr. Yeo: Will my right hon. Friend reassure the House that he will avoid committing too much of Britain's financial resources to concerted foreign exchange support operations for the dollar until it is clear that the United States Government are adopting policies that are themselves likely to produce a firmer currency?

Mr. Lawson: That is certainly a policy position which I have taken throughout. During the greater part of the period since the Louvre agreement the Americans had been following such policies and were fully committed to the defence of the dollar. There was a period towards the end of last year when that commitment by the American Government appeared to be in doubt. Subsequently, however, they have taken action which suggests that they intend to defend their currency. The commitment of the United States is crucial, both in terms of intervention and in terms of the appropriate internal domestic policies.

EC (Internal Market)

9. **Mr. Cryer:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what assessment he has made of the feasibility of the internal market of the European Economic Community in the absence of the harmonisation of value added taxation rates.

Mr. Brooke: The Government strongly support the removal of barriers to trade within the Community, but they do not believe that approximation of VAT rates is a necessary part of this process.

Mr. Cryer: If the Minister takes that view, will he formally repudiate the views of the Conservative appointee on the EEC Commission, Lord Cockfield, who believes that harmonisation of VAT is necessary? If he repudiates Lord Cockfield's views — and he has the opportunity to do so now—will he also repudiate any

attempt by the Government to put VAT on food, fuel and clothing, or on books and newspapers, which would be a tax on knowledge for the first time in our history?

Mr. Brooke: Lord Cockfield is in no sense answerable to the Government. It will not have escaped the hon. Member's attention that there have been disagreements between the Government and Lord Cockfield in the context of his proposals. In response to an earlier question I indicated that I will be making no further pledges during the afternoon beyond those already given.

Mr. Higgins: As the Government have made it clear that they propose to use their veto, if necessary, to defend the zero-rating concept, will my right hon. Friend make it absolutely clear to the Commission that there is no point in putting forward proposals which involve its abolition?

Mr. Brooke: My right hon. Friend is correct in stating the Government's position. The approximation proposals are unacceptable as drafted, but discussion between member states is at a very early stage and it would be wrong to anticipate the outcome. The United Kingdom is committed to completion of the single market, but how this is best achieved is a matter for discussion between member states. I repeat the pledges on zero-rating which have already been given by the Prime Minister.

Dr. Marek: The country will wish to know that the Minister will resist the arguments for value added tax of the party or parties of whom two representatives sit below the Gangway. The Minister has said that the Government have made specific pledges about what they will do and what they will allow in regard to the introduction of VAT. In view of this important occasion, will he list those pledges specifically? Do they include books, periodicals and medicines?

Mr. Brooke: I share the hon. Gentleman's interest in the proposals that have emerged from the alliance Benches. But even into the life of the right hon. Member for Tweeddale, Ettrick and Lauderdale (Mr. Steel) some pleasure must have entered yesterday when the hon. Member for Rochdale (Mr. Smith) issued a statement saying that he was opposed to VAT on food. As to the pledges, those that have been given by my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister relate to food, domestic fuel and children's clothing and footwear.

Economic Outlook

11. **Mr. Knox:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement on the economic outlook for the rest of the current financial year.

Mr. Major: The United Kingdom economy continues to show the winning combination of strong growth, low inflation and sound public finance.

Mr. Knox: The Chancellor's economic policies have resulted in a substantial reduction in unemployment during the past year. Does my right hon. Friend think that present policies will result in a similar reduction in unemployment during the next 12 months, and does he think that there is any chance that unemployment will be less than 2 million in a year's time?

Mr. Major: I certainly do not propose to make forecasts of the future rate of unemployment. My hon. Friend is entirely correct to point out that unemployment has fallen by over half a million in the last year and 300,0 in the last six months, and today's figures again sho unemployment down by 35,000. I am particularly pleas to see youth unemployment down and an especial welcome fall in the west midlands, Wales, the north-we and the north.

Mr. Ashley: Will the Chief Secretary bear in mind th the collapsing dollar is very greatly damaging to o export industries, especially the pottery industr Notwithstanding what was said a moment ago about o exports, will he do what he can to strengthen the dollar i order to aid our exports?

Mr. Major: The fall in the dollar is undoubtedl unsettling, as my right hon. Friend has made clear on number of occasions. The performance of British export in recent months has been excellent and we are keen t ensure that that contiinues.

Mr. McCrindle: Does my right hon. Friend perceiv any danger of overheating in the economy in the month that lie ahead? Can he give the House any indication o what steps the Government have it within their power t take if that trend should develop?

Mr. Major: We do not see any signs of overheating, s I think that the second part of my hon. Friend's questio does not arise.

International Debt

12. **Mr. Campbell-Savours:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what initiatives he is taking with Finance Ministers of creditor countries to address the re-scheduling of a share of the debt of Latin American countries.

Mr. Lilley: The United Kingdom will continue to play its part, along with other creditor countries, in rescheduling its share of developing countries' official debt at the Paris Club. As for commercial debts, that is a matter for the banks and countries concerned.

Mr. Campbell-Savours: But is it not true that at the end of the day the bill for Third world debt written off by the banks may well be paid by the taxpayer, as banks write off losses against profits? If that is the case, does it not mean that the taxpayer may well be paying for ill-considered and unnecessary projects in some Third world countries? And, if that is the case, would it not be better to spend public money, taxpayers' money, in another way by simply increasing the amount of money available for Third world aid?

Mr. Lilley: The hon. Gentleman misunderstands the nature of tax relief. If banks or other companies fail to make a profit, they do not pay tax. No money is handed out by the Treasury to them, and therefore there is no money available that is now going to them that could instead go to underdeveloped countries.

13. **Mr. Redwood:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what responses he has received to his 1987 initiative to deal with the problem of developing countries' debt.

Mr. Lawson: My initiative has been widely welcomed. Many countries have followed the United Kingdom's lead in converting past aid loans to grants and the Paris Club has agreed to several extended reschedulings of official debts. I am continuing to press for interest rate reductions

on such reschedulings. Following my initiative, the managing director of the IMF launched a separate proposal for interest rate assistance with these countries' multilateral debts via an expansion of the fund's structural adjustment facility.

Mr. Redwood: While welcoming the excellent initiative of the Chancellor, may I ask him whether he agrees that the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund should go much further in expediting progress in this area by themselves writing off and making adequate provisions against the debts which they are putting on their books at unrealistic levels?

Mr. Lawson: I think that the international institutions, which are backed by Governments, are in a very different position from commercial banks, which have to make sure that, if there are bad or doubtful debts, provision is properly made for them. It is, indeed, a matter of importance to the supervisory authorities in this country and other countries to ensure that that is done. I welcome what the commercial banks have been doing in this regard.

Mr. Skinner: Is not the truth of the matter that in this financial year the amount of money that will be set against income tax relief in respect of the four main banks in Britain will be of the order of £1,000 million? Will the right hon. Gentleman also confirm that in the next financial year it is proposed that those debt provisions will rise even beyond that figure? Since the British public is of the view that we ought to be helping Third world countries, would it not make sense for the Chancellor of the Exchequer to allow money to go to Third world countries to bail them out, instead of bailing out the British banks?

Mr. Lawson: I am sorry that the hon. Gentleman has wasted the time of the House by asking precisely the same question, based on precisely the same conception as his hon. Friend the Member for Workington (Mr. Campbell-Savours) asked, and which was answered by my hon. Friend the Economic Secretary. If a bank lends money to any borrower, whether an industrial customer or an overseas sovereign Government, and it turns out to be a bad debt, obviously there is tax relief on the bad debt. That is the law of the land. Equally, if, at the end of the day, the debt is paid, the tax relief in unwound.

PRIME MINISTER

Military Hospitals (Departmental Co-ordination)

Q1. **Mr Jessel:** To ask the Prime Minister if she is satisfied with the co-ordination between the Secretaries of State for Defence and for Social Services concerning the use of beds in military hospitals for National Health Service patients.

The Prime Minister (Mrs. Margaret Thatcher): Yes, Sir. Some 34,000 National Health Service in-patients, 4,000 day patients and 200,000 out-patients are treated annually in military hospitals in the United Kingdom. Ways of increasing the number of National Health Service patients treated in military hospitals are being considered by my right hon. Friends.

Mr. Jessel: As the hospitals of the Royal Navy, the Army and the Royal Air Force, which have excellent standards, now take 34,000 National Health Service in-patients every year and could take very many thousands more—on 6 January they had 495 beds available—will my right hon. Friend please urgently consider how they can take more? In particular, will she please consider whether waiting list money can be further applied?

The Prime Minister: I am very much aware of my right hon. and hon. Friend's concern to see that we get as much health care out of the facilities as we possibly can. The ordinary health authorities can apply for waiting list money if they know of beds which are free in military hospitals and can made an arrangement for patients to be treated there, so we are going in the direction required by my hon. Friend.

Mr. Cryer: Does the Prime Minister agree that the armed forces could provide more beds for National Health Service use and, indeed, provide facilities for the National Health Service — which is being cut back under her Government — if she adopted different priorities and shifted the £11 billion she is spending on nuclear weapons in the form of Trident to the National Health Service? In that way the continuing complaints about operations not being carried out would be brought to an end and we could spend money on patient care, instead of on mass extermination.

The Prime Minister: The National Health Service is not being cut back. Over and above inflation, there has been provision for an extra 30 per cent. for the National Health Service. The hon. Gentleman might have got muddled up with the record of his own Government, who, 10 years ago, cut back the National Health Service, and who also cut in real terms nurses' and doctors' pay. Under this Government, the money has gone up, the number of nurses and doctors has gone up and the pay has gone up.

Mr. Speaker: Order. The question is about beds in military hospitals.

Sir Michael Shaw: Does my right hon. Friend agree that the limitation on the number of National Health Service patients dealt with by the services has been caused by a long-running wrangle between the Ministry of Defence and the DHSS? We on the Public Accounts Committee have been assured that that wrangle will reach a satisfactory conclusion by 31 March. Has that same assurance been given to my right hon. Friend?

The Prime Minister: As my hon. Friend heard, 34,000 National Health Service in-patients are being treated by military hospitals, as are a lot of day patients and out-patients. I can assure my hon. Friend that health authorities are being encouraged to consider every possibility, including military hospitals, when putting in their bids for allocations from the waiting list fund. In view of my hon. Friend's question, I shall make further inquiries to ensure that what he wants is happening.

Engagements

Q2. **Mr. Nellist:** To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 14 January.

The Prime Minister: This morning I presided at a meeting of the Cabinet and had meetings with ministerial colleagues and others. In addition to my duties in the House I shall be having further meetings later today.

Mr. Nellist: With Matthew Collier critical, Matthew Mulhall and Adrian Woolford of Coventry still waiting,

when the parents of the 90 bairns in the Midlands desperately waiting for life-saving heart surgery come to London on Monday afternoon to present to No. 10 petitions with over 50,000 signatures, will the Prime Minister meet them personally, or will she be too frightened to explain to them which children will live and which will not?

The Prime Minister: I shall not meet them personally. [HON. MEMBERS: "Shame"] I remind the hon. Gentleman that that particular hospital was designated a supra-regional centre only in 1984, under a Tory Government, and since then over 560 open heart operations have been performed. There are vastly more open heart operations performed now than there used to be, and some 3,000 babies survive now who would not have survived eight years ago.

Q2. **Mr. Atkinson:** To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 14 January.

The Prime Minister: I refer my hon. Friend to the reply that I gave some moments ago.

Mr. Atkinson: Is my right hon. Friend aware that the first phase of the new Bournemouth general hospital in my constituency is due to be opened later this year? Is she also aware that that hospital was planned to be built 10 years ago but that, like so many others, it was a victim of Labour's incompetence in government, which brought the country to the brink of bankruptcy? Should we not be reminded more frequently of the chaos and cuts in the NHS under the Labour Government?

The Prime Minister: Yes. The Labour Government not only cut the capital programme for hospitals, but, as I have said, cut nurses' and doctors' pay in real terms. The NHS has expanded enormously under us, as has the capital programme, and the number of nurses, the number of patients treated, both in-patients and out-patients, and the number of treatments have gone up.

Mr. Kinnock: Will the Prime Minister tell us why she opposes the Protection of Official Information Bill of her hon. Friend the Member for Aldridge-Brownhills (Mr. Shepherd), or is it a secret?

The Prime Minister: For the reasons that have already been given in the House and elsewhere, because of the great complexity of the matter, because of the Government's responsibility for such matters and because we are considering a White Paper with a view to bringing forward a Bill. It is vital that this matter is dealt with by a Government measure.

Mr. Kinnock: Is not it obvious that the Prime Minister's case is weak and that is why she has to Whip? In any case, the Prime Minister knows very well that the full facilities of the Government could so easily be put at the disposal of the hon. Member for Aldridge-Brownhills as he takes the Bill through the House, so her excuses are absurd. When even her right hon. and hon. Friends describe her attitude to and tactics on the Bill as "monstrous", "dangerous", "a political SAS" and as the tactics of the gulag, is it not obvious that her response has nothing to do with state security, and everything to do with a shallow, spiteful and spurious attitude?

The Prime Minister: We believe that a private Member's Bill is not the appropriate way to secure changes in this difficult and sensitive area affecting the nation's security, especially when a revisionary Bill s section 2 of the Official Secrets Act started its jo the other place in 1979 but did not secure passag I remind the right hon. Gentleman that we need no in security from him.

Mr. Gardiner: Will my right hon. Friend today that the purpose of the National Health Service i further the interests or feather the nests of COH NUPE? Will she further confirm that the purpose tendering is to secure more resources for the Service to devote to patient care? Will she th condemn these foolish strikes?

The Prime Minister: I obviously confirm what m Friend has said. The purpose of the National Service is to bring more care to the patient. V enabling treatments to be brought to the patient were not available some years ago. We all regr strikes. They are strikes at the expense of the patien I hope they will be condemned on both sides of the

Q4. **Mr. James Lamond:** To ask the Prime Min she will list her official engagements for Thursd January.

The Prime Minister: I refer the hon. Gentleman reply that I gave some moments ago.

Mr. Lamond: Is the right hon. Lady aware th Manchester royal infirmary is facing its greatest cr 200 years? It is having to issue warnings to its emp that it may not be able to pay their wages. Why do continue to suggest that the only solution to this pr lies in increasing income tax, when she knows ver that her right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exch has billions of pounds in his pocket ready to be pai in income tax cuts? A fraction of those cuts placed disposal of the National Health Service would re fears from people, young and old, who are concerne the future.

The Prime Minister: My right hon. Friend has al made more resources available to the National H Service this year, and next year about £1·1 billion extr be made available out of the taxpayers' pocket. Next the average family will pay £1,600 to the National H Service. That is a considerable amount. We are tryi see that full value for money is obtained from that.

There are vast differences in efficiency bet hospitals and between the ways in which the mon used, and our duty is to get the best value for money of the resources that go into the Health Service.

Q5. **Mr. Harry Greenway:** To ask the Prime Min if she will list her official engagements for Thursda January.

The Prime Minister: I refer my hon. Friend to the r that I gave some moments ago.

Mr. Greenway: Will my right hon. Friend confirm the Conservative party remains the only party fir committed to the modernisation of the British nuc deterrent through Trident, given that the commitmen the Social and Liberal Democrats to that lasted all of th hours?

The Prime Minister: I confirm that we are fir committed to modernising the independent nucl

deterrent with Trident. For one fleeting moment, I thought that we might be joined by another party, but apparently, as soon as it had a policy, it withdrew it.

Mr. Salmond: Does the Prime Minister recall the pledges freely given by the Chancellor of the Exchequer to the House on 31 March 1982 on "Britoil's crucial independence"? When will those pledges be honoured?

The Prime Minister: My right hon. Friend the Chancellor made a statement this week on his attitude to using the golden share in Britoil. That statement stands.

Mr. Leigh: When my right hon. Friend next meets or talks to her colleagues who are Heads of European Governments and receives their congratulations on becoming the longest-serving Prime Minister this century, will she remind them, as diplomatically as only she knows how, that she would certainly not have remained Prime Minister for so long, or even have become Prime Minister, if she had proposed as loopy a suggestion as that we should tax the clothes we give our children, the books they read and the food that we give them to eat? Will she remind them that one would need to have monumental hubris to expect to survive in political life by proposing such measures?

The Prime Minister: I am grateful to my hon. Friend. The undertakings that we gave on this matter during the election — not putting VAT on food or children's clothing — stand in full, of course. Again, for one moment, I thought that another party might have a policy like that, but I quickly understood that it had not.

Q7. **Mr. Callaghan:** To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 14 January.

The Prime Minister: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the reply that I gave some moments ago.

Mr. Callaghan: Is the Prime Minister aware of the report last week that, under the 30-year rule, the file on Hugh Gaitskell had been embargoed? Does that have any connection with the allegation in "Spycatcher" that the former Leader of the Labour party was assassinated?

The Prime Minister: That file was withheld in accordance with rules which are understood by the whole House and in precise accordance with some of those rules. It has been withheld for those reasons. [HON. MEMBERS: "Why?"]

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. Devlin: During her busy day, will my right hon. Friend take time to consider the situation in my constituency? Does she agree that parents of children in Cleveland are no different from parents in any other part of the country and that consequently, although at the end of the inquiry we may take individual measures, we should seek to reform the law relating to children and parents generally?

The Prime Minister: I take note of the point made effectively by my hon. Friend.

Mr. Roy Hughes: To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 14 January.

The Prime Minister: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the reply that I gave some moments ago.

Mr. Hughes: Does the Prime Minister recall the famous words in which she suggested that the National Health Service was safe in her hands? In view of the perpetual crisis in the service over recent months and the tragic cases that have been highlighted in the press, will she now recognise that many people throughout the country believe that she has blood on those hands?

The Prime Minister: I am happy to inform the hon. Gentleman that for every five in-patient cases treated in 1979, six were treated this year. For every 10 out-patient cases, 11 have been treated this year. For every one heart bypass operation in 1978, there have been three this year. For every three hip replacement operations in 1978, there have been four this year. For every two cataract operations in 1978, there have been three this year. For every two cervical smear tests in 1978, there have been three this year. For every two chronic renal failure treatments in 1978, there have been five this year. That is a splendid record of success.

Business of the House

3.30 pm

Mr. Neil Kinnock (Islwyn): May I ask the Leader of the House to state the business for next week?

The Lord President of the Council and Leader of the House of Commons (Mr. John Wakeham): Yes, Sir. The business for next week will be as follows:

MONDAY 18 JANUARY—Second Reading of the Criminal Justice Bill *[Lords]*.

Motions on the Rate Support Grant (Scotland) (No. 3) Order and the Revaluation Rate-Rebates (Scotland) Order.

TUESDAY 19 JANUARY—Opposition Day (7th Allotted Day). There will be a debate on an Opposition motion entitled "The Current Crisis in the National Health Service".

Motions relating to Scottish rating and valuation regulations. Details will be given in the *Official Report*.

WEDNESDAY 20 JANUARY—Debate on motion to take note on the White Paper on the annual report on Hong Kong 1987 (Cm. 293).

Motion on the Food Protection (Emergency Prohibitions) Order

The Chairman of Ways and Means has named opposed private business for consideration at Seven o'clock.

THURSDAY 21 JANUARY — Second Reading of the Firearms (Amendment) Bill.

Remaining stages of the Duchy of Lancaster Bill.

FRIDAY 22 JANUARY—Private Members' Bills

MONDAY 25 JANUARY—Second Reading of the Regional Development Grants (Termination) Bill.

[Documents for debate on Tuesday 19 January:

Non-Domestic Rates and Community Charges (Timetable) (Scotland) Regulations 1987 (S.I., 1987, No. 2167); Abolition of Domestic Rates (Domestic and Part Residential Subjects) (Scotland) Regulations 1987 (S.I., 1987 No. 2179).]

Mr. Kinnock: I am grateful to the Leader of the House. I congratulate him on his additional appointment, although I am sure that all hon. Members will regret the reason why that additional office had been thrust upon him.

Now that the Secretary of State for Social Services has conceded to the presidents of the royal colleges that it is necessary to increase "total resources", to use the Secretary of State's words, and the efficiency of their use in the National Health Service, can we look forward to further candour from the right hon. Gentleman during the Opposition day on the Health Service next week? Can we look forward to, for instance, the announcement of further funds which are essential if hospitals are to clear the £70 million-worth of deficits which still remain in this financial year and which must be lifted if the next financial year is not to begin with another under-funding crisis in the NHS?

Yesterday the Secretary of State for the Environment confirmed in a written answer that he had asked the Nature Conservancy Council to examine the scope for the privatisation of the nation's natural reserves. May we now have an urgent debate on the Government's intentions towards conservation and the future of the national heritage? Clearly, nothing is safe from the Government's predatory instincts, not even our countryside.

Given that this week we have seen yet a further erosion of the Government's support for firms involved in high technology, may we have a statement on industrial research and development which w exactly how the Government propose that w assistance from innovation will somehow adv industries on which our future as a natio especially when our competitors are doing th and giving more support to their advanced ind

The House will have noticed the gravity of posed by the massive increase in illegal imports May we have a statement on what the Governm to do about this and whether they will recruit the customs staff that are estimated to be necessa with this murderous traffic?

Finally, will the Leader of the House now te the House will have an opportunity to debate the of the House of Commons? Can he also tell us w is willing to cast off his coyness and join those want this change and want it quickly?

Mr. Wakeham: First, I thank the right hon. G for his remarks at the beginning and say that I ar whole House is sad that Lord Whitelaw has hac from active politics. We all wish him a conti speedy recovery, which is going on at prese MEMBERS: "Hear, hear."]

With regard to the other matters that the ri Gentleman raised, of course the debate next w enable my right hon. Friend to make quite position regarding funding of the National Healt As I understand it, the meeting with senior gentlemen that took place yesterday was to discus that the increase in funding that had alrea announced was going to assist the NHS and co improve its record.

With regard to the Nature Conservancy Cou understand it too—but I will check the matter right hon. Friend — a period of consultati discussion is still going on, but I will see when is appropriate time to have a debate. It is obvious important matter that we shall have to come t House.

With regard to research and development pla not right for a statement to be given at the mom many of the issues raised are just the sort of issues, to you, Mr. Speaker, that could well be part of the on the Regional Development Grants (Terminati that will take place on 25 January.

On the question of cocaine and drugs generall certainly refer the matter to the Home Secretary have nothing to say at the moment.

I am sorry that I have not been able to announc the date of the televising debate, as I had intended but I can undertake to announce a date in my next b statement next week. I am anxious to have a debat time I said—around the end of the month. I thi the right hon. Gentleman will have to wait, if it is concern to him, for the views that I shall express day.

Sir Bernard Braine (Castle Point): The Leader House will know that the issues relating to aborti often emotive. I hope that he will agree that a Member's Bill that has secured time for debate Floor of the House will be enabled to be discusse for the House to arrive at a conclusion. I ask my righ Friend, therefore, whether he will give an under

that, if any attempt is made to prevent a proper debate on Friday week, he will ensure that the House is given an opportunity to reach a decision on this most grave and important matter?

Mr. Wakeham: I of course recognise my right hon. Friend's concern in the matter, although the point that he raises is hypothetical at present. I hope very much that it will not become a reality. However, I am sure that the House would wish to protect private Members' time if the chance to reach a decision on the Bill were threatened by the use of procedural devices.

Mr. Archy Kirkwood (Roxburgh and Berwickshire): Will the Leader of the House confirm that the announcement that he has made about the motions relating to Scottish rating and valuation on Tuesday night arises on a prayer that has been tabled in the name of my right hon. Friend and hon. Friends? If that is the case, may I warmly welcome the fact that these important regulations on poll tax implementation can be discussed? The opportunity to do so will be widely welcomed.

Has the Leader of the House yet had time to assimilate the results of the debate that we had only last night on the setting up of a Select Committee on Scottish Affairs? May we expect a statement and debate in the near future so that the Committee may be set up and start working on important issues north of the border?

Mr. Wakeham: I use the word "friend" with some care in these matters, but certainly the hon. Gentleman sitting on the hon. Member's left, the hon. Member for Orkney and Shetland (Mr. Wallace), wrote to me on these matters and I confirm that it was what I take to be the hon. Gentleman's hon. Friends who tabled this prayer that will be the subject of the debate next week.

As regards last night's debate, I was pleased to see the more flexible stance taken during the debate. The next thing is to read *Hansard* and see exactly what everyone's position is. Then we will decide how best to proceed from there.

Sir Anthony Grant (Cambridgeshire, South-West): Has my right hon. Friend had an opportunity to study early-day motion 372 in the name of my hon. Friend the Member for Wokingham (Mr. Redwood)?

[That this House believes that honourable and right honourable Members should keep their speeches to 10 minutes or less when requested by Mr. Speaker in order to give more backbench Members of all parties an opportunity to speak, excepting only the four principal speakers in each debate.]

Will he consider, in conjunction with Mr. Speaker, the possibility of reintroducing the experiment which was very successful in the last Parliament, because any restraint on the length of speeches by windbags, especially Privy Council windbags, would be very welcome?

Mr. Wakeham: I have a great deal of sympathy with my hon. Friend. The intention is to get agreement to change Standing Orders to make this a permanent feature, but it is one of a number of procedural changes that we are considering, and I will make progress as soon as I can.

Mr. Dick Douglas (Dunfermline, West): Will the Leader of the House reflect a little on what he said in reply to the hon. Member for Roxburgh and Berwickshire (Mr. Kirkwood) about the Select Committee on Scottish Affairs? Will he concede that the initiative lies in his hands and that, while the Committee of Selection cou theoretically take certain steps, he should take t initiative and put down a motion to get the Sele Committee established? Since Opposition Members ha shown flexibility, is it not his responsibility, in keepi with his duties as Leader of the House, to take t initiative and put down a motion as soon as possible?

Mr. Wakeham: I recognise that the Committee Selection is awaiting further guidance but, as I said to t hon. Member for Roxburgh and Berwickshire (M Kirkwood), I was pleased to see the flexible stance take by the hon. Member for Glasgow, Garscadden (M Dewar). If that had clearly been the Labour party positio earlier on, the Committee of Selection would not ha needed to report in the terms that it did. Once we ha studied last night's debate in *Hansard*, it will be a questio of proceeding to discussions.

Sir Ian Lloyd (Havant): My right hon. Friend will b aware that, in the exceptionally interesting and wid ranging paper on the reorganisation of the Department o Trade and Industry published yesterday, there is proposal that part of the Department should b restructured so that it could play a full part in assessing th contribution which science and technology could make t the economic success of the nation. Does my right hon Friend not agree that not only the DTI but also this Hous should have an opportunity to make such an assessment Is such an assessment not long overdue?

Mr. Wakeham: I agree with my hon. Friend tha discussions on matters of science and technology ar something for which he has been pressing me for som time. He puts it in a slightly different way, but I recognis the validity of his case. It is an important matter, but hope that my hon. Friend will also appreciate that at thi time in the Session there is a considerable amount o important Government business to deal with, so I canno offer him time for that in the immediate future. I will however, bear it in mind and, as soon as we have a bit mor scope, we will do something about it.

Mr. Jack Ashley (Stoke-on-Trent, South): Is the Leade of the House aware that the Cabinet papers just released under the 30-year rule show that, at the British nuclea tests in the Pacific, no high-level consideration was give to the safety of our service men, and the chiefs of staf admitted that they were dealing with an unknown quantity? As British nuclear test veterans have still received no compensation, could we have a debate on the matter as soon as possible?

Mr. Wakeham: I appreciate the right hon. Gentleman's concern, but I cannot promise him an early debate on the matter.

Mr. John Hannam (Exeter): My right hon. Friend will be aware of the Home Secretary's announcement that a White Paper on the reform of the Official Secrets Act will be produced in June. Can he assure the House that we shall have the opportunity of a full debate on this important subject before the summer recess?

Mr. Wakeham: Yes, I can confirm that my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary hopes to lay before Parliament in June a White Paper on the reform of section 2 of the Official Secrets Act, and I can assure my hon. Friend that the House will be given an opportunity to debate it before the summer recess.

Mr. David Winnick (Walsall, North): Is the Leader of the House aware of increasing concern that the Murdoch group is to take a larger stake in the Pearson group, so that the *Financial Times* could come under the control of Mr. Murdoch? Will the Leader of the House recognise that it would be completely wrong for that gentleman to own even more of the British press, and will he promise a statement early next week if necessary?

Mr. Wakeham: As the hon. Gentleman knows, clear rules are laid down governing mergers and takeovers of newspapers. I assure him that my right hon. and noble Friend the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry will conduct himself entirely in accordance with those rules and that a statement will be made if one is required.

Mr. Patrick Thompson (Norwich, North): Bearing in mind the request made by the Leader of the Opposition for an early debate on the televising of Parliament, does my right hon. Friend agree that the scant respect for the great traditions and values of the House of Commons shown by many Opposition Members will do nothing to advance the cause of an early debate or, indeed, of the televising of Parliament?

Mr. Wakeham: Regardless of whether it advances the cause of an early debate, it is certainly a factor that a number of my hon. Friends will want to consider in their deliberations on these matters.

Mr. James Lamond (Oldham, Central and Royton): Will the right hon. Gentleman keep in mind the fact that he is the Leader of the whole House, including Back Benchers? Does he realise that, if he is to keep the kind regard that many hon. Members have for him, he must be careful to prevent incidents such as the recent placing of a two-line Whip on the Felixstowe Dock and Railway Bill, which was a private measure, and of a three-line Whip against a private Member's Bill sponsored by one of his hon. Friends? In addition, he gave a rather curt reply to last night's debate—he has certainly softened a little this afternoon — which also infringed the rights of Back Benchers who want to be part of the Select Committee on Scottish Affairs. Such incidents do not build up the support that is necessary if the right hon. Gentleman is to follow in the great traditions of his predecessors.

Mr. Wakeham: I know that my immediate predecessor was a hard act to follow and I shall do my best to serve the House in all capacities. However, the hon. Gentleman has not got his facts right on the earlier matters to which he referred, and that rather devalues his contribution. Matters of whipping are not matters for me or matters for discussion. I had a very few minutes in which to reply to the debate last night. I believe that we had a useful and satisfactory debate and that the way in which I proceeded will meet with the general satisfaction of the House.

Mr. Robert Adley (Christchurch): Is my right hon. Friend aware that every year, immediately before our debate on Hong Kong — my right hon. Friend announced this year's debate today—the Hong Kong media seem to regard it as necessary to whip up massive expectations of world-shattering announcements about to be made by the British Government. Will he make it quite clear that this is a routine annual debate, albeit an important one, and anybody expecting dramatic announcements from the Government as a result of it is likely to be disappointed?

Mr. Wakeham: The debate is likely t
half of a normal sitting day. As I know
speech that my right hon. and learned Fr
Secretary will make, I do not know
announcements.

Mr. Frank Haynes (Ashfield): Is the
House aware—[AN HON. MEMBER: "Ca
up. I apologise, Mr. Speaker. Hundreds u
my constituents suffer from problems ca
subsidence and many of his hon. Frien
problems in their constituencies. The reas
Coal will not meet the costs of compensat
those properties but keeps wiping them t
the Leader of the House arrange for a debu
so that something can be done to help th

Mr. Wakeham: Matters of dispute with
primarily matters for its management. I sh
matter and if there is anything that my ri
the Secretary of State for Energy or I feel re
we shall see what can be done.

Mr. Keith Raffan (Delyn): My right h
be aware that the Welsh Affairs Select
decided to meet more frequently in Wale
into the possibility of the Welsh Gra
meeting in Wales—thus following the
Scottish Grand Committee, which meets
year at the Royal High school, Edinburg
can be more accessible to the Welsh peop

Mr. Wakeham: I do not have strong vi
matter, but all that I can recall is that the
Scottish Grand Committee cause me e
without adding to it. However, I shall s
done.

Mr. Alex Salmond (Banff and Buchan):
of the House allow time in the near future f
on the Government's golden share in Brit
House can determine whether it was
Chancellor of the Exchequer on 31 March
spoke of the golden share as being an effe
protecting Britoil's independence?

Mr. Wakeham: I do not have anything
the Chancellor of the Exchequer said in ans
notice question earlier this week. If the ma
debate, we shall consider that when the tim

Mr. Michael Fallon (Darlington): Does
Friend agree that it is hard enough to fin
going on in this place without the difficulties
non-appearance of the Order Paper in its pr
its haphazard distribution around the outb
he undertake to see whether the Order Paper
and Proceedings can be printed properly, in
and according to their normal schedule?

Mr. Wakeham: I recognise that there ha
difficulties—there were some today—and
my hon. Friend and the rest of the House fo
doing everything that we can to ensure tha
recur, and I shall report to the House if any
be said.

Mr. Max Madden (Bradford, West): Do
of the House understand that there is conside
in all parts of the House at reports that the
intend to abolish the rights of Members of

make representations directly to Ministers on immigration matters? Will he therefore arrange for an early statement from the Home Secretary so that he can be questioned on the Government's intentions in this matter? Will he ensure that the debate that is due to take place the week after next about the immigration rules is given sufficient time to enable all hon. Members to raise the issue of their ability to make representations directly to Ministers on immigration matters?

Mr. Wakeham: I can confirm that I shall be announcing a debate on these matters in my next business statement. That will be the occasion to deal with the points that the hon. Gentleman has raised. I shall ensure that there are discussions through the usual channels to ensure adequate time for that debate.

Mr. William Powell (Corby): When my right hon. Friend reflects on last night's debate about the setting up of the Select Committee on Scottish Affairs, will he bear in mind the two themes that emerged—that there should be such a Select Committee and that its conduct in the last Parliament was widely thought to be unsatisfactory? Is there not an obvious answer to the problem — the Committee of Selection should nominate only those hon. Members who do not serve Scottish constituencies?

Mr. Wakeham: My hon. Friend adds a novel twist to an already fairly complicated position.

Mr. Greville Janner (Leicester, West): When can we have a debate on the special needs of special schools such as Western Park school in my constituency, where the combination of the reductions in funds for education and for health have combined to make life extremely difficult for the people who are trying to care for those children and for the youngsters themselves, especially in physiotherapy?

Mr. Wakeham: Subject to you, Mr. Speaker, it seems that some of the points that the hon. Gentleman wishes to make could be made in the debate next week.

Mr. Eric Forth (Mid-Worcestershire): Has my right hon. Friend had time to consider the serious events in the Chamber on Monday? Is he aware that the hon. Member involved in the incident announced on radio the same day that, because of the short term of his suspension from the House, he proposes, if necessary and as he sees fit, to repeat the episode? Therefore, will my right hon. Friend allow an early debate on the procedures of the House, particularly on the disciplinary measures available to the Speaker, in order that any repetition of such an event is met with much more harsh discipline than was the case on Monday?

Mr. Wakeham: If there were a strong demand for a debate, I would look into it. The position was pretty clear earlier in the week, and I think all hon. Members hope that we do not have a repetition of that sort of thing.

Mr. Andrew Faulds (Warley, East): May I add my congratulations to the right hon. Gentleman, for whom I have had the warmest regard over many years, since we first travelled abroad together? I know him better than most. When can the right hon. Gentleman arrange that we should have a chance to debate foreign affairs again, because there are a number of very important issues that many of us would like to examine, such as the appalling conduct of the Israeli Government and its army in the middle east, the developments in central America and the continuing appalling situation in South Africa? I agree that these are all major matters that the should be considering fairly soon?

Mr. Wakeham: The high regard of which th Gentleman spoke is reciprocated, but that does no that I can find an extra day in an otherwise c programme in the next few weeks to debate foreign It is certainly an important subject and we will have a debate before long, but it will not be immediate future.

Mr. John Wheeler (Westminster, North): Does n hon. Friend agree that it is welcome news th Treasury will authorise the minting of a £2 coin nex Nonetheless, will he agree to a debate on the nature denominations of coins to be minted and issued a design to be imposed upon them?

Mr. Wakeham: A special tercentenary coin minted. I recognise that a debate on the subject more interesting and enlightening than some deba have, but I do not think that I can promise a deb that subject in the immediate future.

Mr. Alistair Darling (Edinburgh, Central): Wou Leader of the House find time to debate the patrona appointments by Ministers? I am thinking of the L health board, where appointments have been syste ally removed and replaced by card-carrying memb the Conservative party. When I was speaking to the in Edinburgh this morning, one of them openly sp himself as being an agent of the Minister. T unacceptable and cannot go on.

Mr. Wakeham: I obviously cannot comment o particular case the hon. Gentleman raises. My impre after a few years as Patronage Secretary, is that su candidates from whatever political party are hard t for many jobs in public life. It would be more constr for all of us to put forward suitable candidates th criticise those who put themselves forward for service.

Mr. Richard Holt (Langbaurgh): Will my right Friend, notwithstanding next week's Opposition deb the Health Service, seek to bring a Minister here to a statement on the current position over meningitis? is causing great anxiety and many hon. Member surprised that a Minister has not already come t Dispatch Box to air the Government's position o subject. Will my right hon. Friend look into it?

Mr. Wakeham: I certainly recognise that this impo subject is giving concern. I will refer the matter to my hon. Friend to see whether any statement woul appropriate.

Mr. Gerald Bermingham (St. Helens, South): Woul Leader of the House take time to persuade his right Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer to come to Dispatch Box, because today on two occasions a Trea Minister and the Prime Minister were pressed comments made in Europe by Lord Cockfield on extension of VAT? This afternoon we have rece assurances on fuel oils, children's clothes, food, and s but it is remarkable that we have not received such assurance on books and newspapers. Perhaps the Le of the House can persuade the Chancellor to reassur that there are no proposals to impose VAT on books newspapers.

Mr. Wakeham: I am grateful to the hon. Gentleman for his question. I assure him that I can deliver my right hon. Friend the Chancellor very shortly, but what he will say is a matter for him, not for me.

Mr. Phillip Oppenheim (Amber Valley): Could my right hon. Friend find time for a debate on the tremendous damage being done to democracy by the sight of the squalid squabbling among the various factions of the alliance? Is it not true that, when the alliance was formed, its members told us that they would promulgate a new type of consensus politics? Is it not becoming apparent that it is not consensus politics that they are pushing forward, but nonsense politics?

Mr. Wakeham: I shall not delve too far into those waters. I shall merely say that I understand that the squabbling is not about how to divide up the Short money.

Mr. Peter L. Pike (Burnley): Does the Leader of the House recognise that there is considerable concern about the possible extension of privatisation to the provision of leisure and recreation services by local authorities? Will he give the House an assurance that, if the Government are tempted to move in that direction, the subject will be fully debated in the House, and not sneaked through and added to the Local Government Bill by other means?

Mr. Wakeham: I have no doubt that any proposals from my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment would be well worthy of debate in the House, and that he would welcome an opportunity of explaining his views. However, I do not think that I can add anything to the answer that I gave to the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. David Nicholson (Taunton): Will my right hon. Friend consider finding time for a debate on the report from the Foreign Affairs Select Committee on cultural diplomacy? Is he aware of the concern on both sides of the House about the funding and the administration of the British Council, which is so important to our influence and our exports abroad?

Mr. Wakeham: That is an important matter, and the report by the Select Committee is also important. However, I am afraid that the pressure of time is such that I cannot offer any prospect of a debate in the immediate future.

Mr. Pat Wall (Bradford, North): As the Leader of the House has already said that changes are to be proposed in the rights of hon. Members to represent their constituents in immigration cases, can he ensure that a statement is made in the House next week — the week before the debate? This is yet another attack on the rights of hon. Members to represent their constituents.

Mr. Wakeham: I am not sure that the hon. Gentleman's analysis of the position is accurate. The reason that we are having a debate not next week but the week after is that that was found to be more convenient for both sides of the House.

Mr. Tony Marlow (Northampton, North): Following the very eloquent question from my hon. Friend the Member for Mid-Worcestershire (Mr. Forth), may I make a strong demand of my right hon. Friend that we should have a debate on that subject? My right hon. Friend will be aware that, on Monday, a hitherto totally unknown Member of the House, whom no one had clapped eyes on before, managed by appalling behavi ejected from the premises and projecte our television screens.

This bad behaviour is increasing. wants to be a martyr, there should penalty; a little risk; a little bit of pain be burnt at the stake on the Floor of the my right hon. Friend agree that at lea for the faggots, or even a box of mat suspended from the House in future, su his pay at the time when he is suspend

Mr. Wakeham: I recognise the str Friend's argument, and I would gues people think like him. However, I think would be controversial. It is a matter f as I have said, if there is a strong wish see what I can do. We should, howeve the fact that any hon. Member who h from the House is not relieved of al duties. Such matters, of course, would implications for you, Mr. Speaker.

Miss Marjorie Mowlam (Redcar): C the House clarify his response to a ques the hon. Member for Havant (Sir I. chance of an early debate on the Departm Industry? It is very important to interested in investing in the north-east, inward investment, to know what grant the future.

Mr. Wakeham: What I said was th many of the points of substance in the be debated on Monday, 29 January, Reading of the Regional Devel (Termination) Bill.

Mr. Patrick McLoughlin (Derbyshire, right hon. Friend find time next week, o future, for a debate on the conduct of lo Is he aware that Derbyshire county appointed Mr. Reg Race as its county dir in excess of £40,000, when his only qualifi seems to be that he is a former Lab Parliament? Does my right hon. Friend disgraceful and an abuse of local govern debate is forthcoming, should we n possibility of a Bill to outlaw such actio

Mr. Wakeham: I cannot promise immediate future. While I have no wish difficulties for Derbyshire, I am quite c Race is where he is.

Mr. Nigel Griffiths (Derbyshire, So Leader of the House give an early opportu to reform the planning legislation th developers to build on green belt, green fi field sites in Marchmont, Morningside and constituency, and on similar sites i constituencies up and down the country?

Mr. Wakeham: Obviously I do not have I shall certainly refer the matter to my learned Friend the Secretary of State for

Mr. Bill Walker (Tayside, North): Ha Friend noticed the growing tendency withi of the Scottish media to report matters

reported in England? If so, will he confirm that the matter can be debated in tomorrow's debate? If it is not raised tomorrow, will it be included in the Government's thinking in their White Paper on these sensitive and delicate matters?

Mr. Wakeham: What will or will not be in order in tomorrow's debate is not a matter for me. However, I should have thought that my hon. Friend, with the skill that he shows in such matters, might be able to make some of the points that he wants to make in principle.

Mr. Tam Dalyell (Linlithgow): Has the Leader of the House reflected on early-day motions 228, 253, 272, 273 and 286?

[That this House notes that in the book, Campaign, By Rodney Tyler, the Selling of the Prime Minister; from behind the doors of Downing Street and Conservative Central Office—A unique inside account of the Battle for Power, the author on page 1, chapter 1, paragraph 1, sentence 1, states 'It was an extraordinary turnaround in fortunes from the moment on 27th January 1986 when Mrs. Thatcher secretly confided to a close associate that she might have to resign . . .' and on page 3 that 'On the eve of the crucial Westland debate she herself felt shaky enough to doubt her future' though some around her later sought to dismiss this as late evening anxieties of the sort that had disappeared the following morning. It is certainly true that if Leon Brittan had chosen to, he could have brought her to the brink of downfall, by naming the real culprits inside Number 10. Instead, he chose to remain silent, and calls on the Prime Minister to give a full account of what transpired between 3rd January and 27th January 1986, at Number 10 Downing Street, in relation to the selectively leaked Law Officer's letter concerning the Westland Affair.]

[That this House notes that the Member for Aldershot on page 136 of his book Heseltine: the unauthorised Biography, states in relation to the Westland Affair that 'John Wakeham issued an order of the day which contained the trite, if effective message, that it was time for all good men to come to the aid of the party. We did.'; and calls on the Leader of the House, The Right Honourable Member for South Colchester and Maldon, to explain when he first knew the role of the then Trade and Industry Secretary, The Right Honourable Member for Richmond, Yorks, in the matter of the disclosure of a selectively leaked Law Officer's letter.]

[That this House notes that in his book Mrs. Thatcher's Revolution, published this week by Jonathan Cape and Co., Mr. Peter Jenkins writes, on page 200 'Brittan himself refused to enlighten the Select Committee on any point of substance. However, his is reputed to have told close friends subsequently that not only has she known perfectly well what had happened but that, on the day following the leak, had expressed her satisfaction to him at the way things had been handled. However at that time, the downfall of Heseltine had not been achieved . . . He (Mr. Brittan) might point the finger at her (Mrs. Thatcher). Potentially he now had the power to destroy her'; and calls on the Prime Minister to give the House a full account of her conversations with the then Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, the Right honourable Member for Richmond, Yorks, over the period from 3rd January and 27th January 1986, in relation to the selectively leaked Law Officer's letter concerning the Westland Affair.]

[That this House notes that in The Thatcher Years—A decade of Revolution in British Politics, published by BBC Books, Mr. John Cole, on page 170, cons selectively leaked Law Officer's letter in th Affair, writes 'why did he (Sir Robert Armstro her a quick interim report when he discovered t was an inside job, authorised by her Office? Wh Brittan not tell her? Or the private secretary co his chief, who sits in the same room? Or her pres And why did she never ask?'; and calls on the Prim to inform the House of the answers to these qu

[That this House notes that, in the book Honour—The Inside Story of the Westland Sc page 142, Magnus Linklater and David Leigh 'Instead, following Havers's complaint, she spok to Brittan about the leak. Although this is som Prime Minister has failed to disclose, to disbelief, the evidence comes from an authorita who told us: "The Prime Minister knew about th was pleased it had been done. There was a meetin Brittan and her after the complaint from Mayhew two of them were present . . . Brittan assumed s [the leak's] origins. You must draw your own co One of Brittan's friends adds, "Nobody though problem. The complaints were out of the public d any inquiry was expected to be a formality. Le worried at all about it."; and calls on the Prime M give a full account to the House of the meetin herself and Right honourable Member for Richmon referred to therein.]

In relation to what was said to my hon. F Member for Edinburgh, Central (Mr. Darling record that some of us have had nothing but court four Conservative Secretaries of State: Michae Jack Maclay, Gordon Campbell and, indeed, hon. Member for Ayr (Mr. Younger)? Howev have changed in Scotland, and Ministers now throw people off health boards and other Gov committees for the Secretary of State, which h happened before—good Labour people who hav well.

That is partly the reason why—uncharacter perhaps—for the first time ever, I have been questions about one of the right hon. Gen colleagues, the Under-Secretary of State for Sco the hon. Member for Edinburgh, West (Lord Douglas-Hamilton)—who, absolutely without pr announced that he had an interest in a very contr and contentious Bill: the Housing (Scotland) Bill. whether, on Monday of next week, it would be pr a statement to be made from the Government Fron —as the Selection Committee has put the ball Government's court—clarifying the role on the S Committee of a Minister who declares an interest i contentious legislation.

Is it proper that such a Minister should lead on, a major force in, such a controversial Bill? considered that he should remain on the Committee we have a statement on whether etiquette, and, I Government rules, have changed? This has happened before in my 25 years in the House.

Mr. Wakeham: I am only prepared to answer part of that question. In answer to the first part, nothing to add to what I have said earlier. My hon. the Under-Secretary himself raised his interests debate. He took the necessary steps to check whet

[Mr. Waketham]

was conducting himself in the best traditions of the House and ministerial practice, and I am sure that he is doing exactly that.

Mr. Jim Marshall (Leicester, South): Does the right hon. Gentleman recall that, before Christmas, I asked for an early statement about Government concern regarding job discrimination in Northern Ireland and that he gave an unfavourable reply? Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that, in view of the imminent election in the United States, American politicians are coming under increased pressure to support the MacBride principles and that that would lead to further reductions in investment and perhaps disinvestment in Northern Ireland? In view of that pressure, is the Minister now prepared to ensure an early statement from the Government so that American opinion can be reassured and so that we can have further investment in the Province and ensure higher employment levels there?

Mr. Waketham: This is obviously an important matter, and I referred it to my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State. My right hon. Friend and his colleagues spend a lot of time encouraging investment from the United States and other places. If they feel that a statement would be helpful on this matter, I am sure that they will want to make one.

Points of Or

4.10 pm

Mr. Max Madden (Bradford, W
order, Mr. Speaker. I wish to ra
concerning the proceedings of the St
the Immigration Bill. I gave notice o
this matter to the Chairman of the
the Chamber——

Mr. Speaker: Order. I must tell
that he is not able to raise that mat
also had notice of this point of ord
hon. Gentleman and the House that
May" clearly states:

"The opinion of the Speaker can
House about any matter arising or
committee".

The hon. Gentleman must make his
Ministers in the usual way. I cannot h
to raise on a point of order matter
Standing Committee.

Mr. Madden: Firther to that p
Speaker, and with great respect,
whether it would be in order for
expressing my concern about the
Committee continuing? In that way
opportunity to reflect on the matters
and consider whether any matter is a
consideration.

Mr. Speaker: I will certainly ac
cannot go beyond what I have said.
Standing Committee is not a matter

Mr. Tam Dalyell (Linlithgow): On a
Speaker. I would not have bothered
point of order if it had affected only
a distinguished retired civil servan

You may recall, Mr. Speaker, that
today to the Chancellor, I attributed a
Clucas, a former Permanent Secretary
of Trade and Industry. The h
Northampton, North (Mr. Marlow) w
said to the House—certainly in the h
hon. and learned Friend the Member fo
(Mr. Smith) among others—that tha
been leaked to me. Sir Kenneth Cluca
five years ago and there was no ques
leak. Sir Kenneth made the stateme
Minister had placed Sir Robert Arm
difficult position and that it was unethi
Secretary to embark on an inquiry to
answer before he started. That is the
Kenneth Clucas and it is wrong for the
Northampton, North to say that tha
leaked.

Mr. Speaker: I do not believe that t
me. I cannot be responsible for what h
provided they are in order.

Autumn Statement

4.14 pm

The Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Nigel Lawson): I beg to move,

That this House approves the Autumn Statement presented by Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer on 3rd November 1987; welcomes the prospect of continuing low inflation and steady growth as the basis for maintaining the trend of rising employment; and congratulates Her Majesty's Government on the continuing reduction in the share of national income pre-empted by public expenditure.

Mr. Speaker: I must tell the House that a large number of right hon. and hon. Members wish to take part in the debate—no fewer than eight Privy Councillors. I do not subscribe wholly to the way in which the hon. Member for Cambridgeshire, South-West (Sir A. Grant) put his question to the Leader of the House today, but I would say to the House, and to Privy Councillors, that short speeches should be the order of the day if we are to ensure that more Back Benchers can be called. The Chair has—as yet—no authority to limit speeches to 10 minutes, but if speeches take about that time most of those on the list will be called.

I announce to the House that I have selected the amendment in the name of the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Lawson: The Autumn Statement debate this year is a little later than it has been in previous years. Part of the reason was to allow the Treasury and Civil Service Select Committee, which was established only on 24 November, to prepare its report. I believe that that delay was also for the convenience of the Opposition. I sympathise with the Committee's frustration that it was not constituted sooner and I congratulate my right hon. Friend the Member for Worthing (Mr. Higgins) and his colleagues on producing their report as promptly as they did.

Mr. John Smith (Monklands, East): The right hon. Gentleman referred to the convenience of the Opposition. In case such ideas gain some currency, let me make it quite clear that we were asked whether we thought it would be a good idea for the Select Committee to report. We assented to that. That is the only way in which it was convenient to us and in that respect it was convenient to the Government and everyone else, so what is the Chancellor's point?

Mr. Lawson: I am glad that the right hon. and learned Gentleman agrees with what I said.

In my Budget statement last March I warned that:

"the biggest risk to the excellent prospect I have outlined is that of a downturn in the world economy as a whole. There are still serious imbalances afflicting the three major economies—the United States, on the one hand, and Japan and Germany on the other — which, if not handled properly, could lead to a simultaneous downturn in all three. And this in turn could be exaggerated by renewed turmoil in the foreign exchange markets, whose tendency to overshoot is as notorious as it is damaging."—[*Official Report*, 17 March 1987; Vol. 112, c. 817.]

Recent events have brought those concerns very much to the fore, and I therefore propose to devote most of my remarks today to the prospects for the world economy —not least because this may be my last opportunity to do so before this year's Budget statement, which, I can now tell the House, will be on 15 March. The important issue of public expenditure will, therefore, be dealt with by my right hon. Friend the Chief Secretary, w to wind up this debate, if he is fortunate, M catch your eye.

Mr. David Winnick (Walsall, North): Bef from the subject of public expenditure, whi is to be dealt with by his colleague, does th take on board the sort of feelings that have b up and down the country in the past few certainly in the past few weeks, which is th cash crisis in the National Health Service, choice between more money for the NH essential services or continuing tax cuts, it s former that has priority? Does the Chancel the strength of feeling, even among Conserv on that issue?

Mr. Lawson: When I appeared befor Committee on the Treasury and Civil Servic the hon. Gentleman is a member—I recall t had a discussion on that matter. I do not pr into that matter any further today because I directly about the world economy. My right the Chief Secretary will deal with public expe in particular, I am sure that he will deal with the course of his speech.

Mr. Nicholas Bennett (Pembroke): Does m Friend agree that, although the Governme income tax, tax yields have risen?

Mr. Lawson: That is quite correct.

Mr. Gerald Bermingham (St. Helens, Soutl

Mr. Lawson: I cannot give way again. I re few moments ago, Mr. Speaker pointed out t number of right hon. and hon. Members wish in the debate. I do not believe that it is fair o prolong my remarks by giving way more tha amount of times.

I presented my Autumn Statement to the H two weeks after the collapse of the world's sto that has come to be known as Black Apprehension about the prospects for the worl at that time was at its most acute. It was widel that the equity market collapse would inevitabl major world recession this year.

Two months on, it is easier to put the sharp stock market in October into some perspective. the scale and suddenness of the fall were unpr it has increasingly been seen as in large r correction, following the rapid rise in the ear 1987. In the three main markets—London, N and Tokyo—following the sharp falls in Octo prices have not fallen any further since the en month, and are at much the same levels as a yea impact on consumer spending — the so-calle effect"—should therefore be limited.

But a shock such as the stock market col readily damage business confidence quite sever of the major countries therefore acted promptly interest rates, both to deal with the immediate lack of liquidity and to sustain business confide sure that, in the circumstances of that time, that

A further reason why business confidence has pretty well intact is that all the economic published since October, so far from implying th recession is imminent, suggests that the world

[Mr. Lawson]

prior to the stock market collapse was in fact markedly stronger than had earlier been recognised. So any slowdown there may be this year will be from a pretty vigorous momentum of growth.

It is now clear that activity picked up markedly during the course of 1987. Taking the seven major industrialised countries as a whole, output in the third quarter of the year was more than 3 per cent. higher than a year earlier, with industrial production in October more than 4 per cent. up. In the United States, industrial production in the third quarter of 1987 was 5 per cent. up on a year earlier, and unemployment reached its lowest level since 1979. Japan, the world's second largest economy, which had earlier been a little sluggish, began to move ahead briskly, with industrial production at the latest count some 8 per cent. higher than a year ago. The United Kingdom, as I indicated in the Autumn Statement, looks to have enjoyed 4 per cent. growth over last year as a whole, with again the third quarter stronger than the first two. The Canadian economy, too, is buoyant. It is only the performance of continental Europe, and particularly Germany, which remains disappointing, though even there modest growth is continuing.

Thus, overall, world growth has been proving extremely robust. However, the serious imbalances in the world economy remain.

At the heart of those imbalances lies the huge structural budget deficit in the United States. That is particularly damaging, not just because of the enormous size of the United States economy, but because the Americans, with their low propensity to save, have proved wholly unable to finance the deficit entirely from domestic savings. This means, inevitably, that the United States requires large capital inflows from overseas, with the counterpart, so long as this state of affairs persists, of a large current account deficit.

For years, there were calls for the United States to reduce its budget deficit—except, I have to say, from the Opposition Front Bench, which urged us to emulate it. But not nearly enough progress was made, not least because of the difficulty of reaching any sort of agreement between the Administration and the Congress on how to go about it. Indeed, I was interested to see that President Reagan himself said earlier this week:

> "That deficit is an embarrassment and a shame—most dangerous, perhaps, because it signals the complete breakdown of one of the most basic functions of the United States Government."

There has now been some encouraging progress, with the legislation passed just before Christmas to reduce the deficit, relative to the level it would otherwise have been, by $30 billion for 1988 and $45 billion for 1989. But these steps, welcome though they are, will not be sufficient, by themselves, to reduce the deficit to a tolerable level.

It has been clear for some time that the reduction of the other set of imbalances—the current account imbalances—will depend on domestic demand in the United States growing more slowly than that in Japan and Germany for some years to come. One of the prime objectives of the major industrialised countries, meeting together in the Group of Seven, has been to achieve this in an orderly way. The United States action, and the decision of the German authorities to reduce their key discount rate from 3 per cent. to 2½ per cent., the lowest rate they have had since the war, are helpful steps, and paved the way for the G7 communiqué issued on 23 December.

That communiqué also re-emphasised the agreement to co-operate to foster exchange rate stability, following a period of turbulence on the foreign exchanges which had seen a further slide in the dollar.

Wild gyrations in exchange rates can create grave uncertainty and damage business confidence throughout the world. Companies in all countries find it more difficult to plan for the future, and have to spend precious time, money and ingenuity on insuring themselves against exchange rate risks, when they should be concentrating on the real job of improving company performance. That is one of the main reasons why the CBI, for example, has stressed the importance to its members of a stable exchange rate.

It is thus natural that countries should seek to act together to prevent excessive exchange rate volatility. Moreover, history has shown that a readiness by countries to commit themselves to some form of exchange rate stability is the only feasible way of securing wider international co-operation on economic policy.

Mr. Stuart Holland (Vauxhall): I am most grateful to the Chancellor for giving way. There is a paradox in what he is saying. He is talking about robust economic growth, which he is extrapolating from one quarter's figures for several countries, before the stock market crash. What are his comments on the OECD forecast for a slow-down in European OECD countries to 1·5 per cent. of GDP by 1989? Does he recognise that United States growth will have slowed down from about 3 per cent. a year in 1985 to not much more than 1·5 per cent. in 1989?

While exchange rate stability is an objective in itself, it is the volume effect on demand for United States exports that will be crucial. What action will the Chancellor take, with other Finance Ministers, to get spending going in the global economy, which is the real basis for the recovery of the United States' trade and payments deficit?

Mr. Lawson: Clearly I should not have given way to the hon. Gentleman.

Mr. Holland: Answer the question.

Mr. Lawson: As I have said on a number of occasions, there is likely to be some slowing down of world economic growth this year but it is a slowing down from a considerably higher level than was earlier recognised—the level in 1987. Far from there being any of the dangers that the hon. Member for Vauxhall (Mr. Holland) mentioned, the policies he advocates would simply lead to a resurgence of inflation.

If countries are indeed prepared to accept wholeheartedly the exchange rate commitments to which I was referring before that rather lengthy and inconsequential intervention, they will find themselves obliged to pursue domestic policies which are consistent with their exchange rate objectives. That applies most obviously to monetary policy, though fiscal policy also has a vital supporting role, particularly over the medium term. It is, however, an academic dream, divorced from reality, to imagine that sovereign states will be persuaded into consistent domestic policies simply by a process of careful international analysis and discussion.

Of course, countries may choose at any time to ignore the implications of the exchange rate arrangements they

have entered into. Sovereign states cannot, in the end, be required to take particular courses of action. But if they are not prepared to play their part in an agreement with the visible, measurable, objective of broad exchange rate stability, within a framework of low inflation—I stress the necessity of that framework — it is hopelessly unrealistic to imagine that a more general agreement on consistency of fiscal and monetary policy would stand any chance at all of working. Those who suggest otherwise are not living in the real world.

Let me be quite clear. I am not suggesting a return to anything like the rigid exchange rate system that applied under Bretton Woods, which contained the seeds of its own destruction. But I believe that there are clear advantages in a more managed approach designed to prevent the wild gyrations of recent years, particularly in the dollar, and in so doing achieving greater international co-operation in economic policy more generally.

The events of recent years underline the point. It is most unlikely that the heady rise in the dollar during 1984 would have taken place if there had been an exchange rate agreement at the time, and the United States authorities had thus been obliged to give greater weight to the external value of the dollar in the conduct of their monetary and fiscal policy. Had that been so, the imbalances that plague us today, and the protectionist threat that accompanies them, could never have developed to the extent that they have.

Since the United States became converted in 1985 to the desirability of co-operation on exchange rates, we have had the Plaza agreement in September 1985, designed to deal directly with the problem of dollar over-valuation, and over the following 15 months we saw an orderly, but substantial, depreciation. The Louvre accord, signed in February of last year, provided a period of broad stability, intended to allow the major economies to adjust to the massive exchange rate changes that had already taken place.

A number of commentators have seized on the decline in the dollar that has occurred since October to suggest that the Louvre accord was fundamentally flawed, and thus unsustainable, from the outset. I have to say that I disagree. As Paul Volcker observed in a speech in Geneva in November:

"The argument of some seems to be that the agreement sacrificed appropriate internal economic management to the requirements of a stable exchange rate. That seems to me a misreading of both the nature of the understanding and, more broadly, the need to accord the requirements of exchange rate stability more prominence in economic policy-making."

I was pleased to note, too, that the Select Committee said in its report—and I quote:

"give weight to ensuring reasonable stability of exchange rates which was the original intention of the Louvre agreement."

It is of course clear, and this is implicit in both the Plaza and Louvre agreements, that stability of exchange rates cannot be achieved simply by wishing that it were so. Appropriate domestic policies—fiscal and in particular monetary — are required. For a period, the Louvre accord brought the necessary results—stable exchange rates, greatly helped by the fact that interest rates in the United States rose, and those in Japan and Germany edged down.

What brought that period of stability to an end was the perception in the market that the Americans were no longer committed to the Louvre agreement, and were simply concerned to prevent any risk of domestic recession as they saw it. The markets were also aware that, after commendable progress in fiscal 1987, the United States looked unlikely to reduce its budget deficit for fiscal 1988 by anything like the extent agreed at the Louvre.

During November and December, therefore, the dollar appeared to be given little weight in United States policy, with the inevitable result of turmoil on the foreign exchanges, with the dollar falling and expected by many to fall further. Last week, however, the United States authorities demonstrated a renewed commitment to supporting the dollar, with the Federal Reserve bank intervening, in concert with other central banks, to a very much greater extent, and doing so in a deliberately public way. This ending of a brief but damaging phase of so-called benign neglect is a step in the right direction, but it is idle to suppose that official intervention on its own, even when it is co-ordinated internationally and involves full United States participation, amounts to a coherent policy.

But intervention is an important tactical weapon, and it would be foolish not to use it when appropriate. In our own case, it has helped us to achieve a remarkable degree of stability for sterling, particularly against the deutschmark — something that is widely welcomed by British industry — and in the process to build up our foreign exchange reserves to an adequate level.

The desire at the Louvre to allow time for the exchange rate changes to have their effect on trade imbalances is equally important now. The financial markets were perhaps surprisingly slow to wake up to the imbalances in the world economy, but when they did, they showed signs of impatience at the slowness of the adjustment.

In fact, important changes are taking place. Although the published United States trade deficit has shown very little improvement so far the volume figures have moved very substantially: for example, in the year to the third quarter of 1987, exports had risen by 15 per cent., whereas imports were up by only 6 per cent.

As many of us had warned, there was bound to be a lag before these developments fed through to the current account — the well known J-curve. Repeated dollar depreciations, so far from speeding up the adjustment of the current account, can only add to the length of the J-curve. This is particularly the case if, at the same time, domestic activity is not adequately reined back.

Looking forward to the prospects for 1988, it is clear that there remain very real risks in the outlook for the world economy. While there is no immediate prospect of recession, the substantial dollar depreciation could lead to serious inflationary pressures in the United States and there still remains the threat of creeping protectionism, which could at any time escalate into a trade war.

However, the current strength of the world economy, which I illustrated earlier, does give us a breathing space in which to get the world economy on to a more sustainable footing. Some of the necessary steps have already been taken, but more action needs to follow. We must get the right policies in place, and pursue them with patience and determination, because there are bound to be periods of difficulty which we shall have to ride out. Provided we can do that, although there may be some slowdown in world economic growth, I am confident we can avoid the twin dangers of inflation and recession.

Clearly, we in Britain cannot wholly insulate ourselves from developments overseas, and we should not imagine otherwise. But subject to those inevitable uncertainties, it is clear that the British economy is well placed to continue

[Mr. Lawson]

the excellent progress of recent years in spite of the problems faced by many other countries and the turbulence in the financial markets.

Dr. Jeremy Bray (Motherwell, South): The Chancellor has emphasised the importance of exchange rate stability and the dependence of exchange rates upon the fundamentals, but he has said that it is not realistic to expect different Governments to agree about wider economic matters within their domestic economies. Can he reconcile those three statements?

Mr. Lawson: Yes, indeed. This has been the lesson of history. What I said was that the wider co-operation that has occurred has been a result of the acceptance by the major countries of an external discipline. The gold standard was a good example; it operated successfully for a long time. That is the point which I was seeking to make, and am I sorry that the hon. Gentleman failed to understand it.

Britain's strength is clear to the OECD, which forecasts that in 1988 we shall once again be among the fastest growing of the major industrial nations. It is clear to the many thousands of companies from overseas which are coming to invest in Britain. It is clear to those who run industry—take, for example, the American chairman of British Oxygen, Mr. Richard Giordano, who said last year:

"In the last half dozen years, Britain has done a pretty good job. If I was a company having to set up in Europe, it is Britain I would choose."

And it is clear, of course, to the British people, as they demonstrated in the general election only eight months ago.

In fact, the strength of the economy is clear to everybody except to the Opposition. Their problem is that they are so wedded to living in the past that they cannot accept that the policies we are following, which are precisely the reverse of those they followed when they were in office, can possibly have led to the success we see around us.

When it became clear that growth in 1987 was moving well ahead of the already strong trend of the past five years, the Opposition put it down to a short-lived pre-election boom. I am sorry that the hon. Member for Dagenham (Mr. Gould) is not here. Being of New Zealand origin he may, I hope, have gone back to his native land to learn an excellent lesson from the policies being pursued by the Labour Government in New Zealand. They could certainly teach him a lot. Anyhow, last February he spoke of the

"irresponsible and profligate spending boom which the Chancellor hopes will sweep him to a general election victory".—[*Official Report*, 18 February 1987; Vol. 110, c. 942.]

I am glad that the Opposition accept that we had a sweeping victory. I have to tell the hon. Member for Dagenham and his hon. Friends that growth in the period since the general election has, if anything, been stronger than it was before the election, and further non-oil growth —less rapid than in 1987, but still in excess of anything ever achieved under the Labour Government — seems likely in 1988.

The Opposition put the alleged pre-election boom down to higher consumer spending. Again, they are barking up the wrong tree. Growth in 1987 was stronger than in 1986 precisely because investment growth pick up and exports increased more rapidly than in the previo year, in the aftermath of the oil price collapse.

The Opposition also claimed that this so-called p election boom would be instantly reversed. In the l Autumn Statement debate, which I looked at just befo coming to the Chamber, the right hon. Member f Birmingham, Sparkbrook (Mr. Hattersley) made one his justly notorious predictions:

"An election victory would be followed by a massi increase in taxation",

he alleged. He went on:

"There would be more public expenditure cuts."
[*Official Report*, 17 December 1986; Vol. 107, c. 1253.]

He has now had his answer on public expenditure in t clearest possible terms, with the substantial increas announced in the Autumn Statement. Whether he w right or wrong about taxation, of course, remains to seen, but he will only have to wait now for another tw months, until 15 March, for the massive increase taxation which he so confidently predicted, if indeed the is one.

Meanwhile, having warned of a dangerous boom, t Opposition have now reverted to their normal cry th higher borrowing and lower interest rates—an unlike combination, if ever there was one—are needed to sta off impending recession.

It was once said that Wall Street had correctly foreca 13 out of the last five recessions. The Opposition ha done even better, because they predicted recession in ea and every one of the last six years, and in each and eve case they have been wrong. The trouble is that all the o beliefs that they have clung to in spite of the accumulati evidence are being finally and definitively disproved. The believe that economic growth depends on ever high public spending, paid for by higher borrowing and high taxes, and on easy money. They should look at wh happened last year. Public borrowing, even leaving asi privatisation proceeds, looks like turning out at the lowe level since 1970-71. Interest rates, as the Oppositio themselves point out, are, if anything, a little above th international average, yet we have seen the stronge period of sustained growth since the war.

For some time the Opposition justified their attachme to higher borrowing by reference to the experience of th United States. The whole House, and certainly my ho Friends, will recall the right hon. Member the Leader o the Opposition urging the Government to borrow on massive scale and saying:

"They cannot even see the lesson of the United State economy when it is staring them in the face".—[*Offici Report*, 31 July 1984; Vol. 65, c. 236.]

It is now all too clear who got the wrong lesson. With hi unerring instinct for backing a loser, the right ho Member made the keystone of his party's economic polic what has turned out to be the Americans' undoing—a excessive budget deficit.

Right hon. and hon. Members of the Oppositio completely failed to appreciate the real reasons for th rapid creation of new jobs in the United States. The ignored the role played by the low tax burden. The ignored the importance of labour market flexibility an low wage increases, which contribute so much to the fac that unemployment in the United States is lower than i any major country in western Europe. They completel

failed to appreciate the importance of deregulation and of the enterprise economy. As usual they got the wrong end of every stick.

The short point is this. A successful economy cannot be created by the Government pumping in money. It depends on the performances of businesses and the individuals at all levels who work in them. That is what led to the outstanding performance in Britain in 1987. That is what has given us an upswing of unprecedented length, strength and steadiness. That is what enables us to look forward to the future with confidence.

The most telling example of the transformation in British industry is to be found in manufacturing. The Opposition, of course, always paint a gloomy picture of British manufacturing as an industry in terminal decline, in contrast with what they allege to have been a golden age under their stewardship. Nothing could be further from the truth, and I will give the figures for 1979.

The plain fact is that manufacturing output fell over Labour's period in office whereas during our whole period of office since 1979 it has risen. But the contrast goes far beyond that, because the underlying strength of British manufacturing industry has been transformed. Britain's manufacturers have increased their profitability for five years in succession, the best performance for a generation.

Does the right hon. and learned Member for Monklands, East (Mr. Smith) wish to intervene? He will have his chance in a moment, anyway.

Mr. John Smith: I thank the right hon. Gentleman for encouraging me to ask the obvious question. He said that he wanted to be judged by output. Can he tell us by how much manufacturing output has increased since 1979, after eight years of Conservative Government?

Mr. Lawson: The point that I am making is such a simple one that even the right hon. and learned Member ought to understand it. It is that during the whole of the Opposition's period of office manufacturing output fell, and during the whole of our period in office it has risen. That is clear to everybody, even the right hon. and learned Gentleman.

In the past, strong growth of the kind we have seen would undoubtedly have quickly fed through into much higher inflation. In fact, although prices in 1987 rose somewhat faster than in 1986, as the one-off benefit of the oil price fall was lost, inflation remained low throughout the year. At the same time unemployment fell rapidly. Today's figures—which I am sure the right hon. and learned Member for Monklands, East will want to welcome as soon as he gets up to speak—show that during 1987 as a whole the number of people out of work fell by more than half a million—the biggest fall on record, with the rate falling far faster than in any other major country over the same period.

In the Autumn Statement, I forecast that growth in 1988 would be 2¼ per cent. for the economy as a whole, with the non-oil economy growing at 3 per cent. I shall, of course, be making another forecast in the Budget and I do not intend to make one today. However, on the question of the non-oil economy, which is critical for new jobs, let me just say this. Growth of 3 per cent. for the non-oil economy in 1988, although slower than last year, would be a thoroughly creditable performance. The Labour Government never once achieved 3 per cent. growth, with or without oil. Indeed, it was only achieved once in the whole of the 1970s, yet we have achieved that rate of growth in four out of the last five years.

Keeping the economy on track involves keeping a constant watch on all the indicators of how the economy is developing and then taking action as necessary. I have never hesitated to act in the past when I have judged that there was a risk to our inflation objectives. I can assure the House that I shall not hesitate to do so in future. It is precisely by acting promptly that we have been able to avoid the need for drastic and destabilising lurches in policy. Our track record speaks for itself.

We enter 1988 with the British economy in good shape and the public finances sounder than at any time since the war. That is no coincidence. When we came to office in 1979 we gave the highest priority to restoring the public finances to a sound and sustainable condition. That is one of the rocks on which the new strength of the economy has been built. Thanks to that achievement, we have been able to choose to increase public spending, especially in priority areas, while continuing to reduce overall public spending as a share of gross domestic product. Unlike the Opposition when they were in office, we have been able to sustain our policy year in, year out.

The Opposition, of course, are brimful of ideas for spending ever higher amounts of the taxpayer's money, and no doubt we shall hear more of them today. The plain fact is that, had their policies been implemented, the money simply would not have been there in the first place. It was certainly not there in the 1970s, and it would not have been there in the 1980s either.

The Autumn Statement which we are debating today, my first in this Parliament, embodies the consistent strategy that we have been pursuing since 1979. I commend it to the House.

4.48 pm

Mr. John Smith (Monklands, East): I beg to move, to leave out from "House" to the end of the Question and to add instead thereof:

'regrets that the Autumn Statement fails to provide adequate resources for the vital public services and the people who need them, particularly the National Health Service which consequently faces further under-funding next year, and, despite a deteriorating situation in the balance of trade and balance of payments and unsettled international economic relationships, does not propose measures to strengthen manufacturing industry and science and technology, promote vigorous regional development, or significantly reduce unemployment'.

I suppose that it is not unusual for this Chancellor of the Exchequer to dodge the main issue in the debate, but we should remind him that the debate is about the Autumn Statement. Although it is interesting to hear his views on the world economy, and although it is important that we should discuss that matter, among other things, one would have expected a Chancellor of the Exchequer who had proposed the Autumn Statement — this is the first opportunity which the House has had formally to debate it—to defend and argue for the propositions contained in this crucial statement of the pattern of public expenditure. However, the Chancellor is fulfilling his promise that he would not say a word about it. He said that he would leave it to his right hon. Friend the Chief Secretary, who, of course, will be the last speaker in the debate, so there will be no opportunity for any hon. Member to hear the Government's views about the

[Mr. John Smith]

Autumn Statement until the wind-up speech. That does not seem to be the action of a Chancellor who is confident of his ability to defend the propositions that he put forward in his Autumn Statement.

Labour Members conceive their role to be slightly different. We shall probe the underlying issues in the Autumn Statement and invite the Government to defend some of the conclusions that emerged from it. However, before I do that, I have to comment on the fact that we have had to endure once again the commonplace of speeches by the Chancellor of the Exchequer that the British economy, under his beneficent stewardship, is in a condition of near perfection. If I exaggerate, it can be only slightly, because the Chancellor never misses an opportunity to say how difficult things are in the rest of the world but how well-managed they are here in the United Kingdom.

I have a purpose in making that statement. To put it mildly, the Chancellor's claim is a matter of dispute. A glance at the balance of trade figures, particularly the prognosis for the balance of payments, which, typically, the Chancellor once again ignored, would soon jolt back to reality anyone who might temporarily have succumbed to the public relations hype which the Government substitute for serious policy discussion and presentation.

To elucidate some of the important issues on the public expenditure front, let me, for the purposes of argument, if for nothing else, assume that the Government are correct in their claims for the economy. Let us assume that the economy is stong and that the nation is prosperous. Let us assume also that, as every economic commentator predicts, the Chancellor will, by 15 March—the ides of March—have £3 billion to £4 billion at his disposal. Some commentators put the amount higher than others, but all agree that that figure is roughly correct. It would be fair for the purposes of argument to proceed on that assumption.

Let us consider public expenditure in that context, particularly spending on the National Health Service. I hope that the House does not need to be reminded of the crisis in our Health Service. The Government's first response to the crisis was to deny that it existed. Day after day, particularly during and after questions to the Prime Minister, from about the time of the Autumn Statement until quite recently, there was an endless barrage of statistics from the Prime Minister. Most people waiting for treatment and their relatives who could not find treatment in our hospitals, particularly in the acute services, found those statistics pretty wildly irrelevant to their problems and to their circumstances. They were irrelevant to the fact that there were empty wards because there were no trained nurses available to staff them. They were irrelevant to children who had to wait for serious heart operations.

The Government's first attempt was to deny that the problem existed. That attempt was increasingly undermined as a position which they could defend, as medical and nursing professions, appalled at the crisis that they knew existed in the service and strongly supported by a public who rely uniquely on the National Health Service for the prevention and cure of illness and disease, the alleviation of avoidable pain and the moderation of disability, made it crystal clear that the Government's presentation of the condition of the National H Service was in stark contrast to the reality encounter hospital wards.

Let us take just one manifestation of that conce the protest by the heads of the three royal medical coll They spoke out against what they described as breakdown of acute hospital services and the almost collapse of morale in hospitals. Yesterday, they at las the Secretary of State for Social Services. At long last, months of the campaign, the Government have adm that there will be a need to increase the total reso available to the National Health Service. I hope that means that we shall have an amendment to the prop in the Autumn Statement. Nothing was said about the Chancellor of the Exchequer. We would find statement made by the Secretary of State for S Services to the heads of the royal medical colleges a more convincing if he came to the House of Comm today and explained the financial changes that Government are prepared to make, following assurances that they apparently gave to those se medical figures yesterday. We shall wait with interes hear the Chief Secretary spell out the increase in reso that the Government propose to make.

Let us accept that we have passed by the argument there is no need for more resources. Both sides of House agree that we urgently need more resources fo National Health Service.

Mr. Patrick Thompson (Norwich, North) *rose*—

Mr. Smith: I shall give way to the hon. Gentlema a moment.

This is where we come to the importance of assumptions about the economy. If the economy is str if the nation is prosperous, and if the Government hav billion at their disposal, what on earth is to stop t spending it on the National Health Service? We know it is not a matter of resources not being available political choice is being made and the Government calculating whether to spend the money on tax cuts o the National Health Service.

Mr. Patrick Thompson: Given the desire for an incr in resources, will the right hon. and learned Gentleman exactly how many extra resources he would raise increasing taxation?

Mr. Smith: On a visit to St. Thomas's hospital on few days ago, the Leader of the Opposition gave a g response to the question asked by the hon. Gentlem The first step that we recommend should be taken is the underfunding of the hospital services commented in the unanimous report of the Select Committee on So Services—underfunding which existed for four years to 1986 and which would cost about £1·3 bill equivalent to about 1p on income tax, according to ready reckoner attached to the Autumn Statemen should be made good. That is a clear and spe commitment well within the range of what is available the Government.

As the hon. Gentleman asked me a straight quest and I gave him a straight answer, will he put the s question to the Government? Has he any confidence he will get as specific and direct an answer as I suppli I suppose that the hon. Gentleman must have been am the Tory Members canvassed in an opinion poll a

months ago when the question was put to them: would they prefer the money to be spent on the National Health Service or given in tax cuts? A large majority of Conservative Members preferred tax cuts to spending on the National Health Service. I dare say that it might be more difficult to find hon. Members willing to admit that they accepted and defended that conclusion, after the events of the last few weeks, in view of the public concern about the National Health Service.

Mr. Phillip Oppenheim (Amber Valley) *rose——*

Mr. Smith: I shall give way to the hon. Gentleman as, almost certainly, he will want tax cuts rather than more spending on the National Health Service.

Mr. Oppenheim: Will the right hon. and learned Gentleman tell the House how much money would be needed to be put into the Health Service to ensure that anyone who could be treated was treated and that no one was kept waiting unnecessarily long for an operation? How much money would be needed to ensure that everyone could be treated, and how would he raise it?

Mr. Smith: It is a matter of great fascination to me that serious questions about funding the National Health Service are addressed to the Opposition and not to the Government. Even on the Conservative side of the House there is no belief in the sincerity of the Government's commitment to the National Health Service. Of course, enormous amounts of money could be spent on the National Health Service and Government after Government have said that they would always spend all the money that they would always want to spend on it, but we need to spend significantly more than the present Government are spending. A few months ago they told us that it did not need to be spent. They have been moved from that position by the outcry from the medical profession and the public. They have moved, but they have not yet moved financially. We have only about another £100 million on top of the several hundred million pounds of planned extra expenditure in the Autumn Statement and we have some way to go to obtain a better provision for the Health Service. But we now know that we shall be given the answer on 15 March when the Chancellor, who has £3 billion at his disposal, decides to spend the money either on the Health Service or on tax cuts. We shall then know clearly the Government's political priorities.

Part of the trouble about the Government's approach to public expenditure as a whole, and the NHS n particular, is that Ministers and Conservative Members have a less direct and personal contact with the public services than have the public whom they serve. We know that that is so in the case of the Health Service. When the Secretary of State for Social Services has to go into hospital, he goes into a private hospital. Many Conservative Members make use of the private education sector. But let them never forget that the vast majority of British people depend on public services for the standard of living and the quality of life that they enjoy.

It is disturbing that we are seeing the emergence of more rumblings from the Right wing of the Conservative party about changes in the NHS. I noticed in the press today that the hon. Member for Wokingham (Mr. Redwood), who is regarded as some sort of significant intellectual figure on the Conservative Back Benches and in whom the Prime Minister until quite recently reposed the special trust of employing him in her special advisory unit, has issued another pamphlet about reforming, as he calls it, the NHS —he is quite prolific in giving his views—in which he calls the Health Service a monster. Indeed, he goes further and calls it an untamable monster. He recommends various new devices for privatising the Health Service.

That is so far away from the ordinary person's perception of the value of the Health Service that I would not bother with it were it not for the fact that such Right-wing extravaganzas, particularly in the area of privatisation, become official Government policy a few years later. We have learnt at our peril to pay attention to them when they first appear. But on that, as on all other matters to do with public services, the underlying philosophy of the Government is that public expenditure is somehow intrinsically not worthwhile but private expenditure is. Anyone with any common sense knows perfectly well that, whether expenditure is in the public or private sector, it should be evaluated according to the economic or social good which it can achieve.

I am not foolish enough to argue that all public expenditure is good in itself. I deplore—I do not know whether I will take Conservative Members with me—the amount of money that we spend on social security as a result of the unemployment that has been caused by the Conservative party. That is a heavy burden on the shoulders of the British taxpayer. I am not sure—here I am sure that I take my hon. Friends with me in their entirety — that expenditure on Trident is the best example of public expenditure. Nor, I hope, would all Conservative Members argue that all private expenditure is necessarily good, although some have more chance than others to do that. A sensible person would take the view that we should look at the proposed public expenditure to see whether it achieves good economic and social purposes. Under this Government, some credit is always to be taken if either the total of public expenditure or the proportion of public expenditure as part of the national account is falling.

We do not take that view, because to do so implies that there is something undesirable about the public expenditure involved. In the case of the NHS, we have already had to point that out to the Government. It has taken some time to establish—I hope that we have done so—some change of priorities by the Government. But the idea is spread that the fact that the NHS is publicly organised somehow means that it will be less efficiently organised than it would be if it were organised on a private basis. I see Conservative Members nodding, which means that they would prefer the NHS to become a private system on the view that it would somehow be better administered.

I simply do not understand how Conservative Members can hold that view when they look at the private medical system in the United States. Not only are 36 million Americans not covered by the health care in that country, but the cost of administration and bureaucracy are breaking the back of the system. We know that our NHS has to allocate about 2·6 per cent. of its budget to administration. I am sure that everybody would want to reduce that figure as much as possible, because every pound that is released from administration can be spent on care. There should be no argument or dispute about that. We want an efficient and well-directed Health Service. But the proportion spent on insurance, on collection, on arbitration of disputes and on bureaucratic

[Mr. Smith]

organisation of the private health service in the United States is 5·3 per cent.—twice the cost of the NHS. So we argue that the NHS is not only social justice, but efficiency in action for the British people. That is why it is deeply rooted in their affections and interests. That is why the Government will have to retreat in the face of the outcry against the way in which they have handled it.

A similar approach runs through the whole of the Government's view on public expenditure. We see it not just in social expenditure but in public expenditure that is used to support the economy. I am thinking in particular of spending on science and technology, research and development, regional economic development, education and training. All need public expenditure, and that public expenditure is valuable capital investment in the British people and the future of our economy.

Let us look at the statement made earlier this week by the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry on the scrapping of regional development grant. In the usual way in which the Government go about their business we were told that that really does not mean much because in place of the automatic grant on which industry can rely at the moment in deciding whether to go to the north, south, west or east of the country, there is to be regional selective assistance. It is said that Ministers have made provision to spend as much by way of regional selective assistance as by way of regional development grant. We are invited to draw the conclusion that there has been no change in the objective of the policy, just a change in the means of achieving it.

There was what I can describe only as marked scepticism on the Opposition Benches at that presentation of the Government's policy. I doubt whether regional selective assistance will come remotely near the amount of money spent on regional development grants. The Government's fundamental purpose is to reduce the impact of regional economic policy, and certainly to reduce its cost. I see no signs of indignation on the faces of Ministers at that charge.

I think that I know how that will be achieved. It is typical of the Government's modus operandi to say that something has become selective and to manage matters so that the money will be reduced. Once something becomes selective, Ministers can refuse more applications than they grant. Then they will claim that expenditure has gone down because there has been less demand leading it forward.

We were given an interesting insight into the Government's approach by the way in which the Department of Trade and Industry administered the innovation and hi-tech investment grant. It was revealed in a memorandum circulated by Mr. Anthony Kesten, a senior official in the Department, and it came into the hands of one of my hon. Friends. It instructs officials on how to deal with applications for grants and says:

"As you may be aware, Ministers have decided that, as part of their continuing review of DTI support, they want a more critical view to be taken by officials of possible support for single company R and D."

It goes on to describe various schemes covered by the memorandum and then comes the interesting part:

"Ministers have said that, while companies should not be firmly discouraged from making applications, no attempt should be made to seek them out."

It goes on to list various ways in which compani to be encouraged:

"I should emphasise that Ministers do not se requirements as marking any change in policy essential that, in their day to day contacts with c case officers do not suggest otherwise."

The published guidelines remain and officials mu that they have been diverted from them, but ther fewer applications and it is the duty of officials sure that that happens. The document continues that when officials visit companies they should that there has been any change in policy. In ca any doubt about whether this is meant to applications are meant to fall as a result, a phr last part of the document says:

"Offers that have been made prior to toda affected by this instruction."

So this is an instruction from Ministers to offici Department to make a change of policy but not it to those who are affected by it, and to make fewer applications are granted. I can think of appropriate demonstration of the disreput deceitful techniques adopted by the Government revealed by this memorandum produced by the It would be useful if some Minister told us about stage.

The Chief Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. John If the right hon. and learned Gentleman bel memorandum was such a secret, perhaps he coul why this was announced in the DTI White Pape

Mr. Smith: The scheme has now been c abolished in the DTI White Paper, so we shall no bother with it. As the right hon. Gentleman kn existence of the memorandum was revealed b White Paper was published. The shadow Chief did us a public service by giving the memorandu newspapers before the Government published th Paper, so the Chief Secretary's excuse will not d

Does the Chief Secretary think that it is Ministers to give instructions to officials to pret a policy has not changed when it has? The fact Chief Secretary, perhaps prudently, remains in shows that he would find defending what I have c impossible in a decent and sensible Government. I am afraid, typical of what goes on.

The Government approach public expenditur fundamentally erroneous standpoint, both in value and economic analysis. The truth is th directed and targeted public expenditure has a cru to play in providing good social services and ach successful economic policy. If we do not invest i and technology, research and development and we cannot provide a base for long-term sustained particularly for industries at the leading technology, which are especially at risk no Government must know, because almost ever British industry knows, that the technological British industry is dangerously fragile. In c Chancellor believes that that is merely an inventio Opposition—he seems to think that every crit the Government comes from some deluded imagin the Opposition Benches—let me quote to *Financial Times* leader for 13 January. Toda January, so I am pretty up to date and cannot be of lack of topicality:

"British industry is still beset by many problems; productivity is between a half and a third lower than that of its competitors; private sector spending on R and D and training is low; few companies can claim to be world leaders in their sectors; the regional spread of industry is exceptionally uneven, with head offices, jobs and purchasing power concentrated in the south-east".

I do not wish to criticise British industry merely for the sake of it, but many people would regard that as an accurate statement of some of the problems facing British industry. What it says about technology and, even more so, about unbalanced regional development is certainly true.

Of course, the Prime Minister and other members of the Government constantly pretend that there is no north-south division in the country, but everyone else knows that there is. We know that we have unbalanced economic development. There is a danger that, to prevent overheating in the south, the brakes will be clamped on the economy and the north will find itself in even more difficulty because it has never even got going.

The misallocation of resources—especially of social resources—that results from this unbalanced economic development is large. It is having a dastardly effect on the regions. On any analysis of the British economic situation we discover that, as the *Financial Times* leader said, the reality is startlingly different from the complacent picture sketched by the Chancellor. If we read his own Autumn Statement carefully we discover that it predicts that growth will fall, inflation increase and the balance of payments deficit deteriorate.

The Chancellor does us no service by minimising the dangers that face the economy. Many of them arise from the short-term policies of recent years—stimulating a consumer boom for electoral considerations, for instance—which have generated an unsustainable economic growth and aggravated our balance of trade and balance of payments problems.

It is also true, as I think the Chancellor is willing to recognise, that some of our dangers stem from the dangerous disequilibrium in the world economy. He referred at some length to the international position. We recollect that after the events of Black Monday he promised us a meeting of G7 within a short time. He said that as soon as there was an accord with the United States there would be a meeting of the G7 Ministers. That was repeated throughout December but there was no meeting; the so-called telephone accord was scrambled together on 23 December—just before Christmas. It did not appear to have much useful effect in the markets. It does not look as if there will be a meeting of the G7 Ministers in January, either. It looks as if there will be no meeting at all.

It is difficult to believe, given the serious problems facing the world economy, that it is not imperative that the leading industrial nations get together to hammer out common policies to tackle these common problems.

We have three acute inter-linking problems—the enormous imbalance in world trade, the management of currency values and the international debt problem. In recent days there has been an intervention by the central banks—the Chancellor referred to it—to thwart the speculators who prey on movements in currencies. However, I am bound to observe that, while I am glad that that appears to have had some success, it might have been wiser, before the end of the year, to make sure that the United States was prepared to defend its currency before our reserves were swollen by dollars at what Treas officials conceded to the Select Committee was a probal loss of 10 per cent. due to the dollar's subsequent fall.

What action have the Governments of the G7 countr taken to deal with the trade imbalances? They may operating through their central banks to exert so influence on the exchange rates. Incidentally, Chancellor has travelled a long way from the days wh he said that exchange rates, like interest rates, were matt for the market. That was all we heard from 1979 to 198 He talks about consistency of policy—what a change move from the markets deciding these matters to manag floating. What on earth is managed floating if not roundabout system of intervention? It is a way in whi a person who did not previously believe in interventi comes to say that he is now in favour of it. The Chancell cannot say that he wants managed currencies, because wants to retain an element of floating, so now we have hybrid called managed floating—the Chancello contribution to the international economic dialogue. It a little imprecise, as one would expect from the author the phrase. It is not clear how it will work or wheth anyone agrees with it, but it is the Chancello contribution. I suppose that we should welcome any sig of his repentance and of his having at least moved aw from the rather arid free-market, non-interventioni doctrines that he preached to the House, in the name consistency, from 1979 to the early 1980s.

We must concert the economic policies of the maj countries that are in difficulties. It is all very well for t Chancellor to wring his hands and say that it is academic dream to think that countries will be able concert their domestic economic policies—that was wh he said in his speech. It is also an academic dream to thin that free markets can solve all the relationships betwe countries. As far as I can see, that is a much mo academic, and certainly a much more dreamlike, way approaching the situation than attempting, by persuasio diplomacy and patient efforts, to encourage oth countries to bring their policies more in line with eac other or, at least, to run them in such a way that they d not conflict with the common interest of economi stability.

If the United States unwinds its trade deficit too quickl —the Chancellor referred only to the budget deficit; h did not deal with the trade deficit—the danger is tha there will be trouble, not only for the system, but mo especially for those who trade with the United States. I we are to avoid the recessionary perils and the downtur in world economic activity that might lie in store, we nee an expansion in the economies of Western Europe an Japan. It is true that there has been some expansion i Japan. However, it appears that, if anything, Wes Germany is moving in a more restrictive direction, if recen statements by the Finance Minister and the Chancellor o the Federal Republic are to be fulfilled.

Our Chancellor may say that others are not behavin as they should. He was happy to berate the United State in his Mansion House speech and did so a little today Criticism has been directed heavily against that quarter but West Germany is now appearing as a co-defendant i the Chancellor of the Exchequer's dock.

I cannot help but observe that the United States larg trade deficit was the basis of a great deal of the British exports, without which our trade balance would look ever worse than it does today. Therefore, it would be mor

[Mr. Smith]

fitting if the Chancellor gave at least a nod in that direction when he feels that he must criticise the United States so vigorously.

Are we not told by the Government, who find it difficult to persuade other countries to concert their policies, that Britain has a new importance in the world and that unlike previous years, when, it is said, we were not regarded as an important country, we now walk the world's stage with a new-found self-confidence which is based on the Government's vigorous economic policies? If that is so, why does nobody else in the world appear to listen to the Chancellor?

The Chancellor could usefully spend some time with his colleagues, the Finance Ministers of the other G7 countries, in preparing a joint approach to tackle those problems. They should work hard at what is perhaps the difficult work of concerting their policies and they should start as soon as possible. They should not, of course, put the international debt problem to one side. Although there has been some movement regarding Mexico, little international attention has been paid to the problem.

I am prepared to be generous to the Chancellor and accept that his proposals for the sub-Saharan situation should be welcomed. Indeed, they are certainly supported by Opposition Members. However, he has not persuaded anyone else about them and has certainly not yet persuaded the United States. The international debt problem must be tackled with much more vigour by the leading industrial countries and must be given a much higher place of importance on the international agenda.

Mr. Tim Yeo (Suffolk, South): The right hon. and learned Gentleman has tried to have some cheap fun at the Government's expense over the description of managed floating. Will he be specific on one point and add to his welcome for managed floating a welcome for the present exchange rates that that policy has achieved? If not, will he tell us precisely at what exchange rate his party thinks that the Government should now aim?

Mr. Smith: I do not think that it was cheap to comment on the Chancellor of the Exchequer's and the Government's development of thinking since 1979. That seems essential background for understanding some of the things that he said today. I would take the hon. Gentleman's criticism a little more seriously if he could point out any inaccuracies in what I have said. However, I have described accurately the way in which we have moved from non-intervention to intervention in an elliptical manner.

The exchange rate at any particular time is a matter of judgment. One must especially take into account the effect on industry in this country. I fear that the Chancellor is excessively nervous about interest rates because he is not confident about inflation in this country. That is why he turned down the CBI's request to reduce interest rates. I am flattered that the hon. Member for Suffolk, South (Mr. Yeo) should be so anxious to find out the detail of the policy from the Opposition. That is a welcome development. Conservative Members are finding it hard to obtain answers from Ministers, so I encourage them to ask for answers from the Opposition.

I should like to turn — *[Interruption.]* Well, the experts on turning are on the Conservative, not the Opposition, Benches. The hon. Member for Tatton (Mr. Hamilton) is as yet unconverted. He is st monetarist, which is why he is not on the Tr He would have to change his position to Treasury Bench.

To achieve some change in internatio Government would need to see our position The trouble is that they are suffocated by a satisfied complacency and self-congratul prevents the development of an alternative present chaotic state of affairs.

That sense of complacency obscures an a the real problems and dangers that lie ahead economy. The Chancellor knows perfec inflation is likely to increase. Indeed, Statement predicts that it will increase, whic so nervous about interest rates. He productivity growth is likely to slacken a unlikely to be sustained by the sort of supply of support for science and technology, development, investment in manufacturing so on, for which the Labour party argues b not be followed by the Conservative party.

The Chancellor knows that an economic founded on a massive extension of consumer on shaky foundations. He knows that all pred world growth head downwards. Indeed, they downwards even before Black Monday and be revised downwards even further as diminish. In that situation—*[Interruption.]* the facts that are set out for us by the Org Economic Co-operation and Development, the World Bank and, indeed, by all who con international economic situation. I advise Members that it is extremely instructive to publications to discover what it says abou economy and to compare that with what Government say and, even more, with wha press says about the British economy. One think that one was looking at the s circumstances.

A wise Chancellor would face the problem adapt his policies to meet it. Let me give th some advice—*[Interruption.]* I am not arg Government being consistent; I am trying to policies. My whole purpose in life is to Government's policies. I welcome the chan but wish that they were more sincere and bett Indeed, I am hoping for greater things. I sh almost entirely on hope in that respect during or two.

We know that there are difficulties and it avoid considering them. I should like Chancellor one or two pieces of advice, espe inflation. He should now announce the aban the foolish privatisation of the electricity and industries. I have an unconfident hope that he learnt something from the privatisatio Government's share of British Petroleum. It d a triumph to have managed the trans predominant share in Britain's greatest cor British national ownership to Kuwaiti nationa Had that been advertised as the likely outc operation, there might have been fewer bra display and fewer commandos scaling City offi

the day of the issue. Indeed, it might have been more appropriate to have had a courtesy detachment of the Kuwaiti national guard at BP's front door.

However, despite the warnings of that experience, the Government appear to wish to press on with privatisation. If the Chancellor is serious about controlling inflation, I say to him, "Please avoid imposing that extra 15 per cent. on the cost of electricity in two years to fatten up the books for privatisation; relieve British industry and British consumers of an extra £500 million which does not need to be put on their backs." All he needs to do that is to swallow his pride and to change his policy.

As the Chancellor considers his Budget in the next week or two, I hope he will heed the advice that has apparently been given to him by his own advisers, which is that to proceed with tax cuts would be highly irresponsible in Britain's present circumstances.

I will quote from the *Daily Telegraph*—it is hardly irresponsible if it is in that newspaper. I believe that the Chancellor once contributed to the City page of that newspaper or one of its sister journals. On 24 December 1987 it was reported:

> "A row has broken out between the Chancellor, Mr. Lawson, and his senior Treasury advisers over the wisdom of cutting taxes in the next Budget against the rapid deterioration in Britain's overseas payments position . . . Sir Terry Burns, chief economic adviser at the Treasury, is understood to be leading the revolt against a tax-cutting Budget."

We all wish him luck.

Apart from being a wrong decision on priorities in relation to public expenditure, tax cuts would feed straight through into increased consumer expenditure, particularly in the more prosperous areas, and increase overheating of parts of the economy, exaggerating regional imbalances and, above all, adding a further twist to the increasing balance of payments deficit. If the resources were used instead in prudent and well-directed increases in public expenditure, we could achieve an improvement in services, real help for our struggling regions and better foundations for long-lasting industrial success and avoid an aggravation of our most serious economic problem, which is the balance of payments.

The Chancellor constantly ignores the balance of trade and the balance of payments difficulties, but they will be the most serious constraints on the management of the British economy in the difficult years that lie ahead. I believe that it would profit the Chancellor and the Government much more to take these challenges, problems and difficulties more seriously. I ask the Chancellor to tell the House and the nation how the Government propose that we should overcome them. But to do that would mean abandoning their outlook and some of their prejudices. They would have to change some of their objectives. I hope that that will come about, although I am not confident about it. The Autumn Statement gives us no evidence that it will.

We know from our campaign on the Health Service that, however reluctantly, we have moved the Government. I can assure them that on this cause and some others we will fight and fight again to save the services that we love.

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Mr. Harold Walker): Order. May I repeat Mr. Speaker's plea for brief speeches.

5.36 pm

Mr. John Biffen (Shropshire, North): The debate Autumn Statement is traditionally a wide-r economic debate, as we were reminded by my righ Friend the Chancellor when he used it as an occas consider the world economy. We know that my righ Friend the Chief Secretary to the Treasury will be w up on the contentious issues of public spending, should like to direct these remarks mainly to him.

Before I do so, may I say this about the economy generally. We are holding the debate against a backg of a quite remarkably successful record of eco management, which has persisted through characteristic acts of Government. The Chancell been twitted for having adjusted his policies in times. All I can say is that wise and prudent cont economic affairs requires that degree of flexibility. all, it means a commitment to an underlying theme, we have inherited and executed since 1979 to bring greater monetary stability and expansion of owne and broadly speaking to create for this country a market economy that could perform for us what has performed for our continental neighbours in circumstances. Much of what we have achieved testimony to that degree of resolution.

I should like to make two points to the House. I that I shall not detain hon. Members beyond the indicated by you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. The first of relates to the search for more effective qualitativ quantitative control of public spending, and the s relates to the social and political priorities revealed spending plans of the Autumn Statement. A searc more refined control of public spending has al elements of the quest for the holy grail. It has preocc and detained politicians for generation after genera

Little short of 30 years ago we had what was, I sup a seminal contribution from the Plowden report on p expenditure. I suspect that that has been largely forg in subsequent comments, reports and inquests, and i in the setting up of institutions; a more recent one, pe the most colourful of them, is the "Star Chamber". appropriate here that I should pay tribute to Whitelaw, for no man could have presided over suc institution with such genial effectiveness.

But at the end of the day, there is no doubt wha that the execution of public spending, the determini its totality, and the identification of priorities are ma that require political will, skill and authority; for it is and the interplay of those factors, which is finally effe

Although I was much rewarded by reading the r of the Treasury and Civil Service Select Committee, it said:

> "Our predecessors in 1984 said that they had increasingly concerned 'that the mechanism for determ public expenditure priorities, which produces the results Autumn Statement, is not working as well as it should' I have to tell it that that has all the virginal innocen the Social Democratic and Liberal policy document shall always live without that delicate reality of ha found a truly objective way in which public expenditu interpreted. No, it is a political process.

One of the values of our debate this afternoon is it is a process in which the House of Commons can We have the Autumn Statement figures; but we are here just to underwrite them and say that they are a s judgments that have been carried out by the Exec

[Mr. John Biffen]

which command our deferential respect. Politics is not like that. It is a continuing process. Only a few weeks ago, £100 million came forward for the Health Service. That expenditure was determined in the context of a proper and continuing debate, in which this Chamber plays a part.

With that reflection, I would like to make a few further remarks about our health spending. Already, this debate is being given a more reflective nature, and that is to be welcomed. My hon. Friend the Member for Wokingham (Mr. Redwood), who has been referred to already this afternoon, has produced a pamphlet pointing out some of the changes that would be appropriate in our approach to providing health services for the nation. It is not simply a question of adding money to the existing structures. That is the short term and immediate challenge, but there is a wider discipline which, unless we recognise and acknowledge it, invalidates calls merely for more money in present circumstances.

I should like to say to my right hon. and hon. Friends, and indeed to the House generally, that it is 40 years since Aneurin Bevan obtained his political immortality with his National Health Service legislation. Any discussion on this topic will always be inspired by the principles that preoccupied his life. But, 40 years on, this is an occasion not just for a memorial service, but for real consideration of factors that begin to affect the whole funding of National Health Service provision in this country.

I should like to put before the House five immediate considerations that I should like to detain some body—perhaps not as ambitious as a Royal Commission, but some study group within Government that would be the precursor for producing a discussion document upon which policy changes could proceed.

First, we have to ask ourselves whether the great increase in personal disposable income has affected the original argument about the extent to which one could look to an element of state managed insurance, as opposed to direct Treasury funding. Secondly, we have to assess and anticipate the demands made upon the service by the changing age structure of our society. Thirdly, the resource implications of changing medical technology have to be further assessed. That factor is of accelerating importance. Then we have to consider the relevance of the present random application of charges. The power to make charges was a very early strain upon the political circumstances of the service. Indeed, it helped in the resignation of Aneurin Bevan. What we have learnt since then is that they have become very much an integral part, albeit modest, of the application of the National Health Service.

Mr. Eric Heffer (Liverpool, Walton): Will the right hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Biffen: No, I am trying to proceed within the times imposed. I am sorry, because I enjoy debate.

Then there is the undoubted growth of private medical insurance. It is something that we can trace and it is inspired very substantially by group membership of employees, whether trade union members or not; it is very much an employee-dominated expansion.

So let us consider those five principles and make a calm and reflective judgment about what is possibly a more appropriate system of funding for the future than the one we now have. Thereafter, we are likely to be able to say what institutional changes, if any, are ne
believe that we approach this problen
identifying, all too often, an institutional
of the guilt transfer mechanism, blami
authorities and so on. It is the other way
get funding more appropriately settled, we
get our institutional arrangements correct.

If I apologise to the hon. Member
Walton (Mr. Heffer), I will at least throw
conciliation to Opposition Members. I am
for sustenance from my own mild prejudic
able to find it in "A Fabian Submission"
prepared by David Lipsey and approved b
committee of the Fabian Society:

"In welfare provision, we need to a
substantial role for the voluntary sector, as v
local provision".

I am prepared to accept that as the broa
which to try to operate, so that we can see
National Health reform, if not in this Parlia
soon thereafter.

There is no way in which we can escape t
untrammelled operation of the National
gives rise to intolerable expenditure. A
accustomed to think that defence spending
to the admirals or the generals. In these
technology, the potential for limitless expe
daunting. The House has recognised that, o
National Health Service. In the last Parlia
a good deal of time and emotional energy t
a system——

Mr. Heffer: Will the right hon. Gentlen

Mr. Biffen: No, I am sorry, I will not g
—trying to devise a system of setting
pharmaceutical prescriptions so that the
balance between the pharmaceutical comp
consuming public, as reflected in the prescr
the medical profession. Although clinical fre
concept in the operation of the health servic
set alongside cost considerations no less tha
of our expenditure.

I have sought to show that I do not tak
approach to the question of medical
expenditures, that of merely looking a
expenditures and saying that they are in
must operate against a prospect of reform
But for the immediate future, there is no
public will be convinced that bed closures,
or hospital closures are consistent with an ac
Service, even if the number of operations a
of expenditure are at record levels. In the sh
is no alternative to a further enhancement
upon the Health Service.

We read that my right hon. Friend th
State for Health and Social Services has see
three royal colleges and that they are reasc
by their discussions. They say that he told
would go back and discuss health spen
colleagues. He will not be discussing with t
Agriculture; he will be discussing his dile
challenge with my right hon. Friend the Ch
Exchequer. It is absolutely essential, for t
relief of the situation that now exists in the H
and if we are to have any political initiative

wider reforms which are essential, to have a clear transfer of further moneys over and above what is contained in the Autumn Statement.

It is not the task of hon. Members to engage in detailed judgments, and I do not intend to do so at all, but I say to my right hon. Friend that whatever sum is chosen is bound to be related to the total resources that he has available for tax changes and tax reductions. I hope that at least the equivalent of between 1p and 2p of tax change on the direct rate will be available for the Health Service; that is the kind of change necessary to re-secure an initiative in this situation.

There is no question whatever that a reformed and vital Health Service and social services are not an overhead, not an incubus upon the productive economy, but a natural partnership for an economy based upon the social market principles which have sustained this party and this economy so well.

5.46 pm

Mr. Robert Sheldon (Ashton-under-Lyne): The House will have heard with great interest the doctrine put forward by the right hon. Member for Shropshire, North (Mr. Biffen) on the position of the Health Service. Although we would certainly disagree on a number of details, there can be no question of the importance attached to it in this debate by my right hon. and learned Friend the Member for Monklands, East (Mr. Smith) as well as by the right hon. Member for Shropshire, North. They have illustrated its importance both for the future of the Government and for the way in which the Government regard their public expenditure.

We must hope for changes from the Chancellor of the Exchequer because one thing is clear — he is a great learner. He has learnt a great deal in the past eight years during which he has been involved in the management of this country's economy, as Financial Secretary to the Treasury, later in the Department of Energy and more recently as Chancellor, and the House should recognise it and pay some sort of tribute to him for it as well. We must remember that when he started his work on behalf of the Government in financial and economic matters he believed that the markets were able to decide these matters with a degree of perfection which he has now come to understand is not available to it.

As we all know—although there is no point in going into these matters in great detail at this remove in time —he believed in the sanctity of M3 and the monetarist position, and he believed too that these great lessons that had been taught by what he considered to be the mismanagement of the 1970s would be put right in the 1980s. Now he understands that markets, although they may finally decide a number of issues, are, as he put it himself, frequently in a position to overshoot, and that those who look for fundamental causes in the making of their decisions in markets are not likely to do very well in their market operations. The proper success of market operations lies all too frequently in determining the behaviour of other market operators rather than determining the fundamental causes themselves. That is the weakness of markets, and the Chancellor now understands the weakness of markets and the way in which they can fluctuate around any particular norm.

He took those kinds of lessons to the Plaza agreement and used them in the context of the Louvre accord, and they were valuable in helping him understand the way in which Finance Ministers can co-operate to a limite in bringing about a level of the pound, of the dolla deutschmark, of the yen that is in line with lo prospects.

The realisation of the importance of these mat the learning process, however, are not at an end. thing that the Chancellor of the Exchequer needs is the importance of manufacturing industry. As exports — the oil industry is one of the facto distort our trading economy — become less a important and we are able to obtain fewer resourc oil, the role of manufacturing industry will beco more important. I welcome the greater attention Chancellor is giving to the manufacturing in Nowadays he frequently mentions improvem manufacturing industry. The past year's impro have been improvements on a very poor level inc is evidenced by our experience in our constituenc they are improvements nevertheless. We can onl that we shall make up some of the ground lost d past eight years.

Perhaps I should draw attention to the report Treasury and Civil Service Committee and pay tri the Committee—as I usually try to and as we all — for producing its report quickly and in circumstances. Although the Committee's conclusi not unanimous, the analysis is especially useful to list of specialist advisers is also impressive. experience—indeed, in the experience of all tho have served on the Select Committee — advis prepared to undertake work at inconvenient times inadequate reward. The Select Committee can stil the finest advice available and that is cau congratulation. We have people outside the Gove machine who are prepared to give advice compar the advice that the Chancellor received in although not in detail. I note sadly the absence agreed report. I know that the report clearly sets different views, but these can often be obtained variety of academic, economic and journalistic sou is most valuable when a Select Committee puts a partial affections and tries to put suggestions to the to overcome some of the differences that exist a matters in a different context. A Select Committe only body that can do that and, if it does not, it is in an important objective.

The Chancellor spent most of his time unwisely, although I would have preferred t something more on public expenditure — d attention to the importance of the world ec situation. We must all believe that for the next 1 months that situation will be uncertain at best. evidence to the Select Committee, replying to questi 124 on 9 December, the Chancellor said:

"In the first place I see no sign at the present time world going into recession. All the recent figures that w had so far do admittedly relate to the period before th market collapsed."

I detected a little more pessimism in his commen afternoon. The Chancellor said that he saw no sign world going into recession. We hope that he is although it all depends on what one means by rec There will certainly be a slowing down of world and a reduction in United States activity. In the shor it is likely that oil will produce less revenue and,

[Mr. Robert Sheldon]

important, that its beneficial effects on our balance of payments compared with those of oil-importing countries will be weaker.

It is clearly accepted that in the short-term, and at the time of the Budget, the Chancellor will have money to spend. He will have perhaps £3 billion and perhaps as much as £4 billion or even £5 billion. He wants to use that money to lower the standard rate of income tax to 25 per cent. and the higher rate to 50 per cent. He would dearly like to end capital gains tax, which, following its emasculation, raises only about £1·3 billion—not good value for the amount of work involved. I would dearly like it to be increased but I realise that it is unlikely that we shall increase revenue from capital gains under this Government. The Chancellor would like to reduce part of the cost of mortgage tax relief, which stands as a fiscal rebuke to his failure to achieve the greater tax neutrality that he has at heart. The abolition of capital gains tax and the reduction in the cost of mortgage relief are not likely to feature in the Budget resolutions. What comfort the Chancellor has stems from the hope that the incidence of mortgage tax relief may be reduced due to reductions in income tax.

I query the Chancellor's proposed use of the resources available. At present, we have a well-planned consumer boom. No one can doubt the tactical experience and expertise that the Chancellor has brought to bear in these matters. He planned the boom for the election and it has not quite got out of hand yet, which, in itself, is an achievement that has not often been equalled. Nevertheless, an increase in consumer expenditure is planned in 1988. It is expected that GDP will increase by 2·5 per cent. and consumer expenditure by 4 per cent. The expected increase in manufactured imports, which is already being realised, is a consequence of that.

The major budgetary question this year is how to spend the money from a reduced public sector borrowing requirement. Faced with the possibility of a world recession—at best a downturn in world activity and a consumer boom at home—it would be folly to couple that with tax handouts that would increase consumption further and thus increase manufactured imports and worsen our balance of payments. It would be far better to use that money now in the interests of the long-term future of manufacturing industry and to improve the serious economy, which we shall need to support us in any difficult times ahead—and there may be difficult times ahead. This is not the time to be spending money in consumer booms following the election consumer boom. As my right hon. and learned Friend the Member for Monklands, East said, investment in education, training and health can all be useful. What we should not do is to spend the money in a way that will only lead to a further import boom in an attempt to meet the Chancellor's requirements of tax rates of 25 per cent. and 50 per cent.

I should also draw attention to the White Paper "DTI — the department for Enterprise". I understand Ministers' desire to direct expenditure on industry into the most worthwhile projects. Ministers have always felt that they need greater control of the money that they have available—in regulations and statutory instruments to set out the ways in which the money available can be spent. They frequently find that the money does not go for the purposes for which they wish it to go. They try to target it and ask, "How can we ensure that t this purpose?". That is an understa worthwhile desire. However, it is easy can move from that to giving civil serv to decide who should have how mu purpose. It is easy to assume that Wh and that the civil servants handin supplicants from Ashton-under-Lyne officials who can size up a chemical p value of an expanding furniture manu know is that such civil servants are lim there are not all that many to be found of Trade and Industry. I do not ques dedication of civil servants; I onl Government would say the same more we do not breed such people in any nu

I would wish particularly for more out of Whitehall to provide a greate fertilisation, but there is little sign of th to know and understand the civil serva are dealing and the responsibilities money that we are giving them to see th arise. We need to face reality an knowledgeable embattled supplicant himself face to face with an eloquent b official who will be making decisio momentous for the life of the company

The House will know that the Committee is anxious that civil servant a position where the temptations of fra are likely to occur. We are conscious tha of a dissatisfied civil servant on the company in difficulty on the other is a probity of the Government service, of w proud. Once standards decline they are i to reinstate, as many other less fortuna found. We could well arrive at a positio incurs not only the dangers of poor i perils of corrupt decisions.

There used to be advantages employment grant. Indeed, there were a investment grant, and I was a great upl One advantage was not that large ben were made that otherwise would not h although that undoubtedly operated on must not underestimate the importan that money went into manufactur modernise it. Now we are reducing the given and are relying on the expertise o

I look forward to the Chancellor continuing his passage through these m to understand even further the importan ing industry in the long term. As I sai uncertainties ahead. The sure way forw money for long-term investment. That i hope the Chancellor will be absorbing months.

6.1 pm

Sir Peter Hordern (Horsham): My rig Chancellor of the Exchequer rightly strength of the economy. I commend him improvements in the economic strengt over the past few years.

It is not suggested or proposed Statement that the same rate of adva

enjoyed over the past year or two will be seen again. As the House knows, the forecast is for a slower rate of growth and an increasing deterioration in our balance of trade. I accept that it is still a small proportion of our GDP, but nevertheless the relative deficit in our balance of trade is certain to increase.

One matter that concerns me is confidence. Last October we observed a sharp fall in the stock market. My right hon. Friend the Chancellor was right to address himself to that problem and be as bullish as he could about our future prospects. In this mood of international co-operation, it is doubly important that careful use be made of language when criticising our allies. I raised this matter in a speech just before Christmas. I could not then, and cannot now, see any point in criticising President Reagan so volubly as happened in my right hon. Friend's Mansion House speech. What was the point of it? If it were because the President and Congress were not aware of the difficulties arising from America's internal deficit, I would be amazed. It is not as though my right hon. Friend was ignorant of the fact that America's constitution made it difficult for the President and Congress unanimously to agree on what should be done. I regret that criticism, because it affected confidence then, and that effect still persists.

It is important to understand the options that exist for the United States, because that is where the problem lies. The problem concerns the United States' internal and external deficit. My right hon. Friend and others have frequently told the Americans that they must put their house in order and to do so by various uncomfortable measures. We should recognise that one of the ways in which America can improve its position is by allowing, for however temporary a period, a continuing fall in the value of the dollar in relation to other currencies.

With regard to the effect of the fall in the value of the dollar in relation to other currencies, only 9 per cent. of America's GDP is involved in imports. It is much less of a sacrifice for the United States to allow a fall in the value of the dollar relative to other currencies. Furthermore, it is bound to be beneficial to its manufacturing industry to have less competition from Japanese companies and other industrial imports. A substantial proportion of its imports are dollar imports.

I remember a book by Mr. Servan-Schreiber in which he complained about the level of United States' investment in France. Now that there is a large American deficit, substantial sums of money are being invested in the United States. The criticism then was that the American dollar was all-powerful: but now the dollar is criticised for being far too weak. There must be some consistency in these matters and we must understand that an attack on the Americans and the way in which they pursue their affairs will damage confidence. With regard to markets, the question of confidence is very important.

I wish I could share my right hon. Friend's confidence about working with other countries to prop up the dollar and keep the deutschmark and yen in their proper place. The movements are so great and the pressures so large that only if the natural course of events is allowed to take place and money allowed to flow freely where investors wish it to go will the position right itself. The dollar trade deficit must eventually be met by willing investors. It is unlikely to do so if investors think that the dollar is being propped up at the wrong price by a combination of central banks. They will wait until the crisis is over and the dollar finds its own level. There is a new special dra agreement between the United States and Ja interest rates low, which I am sure is benefic ordinary investment view, dollar assets, manufacturing assets, are cheap compared wi

It may be that the dollar still has further to time will come when investment in the dollar w be most productive. It is evident that British so because British investment in United State more than doubled over the past year and reac of $30 billion. The dollar will find its own leve the central banks may do and despite the ag make what have proved so far to be expensiv at the wrong price.

I recollect a period — the sight of the Member for Blaenau Gwent (Mr. Foot) remind —when the Labour Government talked with catching the speculators. I remember talk gnomes of Zurich and making their pips squ may have been the right hon. Member for Leed Healey) talking about Conservatives. It was s speculators would be caught by the actions of banks and that that would solve the problem. same sort of language now, and it fills me wit regret to say that that was not the solution to th

What are we proposing that the Americans in an election year? This is the course of action proposing they should take. First, they should expenditure; secondly, they should raise tax they should raise interest rates; or any com those. As my right hon. Friend said, the Un domestic economy has not been adequately re The President has a saying: "If you want to t out, try it out on the folks in Peoria." If the foll were told that the British Chancellor of the E telling them in an election year that they sho their public expenditure and raise taxes or int I think they would probably ask him to pas across them again. The options for the Am rather different and they may be rather more able for us than for them if they allow the do somewhat, as it may. The dollar price means than to the United States.

We have a monetary policy — I find it understand these days, and that is not throug trying — and we have an exchange rate po aligns us neatly with the deutschmark. In the EMS — I am in favour of us being allowed EMS — at least we are aligned to the deutschm would be the effect of a reduced dollar defi increase in United States exports, which is w urging the Americans to do? We cannot imag reduction in the United States deficit will happ some pain to other countries. We must look a consequences of that. Of our £8·5 billion-worth from the United States, £7·1 billion were in ma goods. That represents only 10 per cent. of ou but when one thinks of the amount of Americ to the European Community, which represent 20 per cent., and of the fact that 50 per cent. of go to the European Community, one sees substantial improvement in the United State exports is bound to be felt by the European C

When we are talking to and lecturing the A we should recognise that the effect may not pleasant for the European Community, and ce

[Sir Peter Hordern]

for us, because, as the House knows, we are forecasting a higher trade deficit during this year. We are also forecasting the most rapid rate of growth in the Community, so we may find a progressive deterioration in the balance of trade, as has been suggested in the Autumn Statement. To the extent that the United States position improves, more strain is bound to be felt within the European Community.

On the stock market collapse, it appears that, during the past five or six years, when the economy has been performing well, it has been helped along by the avid appetite of the United States for imports. We and other countries have benefited greatly from that avidity, but it will no longer be there, which will cause a strain on world trade. We know the difficulties with Japan and negotiations in West Germany. I remind the House of what happened in the stock market collapse in 1929. In 1930, there was a creditable recovery in share prices, but then there was a pressure for trade restraint on every side, which started with the Smout-Hawley Act and went to tariff restraint by Italy and France, and by 1932 we had our own tariff wall through the Ottawa agreement.

The same pressures will start again, not directly with tariff restraint but with voluntary export restraint, which now covers about 50 per cent. of all world trade. I suggest that this is the time to negotiate with other countries to ensure that we open up our markets to the United States and allow the progressive liberalism of world trade. If we were to find the pace of world economic growth slowing down, which is quite likely to be the case, it is up to those who expect to find an improvement in the United States trading position to open their markets correspondingly, and the greatest responsibility for that rests on the European Community. It appears to me that this could be done most effectively by revising the common agricultural policy as early as possible.

I recognise what the Government are doing, but to lecture the Americans when we have the nerve to pile up surpluses amounting to £13 a week for every family in the country, and forbidding the free movement of other agricultural produce into the European Community, is nonsense. We must be very careful during the next few months to see that what happened in the early 1930s on restraint of trade does not happen again. It will require a good deal of leadership and steady nerves. If we are to be certain that the stock market collapse does not lead to a recession, we must open up our markets. The European Community must play its part, and so must we, not by buying dollars at the wrong price but by opening our markets in Europe; in other words, to bring in the old world to redress the balance of the new.

The crisis is not over yet. I would like to think that it is, but I do not believe it is. We need the skill and patience which the founders of the European Community showed in gaining the unity of Europe. We need to show skill, patience and perseverance in dismantling the barriers for the movement of goods and services throughout the world. The task needs leadership, which we and our partners in Europe are uniquely qualified to give, and I hope we give it.

6.16 pm

Mr. A. J. Beith (Berwick-upon-Tweed): The House enjoyed the commentary of the hon. Member for Horsham (Sir P. Hordern). I agree with his conclusion. I am sorry that the Chancellor is leaving, because I wanted to give him some information. I have been conducting some market research on an issue that I know concerns him. If he is thinking of extending VAT in the Budget, he will get as critical a response as did my right hon. Friend the Member for Tweeddale, Ettrick and Lauderdale (Mr. Steel) from my hon. Friends and me. I suggest that he should not contemplate it for a moment.

Having left the Chancellor with the fruits of my labours of the past couple of days, I wish to say that the hon. Member for Horsham took a curious view in criticising the Chancellor for what he said about the American economy. It may be as well to rein in the Chancellor a little for his desire to lecture the rest of the world. Perhaps he took his example from the Prime Minister and presumed upon the Prime Minister's influence with the American President, but there is another side to the scenario which the hon. Gentleman painted.

If the lack of confidence in the United States continues, the dollar continues to slide and Wall Street—I mean those who use Wall Street as a means to invest their money—continues to doubt the willingness of the American Administration to cope with its economic difficulties, the end product is recession of a kind which will end up in this country.

The hon. Gentleman is right to point out that we shall pay a price for the correction in the American economy, but we cannot stand back and say, "We do not mind what you do; we do not care what happens in the American economy". Still less can we fail to show some sympathy for those in the United States who are trying to get more sensible economic management. One of the President's mottos is, "Defence is not a budget issue; you spend what you need". Attractive as that may be as a concept, it plays havoc with control of public expenditure and demonstrates that everything cannot be blamed on Congress because some of that spending was generated by the President.

The economy has undergone a significant recovery and there have been some worthwhile achievements. The House should recognise the good things in the Chancellor's more recent economic management, as well as the good luck he has had. We must recognise that millions of people have a different perception of this. Many of them remember the industrial destruction which preceded the current growth and from which the current growth is measured. Many of them were the victims of it—those who lost their jobs in that industrial destruction and those whose hopes were destroyed. Then there are those who are the victims of unemployment or low wages, who do not see any of the rich benefits and pickings that are to be found in many parts of the country, and those who are in regions where the feeling of economic prosperity is not present or is confined to a few prosperous pockets.

It is very easy to view the present economic conditions with equanimity and, indeed, some enthusiasm from Westminster, but it looks very different in other parts of the country. That is why the Government's public expenditure proposals are of considerable interest, even if that interest has been overshadowed by this week's proposals on regional aid in the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry's White Paper. This is not really the occasion to debate that; we shall have an opportunity to do so in a week or so. However, it has caused great concern

and anxiety that, in reality, regional expenditure will go down, because many requests for selective aid will be refused. The loss of automaticity will be seen as a marvellous opportunity for a reduction in public expenditure on regional aid, and it is impossible to conceive of the system resisting such an opportunity when it is presented.

The right hon. Member for Shropshire, North (Mr. Biffen) spoke very forcefully, and with widespread support, about the Health Service as one of the key expenditure issues that we must face. He was right to insist that there is a political judgment to be made — a political recognition that the people of this country have such a high regard for their Health Service and that they are prepared to make sacrifices to see it maintained at a reasonable level. The present degree of decline in the Health Service evokes real anger right across political opinion. Anxiety is not confined to those who support Opposition parties; it is strongly in evidence among those who voted for the Government.

Several factors advanced by the right hon. Gentleman as relevant to the current debate are indeed important. We must have a debate on the financing of the Health Service. It is not enough to imply that the problems would go away if we increased funding significantly. The right hon. Gentleman put forward a bold claim for, in effect, expenditure of £3 billion on the Health Service. However, even if that were carried out, we cannot pretend that there would be no people waiting for operations and no waiting lists in particular specialties or parts of the country.

We can get rid of some of the waiting lists. However, it is inherent in the nature of the Health Service that difficult choices are posed, and the more that medicine advances, the more difficult those choices become. In the past, politicians have failed to face up to them; they have preferred to let them be coped with within the medical system—and, in particular, to leave them to doctors—on the understandable ground that there are merits in clinical freedom. The fact remains, however, that, given the present capacity of medical technology, decisions made purely by doctors cannot answer the public's demands for access to high-technology medicine, and that system cannot cope with the sort of judgment that may need to be made about the relative priorities given to preventive and high-technology medicine. The difficult choices must be made by politicians, and there must be debate about them.

However, the capacity of the Health Service to cope with that debate and, indeed, with the issue of better management simply is not there if it is suffering severe restraint. Such restraint is now taking place. Although the Government can point to real increases in Health Service expenditure, the number of people in an aging population needing the Health Service is larger, and the development of medical technology is another factor. In the present climate, better management of the Health Service cannot be achieved: indeed, the present climate has given efficient management a bad name. Any health authority that tries to organise its resources effectively is up against a climate in which so many other things are happening, for purely financial reasons, that it has difficulty in justifying any decision that it may make.

No worthwhile debate or development can take place unless the Health Service is better funded, and that applies particularly to NHS pay problems. Health authorities have had to cope with insufficient funding for nationally agreed pay increases, and the Treasury and Civil Service Select Committee has pointed to the difficulty that arises when those pay increases are only ever dealt with from within the Department's own budget, and never compared as a potential expenditure with spending in other Departments.

We must have some way of discussing from time to time whether an increase in the funding of, for instance, the roads programme is more important than an increase in nurses' pay. The social and political judgments that have led to attempts to deal with chronic low pay in the Health Service must surely have implications beyond the existing budgets of that service. The Select Committee was right to point that out in its report, and I commend it for doing so — I was not present at the meeting at which that passage was put in.

The Government must respond to what is being said about the Health Service. That is the key message that the Chancellor must receive from the public expenditure part of the debate. However, this is also an opportunity to review what has happened since the Chancellor made his Autumn Statement. I have some sympathy with him, because forecasting what would happen to the economy just after Black Monday was a bit like forecasting what would happen to our parties' merger prospects at about breakfast time yesterday: it was not exactly a promising time at which to make prophecies.

Some of us said at the time of the statement that the Chancellor would have to revise or reconsider his assessments, especially because he was so optimistic about the international response that he was expecting. He was pretty bullish about what would be done by the Americans, the Germans and the Japanese. The hon. Member for Horsham spoke about the dangers of the previous avid American purchasers of goods manufactured in Britain ceasing to be part of the picture if measures are taken in the American economy. The counterpart of that is that we want avid Japanese buyers for British goods. We want to see an expansion in Japanese domestic demand, and we welcome the efforts that the Foreign Secretary has been making to challenge the Japanese Government on such matters as trade barriers.

The Chancellor has not said much today to revise the extraordinarily optimistic assumptions that he made then. Is he not concerned by the dangers of an overstrengthening of the pound against the deutschmark? He has not said much about that today either. Is there not also a real danger of spiralling world recession, with collapsing commodity prices feeding through to serious problems for Third world countries, which are already beset by the debt problems to which the Chancellor has made some effort to propose solutions? There has been support for his initiatives from both sides of the House, especially for those relating to Africa, but the problems are getting worse, and the measures that he was advocating a couple of months ago will not be adequate to deal with them.

In the light of the events of the past few months, the questions about the overall management of the economy that the Chancellor must consider relate to his aspirations for tax cuts, and the opportunities opened up to him by a public sector borrowing rate that is at historically and internationally low levels. While the economy is relatively healthy, it might be a wiser option to combine some investment in key services—the Health Service is one of them, but there are others, such as housing and home improvement — with taking steps against recession at

[Mr. A. J. Beith]

home. At the same time, the Chancellor should seek the international co-operation without which we cannot reduce the risks of recession being imported from abroad. Clearly, it is more important than ever for Governments to be prepared to act internationally, but there is also a national dimension.

The Chancellor would do well to heed the warnings of the Centre for Economic Policy Research, which said in a report this month:

"continued failure to correct the underlying problems courts the risk of a slide into recession throughout most of the world."

The record of the last couple of months on international co-operation is pretty inadequate. Europe's future is threatened by prospects of slow growth and high unemployment, and the Chancellor's apparent satisfaction with the amount achieved so far is simply not borne out of any objective reading of what has been happening. If the demand from the United States economy declines, Europe must replace that lost demand, either from within itself or from the few other potential sources of purchasing power, such as Japan. That cannot be done without considerable international effort and co-operation.

Many people in this country have worked very hard to win such improvements as have been made in the economy. Those improvements are not won primarily by people sitting in Westminster or in No. 11 Downing Street; they are won by industrialists and by workers on the shop floor. Much of the price has been paid by people who are not at work, because they have no jobs, and have been the victims of the restructuring of industry.

Many people have much at stake in this country and abroad in those Third world countries where international help is needed. Considerable effort must be made to ensure that the events that took place on Wall Street and during the stock market collapse are not simply the beginning of a long saga, which would mean that the very confidence referred to by the Chancellor would not be induced and that, in the coming years, the suffering to which I have referred would be magnified.

6.29 pm

Mr. Terence L. Higgins (Worthing): I greatly appreciate the kind remarks that have been made about the report of the Treasury and Civil Service Select Committee. The delay in setting up that Committee was immensely frustrating because it happened at a time when we were passing through perhaps the most turbulent set of events in international monetary affairs that we have witnessed for many years. None the less, I hope that the report that was produced, under considerable pressure, has been useful to the House.

You have asked, Mr. Speaker, that we should be brief and, therefore, I wish to restrict my remarks to two issues. First, I shall deal with the mechanism for determining public expenditure priorities and, secondly, I shall say something about exchange rate policy, which was the main item in the Chancellor's speech.

We are in the middle of a period of discussion on public expenditure. We have had the Autumn Statement and now we are having the debate. I gather that we shall soon have the public expenditure White Paper, which will spell out the detail. The Select Committee will, of course, then wish to take evidence on that White Paper and make its report. We shall have further debate on the White Paper aft that. In that time I hope that I can persuade my right ho Friend the Chief Secretary to the Treasury that we nee to look carefully at the mechanism for determining publ expenditure priorities. My right hon. Friend the Memb for Shropshire, North (Mr. Biffen) was absolutely right t say that the determination of those priorities must b based on a series of political decisions. That is inevitabl but it does not mean that we should not try to make th mechanism for reaching those decisions as efficient a possible.

The present situation consists of bilateral discussion between the Treasury and the spending Departments and if necessary, recourse to the Star Chamber. That i followed by a quick Cabinet endorsement of the outcom with a great sigh of relief. That is not an effective way o determining priorities because there is no proper overa review of them.

The Select Committee has drawn attention to th problem that occurs when a Department makes a claim fo more resources that is large either in relation to its tota expenditure—which may be small in some cases—or i absolute terms. Over the years, we have had problems o that nature. Some years ago there was a problem concerning Sir Keith Joseph and the student grants. Ther was great controversy over a trivial sum of money whe the Treasury insisted that savings should come from withi the same Department. I believe that that attitude is th root cause of many of our problems. We had a simila difficulty at the Foreign Office when it had to find saving that had difficult implications for the BBC's oversea services. The Health Service is a classic example of th problem.

The Committee has pointed out that there was a larg demand to meet the increases in nurses' pay. The decisio was taken that savings would be found within the DHSS It is true that a large chunk of the increase for the nurses pay came from the reserve, but none the less savings have to be made within the health Department. That is the cause of many of our problems. From a constituency level we are aware that the increase in nurses' pay was not fully funded and that there was no scope for finding savings elsewhere, with the result that wards were closed. Such action represents an inefficient way of operating because the overheads run on just the same. I believe that the right approach would have been to seek the necessary savings across the board from other Departments and not simply from the DHSS.

I wish to comment on the statistics that have been bandied about on this issue. I do not believe that it is right to say that there has been an increase, in real terms, when allowing for inflation. We all know that the relative price effects of nurses' pay, pharmaceuticals and so on are significantly larger than the rate of inflation.

Mention is also made of expenditure on the Health Service in relation to GNP. I believe that the Select Committee took a balanced view on that issue. We drew attention to the substantial, unprecedented increase in NHS resources that has taken place. We pointed out that, as a percentage of GNP, resources had increased from 5·37 per cent. in 1979 to 6·12 per cent. in 1986. That is true of the past, but let us consider the plans for the future.

The right comparison is NHS expenditure adjusted by the Government's forecasts of inflation and the GNP forecast, which includes the inflation effect. If we make that comparison, we discover—I refer the House to the

table that the Committee published—that the proposed increases in Health Service expenditure are significantly smaller, reducing to 1·2 per cent. of GNP. In other words, Health Service expenditure is not going up in line with GNP. I do not believe that the House would accept such an assessment of priorities.

Therefore, it is tremendously important that if there is a large increase in the resources demanded by a Department, consideration should be given to a broader approach to where those savings can be found. I accept, however, that such savings should first be sought within the Department. I accept that my proposed approach would not be easy, because the whole process would be opened up. The Chief Secretary would have to trot round from Department to Department saying, "I am sorry, but there has been a big increase in nurses' pay and you will have to cough up something." I accept that that would not be easy, but the present arrangement has run us into difficulties and will continue to do so. I do not believe that I am being naive and I believe there is a lesson to be learnt.

The Chancellor spent much of his time on intervention. Clearly—as my right hon. Friend said in evidence to the Select Committee—there has been a change of policy. Previously, the policy was to intervene only to smooth fluctuations in currency movements. That is different from saying that we will seek to maintain a level of rates in the face of what the markets would otherwise produce. In this regard the Louvre agreement was not sufficiently explicit. The present Committee and its predecessor noted that fact, and it is clear that the agreement has not operated in the way in which the Chancellor of the Exchequer had hoped.

On page XII of the Committee's report we point out that the amount of intervention, in broad terms—the periods are not precisely the same—by the United States monetary authorities totalled $5 billion whereas the intervention by the other major participants totalled $95 billion. Therefore, the United States contribution to support its currency has been small in comparison to what everyone else has put in. We point out in our report that the resources available to the United States to sustain intervention operations are inadequate. The Chancellor has also pointed out that there was a weakening of resolve by the United States.

We are intervening in the currency markets to support the United States dollar, yet the United States Government are vacillating. That country is not a major participant in the operation and its resources to fund such an operation are inadequate. Intervention is an extremely dangerous operation on which to embark and it has serious cost implications for Britain.

The Select Committee and the Chancellor agree that there is a case for seeking underlying stability. I do not believe that such stability can be achieved as a result of intervention, because that means adopting a speculative position against considerable market forces.

Finally, I wish to pick up a point made by the right hon. and learned Member for Monklands, East (Mr. Smith). He does not understand the market philosophy. It is quite different to intervene in the way that I described, when the market has sought to establish a position and one is trying to change it. The market is determined by supply and demand, and intervention may affect the demand. If one wants to establish stability on a more permanent basis, one must seek to influence the underlying forces and powers that influence the market. In that respect my right hon. Friend the Chancellor is right. It has to be done by differential interest rates or by fiscal policy, or by a combination of the two.

Therefore, while I understand the need for co-operation, and pay tribute to the way in which my right hon. Friend has worked hard in that area, I do not think that it is the right approach to say that there is no hope of getting agreement on interest rates and fiscal policy unless there is agreement on intervention. For reasons that I have already mentioned, I consider that intervention is a temporary palliative. It is not the approach that is needed to establish more permanent stability.

The Chancellor was right to adopt an approach that sought co-operation, but the policy of intervention is dangerous; it may turn out to be expensive and does not deal with the underlying problems. In the light of what he said this afternoon, I urge my right hon. Friend to concentrate on the problem of co-ordination in a broader and deeper sense—on interest rates and fiscal policy, rather than on intervention. I do not think that it has been effective; it was a change of policy which was not advisable.

Mr. Bowen Wells (Hertford and Stortford): Does my right hon. Friend agree that the reason why the United States was not willing to intervene in the market to the extent which was initially agreed was that the co-ordination policy of which my right hon. Friend spoke was not in order at that time? Germany and Japan were unwilling to expand their markets sufficiently to enable the United States to resist a further fall in the dollar.

Mr. Higgins: That may well be so. However, the crucial point is that, even if the intervention had been co-ordinated, it may not have succeeded if the underlying factors had not been dealt with.

I hope that my right hon. Friend the Chief Secretary will give attention to my point about public expenditure, and that we can pursue those issues in the Select Committee. I hope that my right hon. Friend the Chancellor will continue with a policy that, although hazardous in some respects for the United Kingdom, because of international imbalances, has been vastly preferable to earlier economic policies.

6.42 pm

Mr. Michael Foot (Blaenau Gwent): During this debate, and at the time of the Autumn Statement, there has been talk of a national recovery and indeed, in some cases, of an economic miracle. In this debate I wish to present the contrasting situation in my constituency and in many parts of Britain. No economic miracle has yet appeared in those areas and no economic recovery which could be dignified with those terms. We still have a level of economic activity far below what it was in 1979, and a level of unemployment higher than it was in 1979. Therefore, it is an insult to talk in those terms and represents a distortion of what is really happening in Britain.

If the economy is being run with such success, why are we confronted day after day, case after case, with fresh evidence of the squalor, the shoddiness, the injustices and the dangerous undermining of well-tried institutions that are most essential to preserve civilised society in Britain?

I know that many right hon. and hon. Members wish to speak in the debate, but I should like to refer briefly to

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some of those examples, the most notable of which is the National Health Service, which already has been mentioned in the debate by Opposition Members and others. The presidents of the royal colleges showed that they knew better than the Prime Minister what was happening in the National Health Service.

The right hon. Member for Shropshire, North (Mr. Biffen) made some extremely pointed and important remarks on that subject. However, I should like to give him one warning. The right hon. Gentleman quoted from a particular pamphlet. It was once said of Bernard Shaw that he was a good man who had fallen among Fabians. I hope that the same fate does not befall the right hon. Gentleman, who quoted from a Fabian pamphlet as if it was an authoritative statement on the subject, and I hope that he will think again.

Most of the problems with the National Health Service are not novel. The same problems and calculations existed in 1948 when Aneurin Bevan established the National Health Service. I remember it better than any other hon. Member because I am the only hon. Member here who was present during those controversies. The controversies were about how one would unloose an infinity of demand. Had Bevan listened to those arguments, heeded them, accepted them — they came from so many quarters, from Conservatives, Liberal Benches and Labour Benches — the National Health Service would never have been founded in 1948. We have a Health Service because he said that we must represent the claims of that service above any other area of social services, and because he presented them with such daring, comprehension, understanding and compassion the Treasury was prepared to listen.

The problems are not easily solved now, but the sort of figure that the right hon. Member for Shropshire, North mentioned should be presented to the Cabinet today. Perhaps one of the reasons why the right hon. Gentleman was removed from the Cabinet is that the Prime Minister feared that he would present that argument. I hope that some other members of the Cabinet will do that, but I doubt that they will present it as persuasively as the right hon. Gentleman could present it. If they do not, they will be overwhelmed, because the demand throughout the country is growing strongly all the time. The Government will have to yield. The fact is that £200 million is insufficient. The Government will have to yield much more at the time of the Budget, and the sooner they do that, and the better grace with which they do it, the better it will be for the health of the National Health Service and of the nation.

The National Health Service is not the only example where the screw has been turned. According to the figures, there has been an expansion in the total amounts allocated, but elsewhere — I speak for a constituency where we feel the consequences of those measures — the Government have imposed cuts which are taking effect now. But the Government still dare to talk about a national recovery. During the next few months some of the special cuts that they have inflicted on social security will be brought into operation. They will be applied through discussions such as those that took place yesterday in the House about child benefit.

Other provisions will be applied to cut what many hon. Members believed had been established as the best social services to deal with family problems. Conservative Members have said during the past few days th demand for family allowance was an all-party dem the end of 1945. Child benefit was a great improvem the family allowance. It was consolidated by th Labour Government on a more ambitious scale s child benefit was paid to the mother without any test, and sustained at its original value. All those pri are being undermined by the Government. That is serious matter. It will have serious consequ particularly in areas such as mine where peop dependent on these provisions. The vast increa homelessness in many big cities and in other pla another example. So what is meant by all the tal national recovery?

Then there is what the Government have done many other institutions, including universities. Surel time of technical advance the Robbins principle university education for every boy and girl, ma woman, who can take advantage of it should be c out. That was one of the finest principles that came the second world war. It was accepted by us all. I have thought that it was a civilised principle of th order. The Government have done nothing disgusting than to abrogate that principle. There is competition in that sphere. It is dreadful that peopl themselves have apparently had a first-class educ should introduce measures that will deny a si education to other people who are just as capab benefiting from it. *[Interruption.]* Let those who wi deny what I say talk to the leaders of the universities people at universities who have been protesting again policies operated by the Government over many mo There is talk of the Government withdrawing some o offensive clauses from the Education Reform Bill. I that they will do so.

Another part of the Government's programme w affects people directly is the extraordinary White P published on Tuesday by Lord Young and Department. Huge sums of taxpayers' money are b used to publicise the document as though it had accepted by the House. When one reads the document realises how taxpayers' money has been misused publicise Lord Young and his Department. explanation I offer to the House is that the document not prepared originally to be presented by Lord You Department but would have been presented by him had been appointed chairman of the Conservative p He seems to have decided that, as he had drawn up document, he might as well get the taxpayers to pay fo

If hon. Members think that I am exaggerating, let t look at page 2, where it is explained that 1979 supposedly the turning point of the century in economic life. Lord Young is not so modest as to thin was a turning point just in the postwar period, but in century. In glorifying his achievements and his prosp Lord Young does not even mention that North sea oil made some contribution to the economy over the past years. That is not even mentioned in the document, wh supposedly describes the whole economic position of country.

The same Lord Young comes forward with propo for changes in regional policy. I am not saying that previous policy was perfect; of course, it was not. Mu cuts imposed under that policy hit areas such as mine. T

is why we pleaded with the Government to listen to what we had to say before they introduced a new regional policy.

The idea of having discretionary grants as a substitute for guarantees for different industries is dangerous; it is a principle that is difficult to work sensibly. It is not only we in the Labour party who say that. Three ex-Ministers from the Department of Trade and Industry asked questions about it yesterday—the right hon. and learned Member for Richmond, Yorks (Mr. Brittan), the right hon. Member for Chingford (Mr. Tebbit) and the right hon. Member for Henley (Mr. Heseltine). I have to be careful about applying zoological terms to the right hon. Member for Chingford—if I do, I may get complaints from the Animal Welfare Trust—but when three worms turn on the same afternoon, asking the Minister to look properly at the proposed change, the Government ought to take note.

We are deeply concerned about the Government's proposals in the area I represent. The changes will apply not just to areas which have been badly hit but to considerable parts of Wales, Scotland and the north-east. There should have been much more discussion about how to have a more effective regional policy.

One obvious way which we had worked out and which was being applied in 1978 was special development assistance for the areas which were hardest hit, the areas threatened not just with a 2 or 3 per cent. increase in unemployment but with a doubling of unemployment. Unemployment went up to the then appalling figure of 12 per cent. in areas affected by the steel crisis. But over the next three or four years, under the wonderful recovery programme of the Conservative Government, unemployment went up to over 20 per cent. What we sought to provide under the Labour Government's regional policy was special development assistance over and above the general development area assistance. It worked. There were plans for getting new industry into my area. Other areas too had special development area status. It enabled us to get on with the job of rebuilding, as local authorities and industries are eager to do now. We are determined to rebuild industry. We wish the Government had listened to what we had to say about how a sensible regional policy should be worked out.

Even at this late hour, if only Lord Young can set aside his propaganda leaflets, cannot we have a proper discussion? Most of the affected areas are represented by Labour Members and by Labour local authorities that are passionately eager to join in the task of rebuilding. The idea that local authorities are hostile to trying to get on with this major task is ludicrous. To get more jobs is the number one priority of many local authorities. But, partly because of their insane hatred, detestation or suspicion of local authorities, the Government have not been prepared to join in such activities. I hope the Government will consider that afresh.

That is just another example of how fraudulent is the claim that we have had a national recovery. Whatever else there may have been, it is certainly not a national recovery. Until it is national, the Chancellor of the Exchequer should be more reticent in the claim that he makes for himself and his achievements.

The hon. Member for Horsham (Sir P. Hordern), with his usual delicacy, properly rebuked the Chancellor for lecturing the Americans. If, at the beginning of the Reagan regime, the Americans had pursued similar policies to those pursued by our Government in 1979, 1980 and 1981 there would not have been a recovery in the United States or throughout the world. The world would have been plunged into an even deeper slump perhaps than in 1929. There would not have been a recovery here. The Chancellor thinks that he governs these things, but he is just the fly on the wheel. He thinks that he makes the wheel go round. What happens in the United States economy is far more important than anything he does. Therefore he should have been a bit more careful about looking back.

Some people prophesied what was going to happen in the American economy. Professor Beckerman, an old fashioned Keynsian—which means that he is absolutely up to date; he has got the policies which the Chancellor is looking for for next month — said way back, as anyone can check, before President Reagan came to office, that of course he would prefer a Democrat to be elected, but the incoming American Administration would not carry through a full monetarist policy, as they were claiming they would. Because tax cuts were popular and public expenditure was not popular, they would carry through, not by intention but by accident, a Keynsian policy of reflation no matter what it might be called.

That is what they did for five or six years, and when the American economy recovered we managed to clutch the coat tails in the last four years. That is what really happened, so it does not become the Chancellor to make a holus-bolus criticism of what Americans may be doing now. The situation may be different, but the idea that economic problems which we have not solved can be solved by encouraging the Americans to go in for a full-scale cut in their deficit is absurd. All that will happen is that there will be the kind of slump that there would have been if the Americans had embarked on that policy six or seven years ago.

This does not mean that I agree with the American policy. I think that they could spend their money much more sensibly. If only they would divert a huge amount of that public expenditure, as they could, from armaments into these other fields, it would be much better for all of us. So I certainly think that we should encourage that. But the suggestion that all economic wisdom rests with the Treasury Bench and the Chancellor of the Exchequer and that all that is necessary is for the Americans to copy what the present Government have been doing is absurd. First of all, they would have to explain which of their policies they wished the Americans to copy—the one that they tried with such appalling results in their first period of office or those that they are following now, although they are trying to conceal the fact that they have come round that far.

I know that several Tory Members are trying to entice them further along that road of sanity and I do not wish to interfere with that process because I think that it could be beneficial for the country as a whole. Some of the benefits of such a policy might eventually get through to the great areas that some of us represent that have seen the tragic failure of the Government to understand what is happening. But Government Members do not come to those areas; they do not know the areas and they do not see what is happening in our places. So we have got to tell them.

In the meantime, I hope that we can stop the Chancellor of the Exchequer preaching to others when he has himself found the right gospel only in the last few weeks. I hope that he will change his habits in a way that may be helpful

[Mr. Michael Foot]

to us all instead of causing the kind of injury that might follow the sort of prescriptions that he has been giving in the last few years.

7.2 pm

Dr. Charles Goodson-Wickes (Wimbledon): I am honoured to have been called to address the House for the first time. It is a special privilege to be allowed to do so in the debate on the Autumn Statement, which has been delayed nearly as long as this speech.

Sitting under the Strangers Gallery tonight is the Conservative Member for Blaydon between the years 1931 and 1935—not, I hope, the last Tory representative for that area. He has been my friend and political mentor for many years. He tells me that in his day one informed the Whips when it was convenient for one to attend the House. The position seems to have been reversed over the years.

I know that the whole House will join me in wishing my predecessor, Michael Havers, now in another place as Lord Havers of St. Edmondsbury, an early return to robust health. It is widely recognised that during his exceptionally long service as Attorney-General he had a formidable workload the success of which remained largely unrecognised owing to its sensitive nature. The burden clearly took its toll upon his health. I am confident that the House will agree that *The Times* got it right when it described him recently as

"one of the straight men of politics"

—as noble a tribute as any to which any hon. Member could aspire. To achieve the highest office of precedence as Lord Chancellor, with all its constitutional, legal and procedural duties, only to have to lay down the burden shortly thereafter must have been a bitter blow. In wishing him well, I take the opportunity to thank him for his wise counsel. It is a privilege to follow his 17 years of service as Member of Parliament for Wimbledon.

I wish to depart slightly from the usual convention by mentioning also Michael Havers' own predecessor, Sir Cyril Black. A number of hon. Members will remember his service in the House from 1950, when he gained the seat, for 20 years thereafter. He continues to offer unparalleled and unselfish service to the area with which he has so long been associated. I cannot speak too highly of his accumulated wisdom, which he has been kind enough to share with me. To follow two such distinguished Members, both of whom served Wimbledon so well in their different ways, will present a challenge which I address with understandable misgivings.

The constituency of Wimbledon forms the western part of the London borough of Merton and, although in the popular mind it is associated with the village of Wimbledon, it extends very much further, with an agreeable diversity of people and interests. Let nobody think that it is a unformly affluent area free of social and other problems. On the eastern side of the railway, which bisects the constituency, there are areas of relative deprivation as one moves towards the boundary, which runs along the course of the river Wandle.

Merton has a distinguished and interesting history dating from an Iron Age settlement. Henry VI was crowned at Merton priory and, by marriage, the royal connection continues, as the Princess of Wales' father, also in another place, is the lord of the manor of Wimbledon. His forefathers inherited Wimbledon house by descent from Sarah, Duchess of Marlborough. It was one Spencer's predecessors who found himself in disp the inhabitants of Wimbledon in 1864. He pro enclose the common and subsequent protests led t of Parliament vesting it in a specially constituted conservators.

Another parliamentary predecessor of mine, S Peek, played an active part in preserving the "public enjoyment". The present system continu can tell the House that no hard feelings persist. H the unique status of the common and the meth funding are likely to produce difficulties in relatio restructuring of local government finance. But I raising that point with my right hon. Friend the S of State for the Environment on a more suitable o

Wimbledon common has been the site, as we subject, of dispute on many occasions in the past. younger, while Prime Minister, engaged in duellin common, luckily without serious results, bef practice ended in the mid-19th century. The comm from the time of the Restoration, the site of reviews and manoeuvres and both the royal tou and Bisley trace their origins to those events.

The most famous of Wimbledon's inha however, was a sailor, Lord Nelson, who lived at place in the present south Wimbledon, in his ménage à trois with Sir William and Lady Ham was from this house that he left to meet his deat battle of Trafalgar.

Three other distinguished men of Wimbledo William Wilberforce, a pioneering Tory who did s to bring about the abolition of slavery, Baden-Pow wrote his "Scouting for Boys" there, and John I horticultural fame, who, in Merton park, founded the first garden suburbs.

Merton has a long history of learning and t century statute of the same name was repealed 1923. Excellent schools of many types flourish borough, as my right hon. Friend the Chief Secre the Treasury can testify from his personal knowled influence of various religious bodies is a marked po good in the constituency, as is the medical work out at the Atkinson Morley's and Nelson hospita

The constituency is mainly residential with balanced community. The tradition for commer light industry, dating from the snuff mills and the works, established by William Morris, persis flourishes. Several new companies, many with technology element, are moving into the district, such old companies as leather curriers.

The name of Wimbledon is universally associate lawn tennis and, in recent times, it has acquir additional distinction of first division football. other sports from golf to greyhound racing are e and there are also other admirable cultural and opportunities.

I address the House at a time when the fundi functioning of the welfare state has been increasingly into question. One of the privileges sha all hon. Members is the opportunity to see at first ha immense amount of voluntary activity, often un nised, carried out in the service of others. Basic h instinct to help those most vulnerable in society is re in this voluntary work and in the financial contrib from so many. I like the term "community self- analogous with the concept of individual self-help.

is nothing novel about that. After all, many of our great hospitals and educational establishments started life as charitable institutions.

Although it would be naive to suggest that the private sector and voluntarily raised finance could solve the present difficulties, they nevertheless have their part to play. I see no ideological bar to such funds supplementing the welfare state and hope that there would be universal support for that. A move in this direction would go some way towards satisfying the recent call made by the presidents of three of the royal medical colleges for "additional and alternative funding in the National Health Service".

I noted with interest the arguments of my right hon. Friend the Member for Shropshire, North (Mr. Biffen) in that context.

I speak from some small experience, having been involved with a charity set up in my father's name, which has my right hon. Friend the Member for Castle Point (Sir B. Braine) as president. Among other things, we have provided funds for beds and living accommodation for the families of critically ill children to stay in National Health Service hospitals at times of anxiety. Only this week, we have contributed to the renovation of an underused building at Bart's. That hospital, where I trained, was founded over 850 years ago and it seems illogical that an organisation such as the National Health Service, established barely 40 years ago, should be expected to cope unaided with today's unlimited demands.

If charities, which now have an annual turnover in excess of £10 billion a year, are to play their full part in our society, two requirements must be satisfied—first, the incentives for giving should be increased and, secondly, the funds gathered should be used as efficiently as possible.

On the first point, I must congratulate the Government on their success over the past eight years in creating a climate favourable to charities. The 1986 measures have been described as the best charity Budget that we have ever had. The extension of tax relief to companies for one-off gifts was a major step forward. These are early days yet for the payroll giving scheme for individuals, but many employers, including central Government Departments, have set up the appropriate machinery. However, a new publicity boost is needed from the Government to increase general awareness of the scheme and to spur on charities and their agencies to take advantage of it. Provided that the administrative burden is not too great, income tax relief for individuals on single gifts might also be arranged in due course.

My second point is to urge the implementation of last year's Woodfield report. The inadequacies which it identified in the supervision of charities must be remedied. The question of registration should be tackled to go beyond the endorsement or otherwise of submitted statements of charitable aims. A very small number of cases of abuse taint the image of charities in general. Unfortunately, there are cases of bodies claiming tax relief for non-charitable purposes, fraud or tax avoidance. A requirement for charities to submit annual accounts must be sensible and these should also be made available to the public.

Although I am aware of the practical objections raised on both sides of the House, I also urge the Chancellor to reconsider possible sanctions to discourage the accumulation of funds. Such accumulations may be perfectly proper, but there have been cases of idleness on the part of trustees and there is always a potential danger in the practice which I have heard described as "money looking for trouble to happen".

It seems ludicrous that the Charity Commission, which has done such valuable work, has inadequate resources, both financially and professionally, to inspect annual accounts and to investigate possible wrongdoing. I am sure that my right hon. Friend would share my reluctance to advocate increased Government expenditure on this matter and perhaps much work, historically done without charge by the commission, could be contracted out, with better use being made of existing resources. The introduction of a modest registration fee, possibly renewable annually, would not be unreasonable. That would be in the interests of good administration and the production of revenue.

As the Inland Revenue has the power to disclose prima facie abuse to the commission, staff must obviously be redeployed to adjust to modern-day circumstances. Although a modernised Charity Commission might well pay for itself by preventing unjust fiscal claims, that argument would not in isolation carry weight with the Treasury.

Such enlightened Government measures would greatly increase the scope for co-operation between the public, private and voluntary sectors for the good of the population as a whole. I hope to play some small, but effective, part in furthering this end.

7.18 pm

Mr. Giles Radice (Durham, North): The House will have enjoyed the speech of the hon. Member for Wimbledon (Dr. Goodson-Wickes) and the way he spoke about his predecessor who was a highly respected Member of the House. It will have enjoyed what he had to say about his constituency and it will also have noted the expertise with which he spoke about charities. No doubt we shall hear much from him in the future. However, there is just one issue which I wish to take up with him. Speaking as a Member for the north-east, I can assure him that there will not be another Tory Member of Parliament for Blaydon.

As we pointed out in the Treasury and Civil Service Committee report, the Budget judgments for this year will be made against a highly disturbed and turbulent international background. Indeed, they are the most turbulent since 1979-80, the years of the second oil shock. We can all agree that it is extremely difficult to predict the consequences of the sharp fall in the stock market in the last two weeks of October. For one thing, markets all over the world continue to be extremely unsettled, but we heard nothing about that from the Chancellor. We should have done.

Also, the response of the policy-makers in the main industrial economies has been extremely hesitant and uncertain. The coming of the American presidential election has already had an impact on the United States, but it is not only the United States which has been slow to act. Other countries have also been adopting a highly cautious approach, particularly the West German Government, who seem to be very unclear about what action they should be taking. Yet West Germany has an obvious responsibility as a major trading nation, with a balance of payments surplus equivalent to 4 per cent. of its GNP.

[Mr. Giles Radice]

The empty G7 statement just before Christmas was a sign of the confusion and uncertainty in the seven major industrial countries about what to do next. However, despite the difficulties about long-term predictions, the House should note that the latest report from the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development has already forecast that, as a consequence of the October crash, international economic activity will be significantly weakened. It also says that unemployment in OECD countries will begin to rise again.

The OECD report is particularly concerned about the impact on industrial and consumer confidence which could lead to a downturn in both investment and spending with the inevitable consequences for growth and employment — very much a classic Keynesian picture. Significantly, it warns policy-makers about the risk of a world recession. I should have thought that the Chancellor would at least have had the courtesy to mention that warning from a body of which the United Kingdom is a member. It is a risk which the Chancellor typically dismisses far too lightly.

With all the turbulence and uncertainty around, there might be a case for expressing some sympathy for the Chancellor as he prepares for the Budget if he were not so insufferably complacent, confident and cocky about the prospects for the British economy, and, more especially, about his own performance as Chancellor of the Exchequer.

It is true, and it is a good thing, that in 1987 our growth rate, at 4 per cent., has been faster than most of the rest of Europe. It is also welcome news that unemployment has been falling over the past 18 months, albeit assisted by changes in the way that the unemployed are registered. However, the forecast for growth in the Autumn Statement is only for 2·5 per cent. in 1988 and there are some signs that much of that growth will be bunched in the early part of the year. Lower growth, whatever the Autumn Statement says, is likely to mean higher unemployment. I note that the OECD report predicts that the pace of growth in the United Kingdom may not be sufficient

"to prevent the rate of unemployment from rising again."

That is a very different message from the Chancellor's this afternoon.

The Chancellor's dilemma is that, if unemployment is to continue to fall significantly, and if regional differences are to be reduced, we shall need growth rates somewhat above 3 per cent. over the next three years. Yet the growing balance of payments and trade deficit is a factor that must make any Chancellor cautious about increased rates of expansion. That is a genuine dilemma that the Chancellor must face. Yet he makes these things far more difficult, not only for himself but for the British economy, by three aspects of his economic policy.

First, the Chancellor has made it clear that he is firmly committed to further income tax cuts in his Budget. Yet income tax cuts are, as all the models show, the least effective way in which to boost employment. They would almost certainly suck in more imports at a time when our balance of payments deficit is predicted to deteriorate.

Then there is the Government's posture on public spending and their highly cautious stance on the PSBR — more cautious in the Autumn Statement than was predicted. That stance means that infrastructure projects, regional policies, and key social programs health and education will all be deprived funds. The Chancellor forgets the importa well-targeted public spending is a safer way our balance of payments, bringing down un and keeping growth going.

There is a third problem. As the American well, the obvious way to tackle a balance deficit and to assist manufacturing is by Indeed, the 1986 British devaluation provide assistance to our economy. However, sinc pound has increased in value by over 10 per Chancellor's policy is to tie the pound firmly particularly to the deutschmark. In doing s rules out any further dev[illegible]on in the near fu context, he should note the point made by Minister in an interview in the *Financia* November, when she warned that gearing the deutschmark was likely to be deflationary. Th a difference between the Prime Ministe Chancellor on that point.

Mr. Quentin Davies (Stamford and Spald remarks, does the hon. Gentleman take any ac extreme difficulty that we have had recently in the pound from appreciating above three de How on earth can we contemplate pursuing a for parity at present, even if we wished to do simply appalling monetary consequences?

Mr. Radice: That point has already been an must bring interest rates down. Our interest Chancellor pointed out to the Select Com higher than most of those of our main competi to three points and there is no reason why they be lower.

However, I draw some comfort from how Chancellor's policies have changed since 1979 been mentioned by several of my hon. Friend the Chancellor was the inventor of the m financial strategy. However, monetary con virtually abandoned in October 1985. He used the Labour Government for their irresponsibili the past 18 months he has manufactured a consumer boom, fuelled by a remarkable d savings ratio—I think from 7 per cent. to 5 disguised fiscal relaxation and earnings rising inflation.

It is not an Opposition invention to say that old consumer boom. The Chancellor himsel Select Committee that the present rate of g unsustainable and above our historic levels. It w a good reason — the Chancellor was m contribution to the Conservative party winning election.

Even on public spending, there has been a hon. Members may remember that the object reduce public expenditure in volume terms. The hold public spending constant in real terms. N reduce public spending as a proportion of GDP. marginal changes, but they are changes in direction. There is also the famous change on the rate policy. My right hon. and learned Friend th for Monklands, East (Mr. Smith) noted Chancellor used to say that exchange rates sho to the market, but he now believes in manage

and international intervention, although, as the right hon. Member for Worthing (Mr. Higgins) pointed out, he does not do that very effectively.

The former hard-line monetarist, the man who really invented the Government's strategy back in 1979, is becoming increasingly pragmatic. Like my right hon. and learned Friend, I welcome the Chancellor's conversion. I welcome his changes and over the next few weeks and months, and for however long he remains Chancellor—I understand that he wants to be Foreign Secretary—we all look forward to further changes in a more sensible direction.

7.29 pm

Mr. Leon Brittan (Richmond, Yorks): My first and pleasant task is to congratulate my hon. Friend the Member for Wimbledon (Dr. Goodson-Wickes) on his maiden speech. He began with an elegant and apposite tribute to our former colleague, Lord Havers. I am sure that we would all wish to be associated with everything he said and, in particular, with the good wishes for his return to health. We were then given a conducted tour of Wimbledon which left even those of us who thought we knew the place infinitely better informed than we had been before. Finally, my hon. Friend made a perceptive and constructive speech about the relationship between the welfare state and the voluntary sector, and put forward a number of important suggestions which, I am sure, merit consideration. In all, if I may borrow a phrase from his constituency, he served an ace and we look forward to many more.

Looking at the Autumn Statement so long after its publication, we inevitably feel that it has a slightly antique flavour about it. But it is none the less remarkable for all that, because it is an account of strong but soundly based growth with the prospects for substantial further growth and falls in unemployment—and, by implication, more tax cuts. The decisions announced in it are, of course, the public spending ones arrived at after a period of intense haggling, which anyone who has been Chief Secretary looks back on with a mixture of nostalgia and relief that those days are over.

Although the hon. Member for Durham, North (Mr. Radice) seemed not to give sufficient weight to this fact in the earlier part of his remarks, the Autumn Statement shows an increase in spending for 1988-89 and 1989-90 of £2·6 billion and £5·6 billion respectively compared with the figures announced last year. The growth in Government expenditure in real terms, excluding privatisation proceeds, is expected to be 1·25 per cent. a year over four years

Those who might have anxieties about the implication of such an increase in public spending, after a period when the stated aim had been to hold expenditure roughly flat, are reassured in the Autumn Statement by the argument that public expenditure will at least continue to fall as a proportion of the nation's income over the next three years. When one takes into account the fact that, last year, the plans for this year were increased by £4·75 billion, the further increases in spending amount to significant relaxations in the public expenditure objectives of the Government.

Nevertheless, in the context of a rapidly expanding economy, my own view is that the Government's present proposals are still consistent with a generally sound financial posture. However, it is against that background that we must consider the implications of the Aut Statement and subsequent developments for future p — in particular, for the forthcoming Budget. Autumn Statement forecasts growth of 2·5 per cent. year and £1 billion of PSBR for the current financial and assumes a similar PSBR for next year, althoug actual PSBR is to be set in the Budget.

Looking forward rather than backward, the question seems to me to be: have recent events at hom abroad, and possible developments in prospect, cha the situation in a way that should influence Chancellor's judgment? I think they have. I agree wi heartedly with the conclusion of the Governor of the of England that the need for caution is now paramo I add that caution makes good sense politically, too. were, after all, re-elected only a few months ago an have a whole Parliament in which to achieve our objectives.

We have always acted on the principle in the past we would implement those objectives as and when could afford to do so. I am sure that we would be wi continue to follow that principle. By all means let u what we can safely do this year, but in a yea international turbulence, the domestic consequence which are still not clear, financial prudence should, a all else, be our watchword. Much can change in the few weeks, but for the moment the objective of a neg PSBR would seem the right one to set.

This conclusion flows from considering both the w scene and the domestic economy. The internati position needs to be examined first, because it is there the uncertainties are greatest. What happens in the Un States is crucial. There have been excruciatingly pai efforts in the United States to reduce the budget de ending up with a cut at the lowest level needed to persu the markets that the United States is even remotely ser about tackling its problems. Since then, some forec have emanated from the United States suggesting spending will actually be greater than envisaged and the cut in the deficit will be correspondingly low. It is c that there is not the slightest intention of the increas interest rates that is needed to go along with the cut in budget deficit. It is not surprising that that should b in an election year, but it is an important fact in the t equation.

Worst of all, in terms of confidence in the market the continued insouciance shown by the United St administration, with the President, but a few days saying that the trade deficit is a sign of the strength of United States' economy.

Mr. Austin Mitchell (Great Grimsby): That is what Minister said.

Mr. Brittan: It is not surprising that it has nee herculean efforts on the part of the world's central ba at great cost, to keep the dollar even at its present le Nor is it surprising that the financial community considerable doubts about whether those efforts can successful in anything other than the short term, in absence of an appropriate policy to deal with underlying problems.

When I was at the Treasury between 1981 and 1983 we faced complaints about the high value of the pound. always said that the exchange rate could not be altered intervention on any permanent basis, and that all we co do was to smooth out short-term fluctuations.

Dr. John Reid (Motherwell, North) *rose*——

Mr. Brittan: I am inclined to believe that that is just as true today of current attempts to prop up the dollar. Although the dollar may have fallen far enough already, there inevitably remains a real risk of further irresistible pressure on it and a further fall in the United States stock market. There is no way in which we can insulate ourselves against that, so that is the first main reason for adopting a cautious fiscal stance.

I reject the idea that we should try to spend or borrow our way out of a recession that has not come and, if it did, would be extraneously induced. I suggest that the same cautious conclusion emerges from an examination of the United Kingdom economy. I do not accept that the fall in share prices has had a deflationary effect, or that it will have one, and that therefore we should now adopt a more expansionary policy than would otherwise be desirable. One might reasonably have expected that the fall in the stock market and the fear of further falls would have had that effect, but all the signs are that that has proved not to be the case. There are no signs of a significant lessening of economic activity; expansion is continuing at a rapid rate in all parts of the United Kingdom, including the assisted regions.

It is interesting to see the Lloyds bank economic bulletin, entitled "Limited Impact of Equity Slump", which contains a careful analysis of the so-called wealth effect and comes to the conclusion that it has proved to be extremely limited.

Another commentator makes the point that the exceptional growth in the second half of 1987 — annualised GDP growth of 5 to 7 per cent. — has a carry-over effect into 1988 so strong that, with no further growth at all, growth would be 2 per cent. in 1988 for that reason alone; with continuing growth, 3 per cent. to 3·5 per cent. is the probable total for the current year. Moreover, the stock market effect — if it had a deflationary effect — has already been counteracted by the 1·5 per cent. reduction in interest rates. There are already significant labour shortages in certain industries in parts of the country. That underlines the need for a vigorous regional policy — but that is a matter for another day. Looking at the whole picture, I believe that the domestic risk against which the Government must guard is not recession but the further build-up of inflationary pressures. For those reasons, domestic and international, I come out strongly on the side of those urging caution in the preparation of the Budget.

However, on the figures in the Autumn Statement, even with caution, there is likely to be some scope for tax reductions, and certainly opportunity for tax reform. Political momentum in favour of moving to 25p basic rate and reduction of top rates to 50p is now probably irresistible, but its timing must depend on what is consistent with a prudent PSBR target.

One way of enabling more money to be available for tax reductions than would otherwise be possible would be to restrict tax allowances to the basic rate. Indeed, there is a great deal to be said for also limiting mortgage interest relief and pension relief to the basic rate. If all that were done, £1·75 billion would become available for tax reductions.

Much of that money may be needed to deal with the problem of the tax treatment of married women, depending on precisely how that is done. However, I am sure that the Chancellor appreciates structural problem, the resolution of delayed any longer. The feeling of in present arrangements is now overwhelm think that the Government's original with this had very much more to comme critics have allowed.

Beyond that, and maybe beyond Budget, I would make the top priority th increase in personal allowances to take possible, at the lower end of the inco income tax altogether. That is desirable First, it is, of course, the people at the scale for whom tax is now the greatest

Secondly, it is the obligation to pay ta which is the main cause of the poverty t that can be done to make it more worth w to stay on the dole is intensely desirable. low earnings out of tax altogether mean can take on more people and further r ment, for the simple reason that the mo afford to pay will not be so reduced by longer higher than the dole.

If the main economic and social prob face, particularly in certain parts of the unemployment, the top priority of fiscal take people out of tax and stimulate em way, provided always that that can be do of a reasonable fiscal policy.

To allow inflation to start up again wo to the economy, no service to the unemp to the Government, no service to the Co and no service to the country.

7.42 pm

Mr. Peter Shore (Bethnal Green and S like to add my voice to the tributes that h the hon. Member for Wimbledon (Dr. C for his successful maiden speech. The H with what he said about his predecessor, popular Member. Those who know his Wimbledon will share his sentiments enti his contribution and look forward to h again.

I join my right hon. and learned Friend Monklands, East (Mr. Smith) in feeli disappointment at the Chancellor's speec the debate. It was a mistake for the Chanc the entire subject matter of the Autumn Chief Secretary who is to reply, rathe himself an analysis, defence and general s of the Autumn Statement for which, aft prime responsibility.

I listened, of course, to what the Chan the international economic scene. I acce great difficulties in reaching any certain j the likely course of events. However, I ag Member for Horsham (Sir P. Hordern) a hon. Friend the Member for Blaenau Gw because I do not see much sense or pro from publicly upbraiding America for th of its economic policy when the United St principal engine of world economic gr years. Any significant reduction in the should, at least, be accompanied by increases in the growth activity of the grea

of Japan and West Germany. If we were seriously to urge on the Americans dramatic movements in cutting their trade deficit and their budget deficit without corresponding and compensatory movements towards expansion by the other major industrial countries of the western world, we should have a recipe for a major slump and recession, which would not be confined to the western world but would, of course, embrace Third world countries, which have appalling suffering.

I am sorry that the Chancellor could not remain in the Chamber until he had heard the end of my speech. Nevertheless, I am glad that the Financial Secretary to the Treasury has heard what I have said and I hope that my sentiments will be conveyed to the Chancellor.

There are two or three crucial and indisputable facts about our present economic and social situation. The first is clearly stated in the Autumn Statement. The growth in GDP that we have enjoyed during the past year is forecast to slow down considerably in the year ahead. That does not conflict with the forecasts of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development and others. The forecast of a falling-away of growth applies not only to Britain, but to virtually all the other countries in the western world and it is one principal source of our concern. It is clear that unless something else happens, growth will slow down. That will mean an end to the gradual reduction in unemployment and it is perfectly possible that there could be a reversal of the current trend. That is fact number one.

Fact number two is that the Autumn Statement forecasts—correctly, I am sure—the elimination of the public sector borrowing requirement. It is true that it will be the first time since 1970 that we have moved into surplus on the budget account. That is a remarkable change. However, the way in which that has come about might merit considerable discussion in the House.

My explanation of what has happened is that during the past 18 months there has been a significant increase in Government public expenditure, which has been only partially disguised by the sale of public assets. At the same time, there has been an obvious and notable decrease in taxation and a considerable fall in the exchange rate, especially in the earlier months. Surprise, surprise—the economy expands when one cuts taxation, increases public expenditure and lowers the exchange rate. Of course that is what happens, but for the past eight years the Treasury Bench has failed to understand that when one achieves expansion, one gets buoyancy in revenue, which means that the money that one thought that one had borrowed is more than covered by receipts from the increased economic activity. That is what the entire Keynesian argument is about. There are certainly criticisms of it and, although there are lessons to be learnt, it should not be carried too far. However, it is much more rewarding than the awful arid doctrines of monetarism which simply squeeze the life out of the economy while hoping that somehow spontaneous regeneration will occur. The elimination of the PSBR is, thus, the second point.

The third fact, which I think has impinged itself on all hon. Members and, indeed, on everyone in the country, is that two of our social services are going through a period of obvious crisis. The National Health Service has been referred to by many speakers, not only in this debate but virtually from the time the House resumed after the recess. I will say nothing more about it except that I agree entirely with the right hon. Member for Worthing (Mr. Higgins), the Chairman of the Treasury and Civil Serv Committee, who pointed out that the growth r terms is at most 1·2 per cent. That will not be ad the needs of the Health Service, where a massiv of funds on the scale mentioned by the former the House, the right hon. Member for Shropsh (Mr. Biffen), is almost certainly required.

Another social service of great importan people is rented housing, where we are talking the inadequacy of growth but of devasta destruction that has not been compensated by building in the private sector. There has not increase in overall housebuilding in Britain. T eighth year in which the total has fallen well belo in every year during the 1970s.

Mr. Winnick: I am grateful to my right hon. giving way. Is he aware that just before the recess, I received a reply from a junior en Minister saying that as far as the Governm concerned it was no longer the function of local a to build. Bearing in mind the thousands of waiting lists throughout the country, and the bed-and-breakfast and hostel accommodation, absolutely disgraceful that for the first time in years local authorities have been told that they need to build?

Mr. Shore: It is the logic of the situation authorities can no longer be responsible if they the resources. Let us look at the figures. T produced in the Autumn Statement on public spe for expenditure on housing of £3,020 million. In 1988 cash value terms, we were spending more th million in 1978-79. That is a fall in the housing pr of 60 per cent.

Mr. Roger Knapman (Stroud) *rose*——

Mr. Shore: I shall not give way to the hon. G at the moment.

It will surprise no one to learn that both compl new starts in public sector rented housing in the have been 30,000, whereas in 1978 starts were 10 completions were 130,000. If anyone wants to k we have an army of homeless and such disconte estates, there is the reason. There has been total housing provision and an obsession with ownership.

I have put together three facts which are pre incontrovertible. The first fact is that we shall ha down in growth over the next year. Secondly, we PSBR deficit; indeed, we have a surplus for the in 17 years. Thirdly, we have two obvious cris essential public social services which cater for thi our people. Surely there has never been opportunity for the Chancellor to act, for once, cl responsibly in the interests of the British peop Chancellor felt when he presented the Autumn S last year that a PSBR of 1 per cent. of gross product, a mere £4 billion, was prudent to the great praise for himself, why should not a simil in the coming year be equally prudent? Would mean that resources of the order of £6 billio become available?

As many right hon. and hon. Members hav would be folly if such resources were flung into c

[Mr. Shore]

purchasing power. Some contribution could be made there, but to dispense large sums of money to private consumers, knowing perfectly well that that would fuel an expenditure explosion or an increase in imports, would be folly. However, there would be no folly at all in spending more money on the Health Service and on the building and construction industries, both of which have a very low import content. Such expenditure would also give enormous help to many people who are in desperate need of adequate health care and decent accommodation.

I must say to the Chief Secretary to the Treasury that there cannot have been many such opportunities where circumstances have been so united for doing good things. They are now in the hands of the Treasury, and we hope that they will be exploited in the Budget of 1988.

7.56 pm

Mr. Bowen Wells (Hertford and Stortford): One of my first observations in my brief remarks concerns what right hon. and hon. Members on both sides of the House have been saying about the way in which we could distribute the additional money that the economy is earning. My right hon. Friend the Chancellor and his team have managed to expand our economy so that there is money available for the Health Service and indeed the social services and housing, about which the right hon. Member for Bethnal Green and Stepney (Mr. Shore) has spoken.

Mr. Knapman: Will my hon. Friend bear in mind the remarks of the right hon. Member for Bethnal Green and Stepney (Mr. Shore), who referred to homelessness? Would it not help the plight of the homeless if certain Labour councils with 10 per cent. of their council houses empty got round to letting those houses?

Mr. Wells: That is a very good point, but I was congratulating my right hon. Friend the Chancellor on the way in which he has conducted the economy so that we have surpluses available to spend in this way. Indeed, it is a great credit to him that this wonderful situation has been brought about by careful and sensible financial policies.

I want to help the Chancellor in relation to the international scene. He opened the debate on that subject. It is in the international setting, as the right hon. Member for Blaenau Gwent (Mr. Foot) said, where, if we get it wrong and the United States economy goes wrong, we shall not be able to resist the forces of depression in this country if the economics of the world contract.

The issue causing me to detain the House this evening is my concern at the serious lack of analysis of the international financial situation that was displayed particularly by the shadow Chancellor of the Exchequer, the right hon. and learned Member for Monklands, East (Mr. Smith), on the occasion of the stock market crash and the subsequent Opposition Supply Day debate.

I thought that the right hon. and learned Gentleman conducted the debate in a frivolous manner that was most unhelpful in seeing a solution to the serious domestic and international difficulties that we faced at that time. On that occasion speaker after eminent speaker claimed that the financial markets would not stabilise until after the United States budget deficit had been reduced substantially. Indeed, my hon. Friend the Member for Horsham (Sir P. Hordern) made this point delicately—as the right hon. Member for Blaenau Gwent said Chancellor this evening in taking Mansion House speech.

Once such an event as the st occurred, we were assured that th would stabilise and the stock m Undoubtedly, the United States bu cause of imbalance in the internati for some time, but in the years tha it has caused stock markets to r heights in this country and indeed The value of the dollar has risen s deficit has been the principal re economy began to grow from 1981 the right hon. Member for Blaenau G is not in his seat, that the failure Government to expand the econom have led to a drastic world-wide re

Perverse as the phenomenon r happened during the period 1981- significant effects. It was a major cau States trade imbalance because its v of falling, as a budget deficit woul suggested it should do, and wh commentators would say was inevi very serious calls for protectioni American manufacturers faced wit competitive foreign goods on thei international, markets and their ina both in domestic and overseas mar

The other effect of the United S in foreign domestic savings to finan and to create historically high real in interest rate regimes run in this coun the United States policy, which has investment in our domestic economy to the persistence of unemployment and has had a devastatingly cont trading partners of Britain and Euro of the Third world trading nations demand in Europe and Britain an prices.

If the United States budget def 1987, how can it be argued that si United States deficit we will ga exchange rate stability and conti Undoubtedly, if the United States h calls for a drastic cut in the budget United States would have slowed d the United States economy into reces would have made it very difficult to States, and slump would have hi trading partners, Japan, Britain and a scenario would have been disastrou economy.

If we look at the current con economy, we cannot be self-satisfi major unemployment and serious productive capacity. The markets of t Latin America and Europe's Africa down because of their chronic indebt of exports from Europe or the United there. Only the markets of the far ea trade, where fierce competition betwe States, Britain and western Europe it resulting in trade on a very marg

base. If, on top of this, we close down trade between the United States, Japan and western Europe by putting the United States into recession, we shall certainly face a worldwide slump.

It is widely argued that the way out of these difficulties is to enable the world economy to expand without overheating into inflation. How is this to be done? It will not happen automatically; it must be managed. As Paul Volcker rightly said, money will not manage itself, and certainly international money will not. It is equally certain that if one does not manage money, others will manage it for one. I agree with Lord Lever who, in an article in the United States publication "The International Economy", says:

"Yo-yo currencies are fundamentally incompatible with a liberal and prosperous, interdependent global economy. The most important condition for a return to greater world progress and trade expansion is the establishment of a system of collective disciplines for the management of the exchange rates of the world's major currencies and especially that of the dollar."

I support wholeheartedly the Chancellor's efforts to co-ordinate policies in the world and, in particular, the measures that he outlined in his speech this afternoon. One thing that he left out of his analysis, however, was the issue of debt, yet my right hon. Friend is the most innovative Chancellor and the most imaginative Finance Minister on the world stage at present in putting forward his suggestion of how African indebtedness should be dealt with.

He has suggested that the world's indebtedness may be dealt with, especially as regards Africa, where there is very little hope of repayment, by converting present public indebtedness—that is, Government loans—to grants, by reducing interest rates and by extending the indebtedness of those countries so that repayment can take place over a much longer period, with the repayment being related to the economic capacity of a country to earn its living and service its debt.

My right hon. Friend has met with little encouragement from trading partners such as West Germany and the United States, but he should persist in his attempts to persuade both the United States in relation to the Latin American debt, and West Germany and Japan in relation to other indebtedness, to enable that reorganisation of the indebtedness of Third world countries so that trading can be resumed, markets can be opened up in those countries and we can thereby begin a world expansion in trade which will result in the reduction of unemployment in our own economies and the beginning of the expansion once more of the very impoverished nations of the world on which we impact. Unless we also look at that debt issue and get it put right, we will not see the world expansion in trade that we all desperately need.

It is by the combination of policies, the co-ordination of policies and the management of policies that we shall expand world trade, prevent recession and prevent the recurrence of inflation, which is an undoubted scourge on all our economies.

There are certain points which need, therefore, to be addressed in trying to achieve that co-ordination of policies that will benefit us all. First, there must be expansion of the German and Japanese economies, and trade with all countries. Their economies must permit imports from those of us who are able to supply them, and so there must be a dramatic reduction in tariff barriers, and a GATT round, designed for that purpose, must be hurried up and made effective. There must b reduction of the United States deficit, and rates here in Europe and in the United State investment; a stabilisation of currency rela massive debt rescheduling to permit tr underdeveloped economies of the world.

We must support the international or their attempts to make certain that the economic policies, designed to produce w activity in Third world countries—and th condition of any rescheduling in which we Those international organisations—the Wo the International Monetary Fund — strengthened to provide the money for that the disciplines necessary for those Third wo to prevent them going once more indebtedness.

We must also reduce agricultural su developed world so as to increase the possi with the Third world countries which ma agricultural commodities and which are un because of agricultural subsidy regimes.

Given those conditions, and working toge see an expansion of world trade and so a commodity prices, with the result that the trading system will benefit and we shall be expanded economy, able to afford health social services without indulging in oversp public sector.

8.8 pm

Dr. John Reid (Motherwell, North): I be my congratulations to the others given Member for Wimbledon (Dr. Goodson-W maiden speech. I cannot say that I agree wi he said, but I found it a generous contrib concise and comprehensive and in many pa interesting. In short, it was not the Chancel

The Chancellor's speech was a ra contribution, managing to open a debate on Statement while making no reference t important sections of that statement, i instance, public expenditure. I do not Chancellor for staying as far away as possi Autumn Statement because the only way I c is that it is a sort of plethora of platitudes. U he could not distance himself too far from it b striking similarity between that plethora of 3 November and the cartload of cliches tod

We heard an updated version of the familiar theme of the Government's first fu effect, he said, "We are turning the corner." I his hon. Friends could not resist throwing i to Noel Coward's telling us that good tim around the corner. When we heard that in years of this Government, we knew in our bore little relation to reality. The same is Chancellor's statement. He boasts of pros constituents, who see around them nothing b poverty. He sings of industrial success when constituency and in Lanarkshire experien industrial decline. He bleats about steady gro in Britain who have seen nothing but steady standards of public services over the past fe

The truth does not lie in the statem Chancellor made today. The truth about the

[Dr. John Reid]

simple: far from experiencing an economic miracle, we have an economy which is still growing more slowly than it did under the much reviled Labour Government whom the Chancellor likes to attack when under fire. Manufacturing output has only just returned to its 1979 level and manufacturing investment is still almost 10 per cent. lower than it was in 1979 when the Government came to power. Our manufacturing trade deficit is at an all-time record and our balance of payments has been deteriorating rapidly. As if this year's news were not bad enough, the Autumn Statement makes it plain that there is worse news for next year. On the Government's own calculations, the Treasury expects slower growth, higher inflation and a worse balance of payments this year than we had last year —all of this in spite of the fact that the Government have had the benefit of £60 billion of oil revenues.

How, then, can the Chancellor continue to boast of economic and industrial success? I do not believe that it is just because the Chancellor is a stupid man, although from time to time it strikes me that if he left his brain for scientific purposes the scientific community of Britain would contest the will. It is not just because he is an obstinate man — although, God knows, he is that as well. It is not merely that he is apparently ignorant of the social consequences of his policies. The fact is that the Chancellor has managed to combine all three characteristics—stupidity, ignorance and obstinacy—in a manner almost unparalleled since Marie Antoinette. It is almost unbelievable that, with a windfall of that magnitude, this Chancellor should have created such a manufacturing deficit—not for the first time in 30 years, but for the first time in Britain's industrial history.

It is because of the combination of the Chancellor's blindness to the consequences of his policies and his failure to realise the suffering that they have caused that he can boast about his fiscal policy, among other things. The Government's fiscal policy has been marked by two characteristics. First, it has been socially divisive and, secondly, it has increasingly diverted the burden of taxation away from those best able to afford it on the backs of those least able to afford it.

The Chancellor may not have departmental responsibility for the poll tax, but it is the child of his philosophy because it meets the two criteria that I have outlined. Not only is that tax grossly unfair, highly inefficient and thoroughly regressive, but its effects on millions of people in Scotland have been intentionally underestimated in Government propaganda. The truth is that the poll tax will not remain at the £250 per head that the Government have suggested. According to figures produced by the Library, assuming that the new business rate will be held steady in real terms—the Government tell us that it will—and that the cuts made in central funding to the local authorities over the past five years will continue, at 1986 prices the poll tax will be running at £450 a head in real terms in a very short time. That is one further act whose genesis lies in the fiscal policies based on the Chancellor's philosophy.

I refer briefly to the Chancellor's public policies. If he does not believe that there is a crisis in the National Health Service, let him speak to nurses and ancillary workers at Hartwood hospital. I understand that through the howls of disbelief at her statements on the National Health Service, the Prime Minister today challenged hon. Members with constituents who are nurses or ancillary workers who are holding a token strike to condemn that action. I shall respond to the Prime Minister's challenge. It is the height of hypocrisy for Margaret Thatcher of all Prime Ministers to ask us to condemn people who have committed their lives to the Health Service, who pursue a profession that has had a tradition of non-militancy for 100 years but who have been pushed to action that they regard as extreme for the sole purpose of safeguarding patient care.

On 15 March—the ides of March—the Chancellor will have the chance to prove that the Government really care for the National Health Service. If he does not take that opportunity to use part of the supposed £3 billion surplus to meet the inadequacies of the Health Service, we shall have a historic repetition of the events of the ides of March. "Et tu, Nigel?" may not have the same classical ring as "Et tu, Brute?" but there will be some classical justification for it if another supposed friend of the National Health Service sticks another dagger into its heart.

8.16 pm

Mr. David Howell (Guildford): The world economy has been passing through an extremely dangerous phase, and continues to do so. Unlike the hon. Member for Motherwell, North (Dr. Reid), I feel that we owe my right hon. Friend the Chancellor a vote of confidence for the skill with which he has so far steered us through these dangerous and challenging rapids. His troubles are certainly not over yet, as I shall explain in a moment. Now that Paul Volcker has departed from the scene, my right hon. Friend's judgment will become increasingly central in world financial circles. He will be turned to increasingly and that will be a heavy responsibility, which I believe he will carry with skill and experience.

I said that my right hon. Friend's troubles were not yet over, because the worst is yet to come. In the 1930s, following the financial crash, many said, "That is just financial. We can all relax. The economy is fundamentally sound." Our position today is not dissimilar and the same pattern could unfold if we are not careful. The reason has less to do with our own affairs than with the fact that the United States economy is in an extremely fragile, indeed rotten, state. Despite the superficial signs of prosperity —job performance and the increasing exports to which my right hon. Friend referred—that economy is riddled through with debt of every kind.

Tomorrow's trade figures may be a little better. They will merely confirm what is obvious to some of us, although not to some Opposition Members: one cannot devalue one's way to salvation in trade any more than one can do so in any other activity. The trade figures will probably not be appalling, but they will not be very good.

Tomorrow's trade figures will tell us nothing. The United States economy is burdened not only with the debts of the developing countries about which my hon. Friend the Member for Hertford and Stortford (Ms. Wells) spoke so eloquently but, more seriously, with a mass of farm debts, energy bad debts, over-borrowing by consumers on a scale far greater even than in this country and, above all, a mass of bad debt arising from the huge speculative borrowing that went on throughout spring and summer last year to finance junk bond arrangements and leverage-managed buy-outs. The present situation is the legacy of that period, which some hon. Members seem to think was

a good period for United States economic policy. The true legacy consists of borrowing and debt on a most fearsome scale, which are bound to mean that the American economy remains deeply sick.

All this will mean that the recession, which will come anyway, will be prolonged. I differ from my right hon. Friend the Chancellor only in that respect. Of course, he is right to suggest that this economy is in a strong position in a dangerous world. However, he is too sanguine about the prospects of recession arising from what is coming quite soon in the America economy. As happened in the 1930s—the present situation is not dissimilar—we have a mass of bad debt that will never be repaid and that will lead banks increasingly to seek loans of higher quality and to try to squeeze out those stuck with unrepayable loans.

Neither the clichéd traditional policies of Keynesianism recommended by the right hon. Member for Bethnal Green and Stepney (Mr. Shore) nor monetary policy have much power to exert a counteractive influence. There often comes a stage—this was very much so in the early 1930s—when a monetary policy that has been relevant during several stages of the cycle ceases to be an effective instrument. Keynes described it as like pushing on a piece of string, trying to counteract the recessionary forces of a debt-ridden world — particularly a debt-ridden United States economy — by monetary expansion and an injection of additional money and liquidity.

That is the reality, and those who think that we are over the financial crisis and that there will be a calm phase when everything will gradually pull together are living in cloud cuckoo land. The dangers are as great as ever, if not more so. Our task in our part of the global economy is to do everything responsibly and to manage our small ship in the colossal storms that are all around us and are still coming over the horizon.

The first thing that we must do—we have already done some things that were necessary—is recognise the limitations of our position and avoid following the Americans into debt-ridden disaster. We must avoid accumulating more debts. Luckily, we are in a stronger position than the Americans were in the 1930s, just as the Americans are in a much weaker position. In the 1930s, the United States was a creditor country, but now it is one of the world's biggest debtor countries. We had some credits in the 1930s, but they were dying away. Today we are a strong, major creditor nation.

We must do everything possible to preserve that, internally and externally, and to maintain a creditor position. That means avoiding debt in terms of the Autumn Statement and the issues immediately ahead for the Budget, and it means that we must pursue a policy of a tight Budget. By a tight Budget I mean a balanced one, I understand from the excellent report of my right hon. Friend the Member for Worthing (Mr. Higgins) and his colleagues that when the Chancellor speaks of a balanced Budget he means a borrowing requirement of about 1 per cent. of GDP. That is probably sensible — a little borrowing covering some but not all of Government capital spending and revenues covering certainly all current spending.

If the Chancellor follows that policy with a tight and balanced Budget consistent with the picture that I have painted of an extremely dangerous world, it could make room for £3 billion or £4 billion-worth of tax cuts or increased expenditure. We have heard different views on which it should be, but I believe that tax cuts produce increased revenue. Cutting taxes has produced a vast increase in revenue from VAT, corporate taxation and income tax. Out of that can and should come the additional resources that should be spread to the vulnerable parts of the economy and to the major public and social services that we need.

If Opposition Members think that there is a policy choice — that we can have either tax cuts or public expenditure increases — they are living in a world of muddle. Tax cuts will generate the wealth that will enable us decently to finance vital public services and raise family living standards through individual effort.

Dr. John Marek (Wrexham): Will the right hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Howell: No, there is not time.

In the Chancellor's own words, there is room for substantial tax cuts within the balanced budget strategy.

Should we go for higher interest rates? I cannot understand that view. Every time that interest rates go up, they add to the money supply and liquidity and increase the inflation risk, not reduce it. To increase rates would go against the strategy of G7, to which we are committed.

My right hon. Friend the Member for Richmond, Yorks (Mr. Brittan) said that he agreed with the comments of the Governor of the Bank of England. I do not agree with them, and I did not understand the reference to the need to raise interest rates. That would be wrong and inconsistent with the earlier point that I made about maintaining a tight position in this country. Raising interest rates is an absurd response to the need to maintain the position, avoid debt and tighten credit.

The more realistic policy that my right hon. Friend may have to face is to return to more direct controls over consumer credit, the various ways in which plastic money is dished out and the way in which some credit companies freely provide credit to completely uncreditworthy people without bothering to find out how much they have already borrowed. He may have to consider, dare I say, direct hire purchase controls, which is an old instrument of the past. If we are concerned about avoiding consumer debt, that is where we must press the button. The idea that raising base rates will do anything to improve matters has been disproved; on the contrary, it would be counter-productive.

That is the message that I want to add to the interesting points that my hon. Friends have made. We must avoid debt and keep a tight ship. This is the very last moment when one should crowd on sail in the middle of a storm — that would be absurd. There are enormous squalls ahead and we must be extremely cautious. The vast inflation of assets and house prices led to the crash in October and it could lead to another. Inevitably and unavoidably, now will come the recession. That is now much the greater danger than price inflation, although we may get both at the same time. Price inflation will remain subdued because commodity prices will not rise—they will fall. Oil prices will fall and that will create a climate internationally of disinflation.

What we must be prepared for is recession. My right hon. Friend has helped to prepare us with great skill in moving through all these shoals and difficulties, but there is more to come and much more skill will continue to be needed if we are to get through without great hurt.

8.26 pm

Ms. Joyce Quin (Gateshead, East): I welcome the opportunity to speak in the debate, particularly as I am a member of the Treasury and Civil Service Select Committee that has considered the Autumn Statement and through it the state of the British economy.

Like my hon. Friends, I feel that the position is not quite as the Chancellor depicted it this afternoon. There are large sectors of weakness in our economy and in the Chancellor's strategy for dealing with it that have been glossed over.

One of our main concerns, if not the main concern, must be unemployment. I welcome any fall in unemployment, but even on the Government's figures it is still well over 2·5 million. I fail to understand how there can be general rejoicing among Conservative Members about the state of the economy when that level of unemployment persists. Rejoicing can begin only when unemployment drops below the level that it was when the Government took office in 1979.

In his evidence to the Select Committee, the Chancellor was less than clear about the future level of unemployment. He was not sure whether it would go up or down or stay the same, and he seemed to adopt a nonchalant attitude to questions.

Unemployment should be the centre of any economic strategy. I share the worries that many of my hon. Friends have stressed about the balance of payments, particularly about the value of manufactured goods and the increasing demand for imports. Allied to that is the fear that some have expressed, that many imports are bought on credit. As a part of the tremendous growth of consumer credit, that has virtually doubled since 1980. Perhaps even more worrying is the fact that the claims of moneylenders in court to recover loans has increased since 1980 by 180 per cent., which makes the credit problem clear.

As we look ahead to the Budget and the possible taxation changes, it is important to stress our commitment to zero rating on VAT. During Treasury questions today, the Government seemed to reiterate their commitment to continue with the zero rate on food, children's clothing and fuel, but we have still not had a firm commitment, despite repeated questioning during Question Time and in the Treasury Select Committee, to a continued zero rate on books, newspapers and periodicals. Perhaps in his reply the Chief Secretary will give such a commitment from the Government. I certainly hope so.

My hon. Friend the Member for Motherwell, North (Dr. Reid) talked about the unfairness of much of the tax burden, and I echo what he said. The tax burden is distributed unfairly. I hope that the Government have studied the Government publication "Social Trends", which shows clearly that under this Government inequalities in society and disparities in incomes have greatly widened. I hope that the Chancellor will take those figures on board when looking at future tax reform. Many tax perks and concessions are given unfairly to those who are already well off.

One case which the Chancellor could pledge to do something about concerns tax perks and concessions for private investors in forestry. I understand that those concessions amount to about £10 million a year. That may not seem a great amount, but £10 million could build about three new hospitals. It could certainly extend the attendance allowance to children under the age of two, as suggested in the amendment to the social servic legislation put forward yesterday, which would cost on £7 million. It is unjust to give tax perks and concessio of that type.

A great deal of unfavourable publicity has been giv to generous tax concessions to well-known television ch show hosts and snooker players, who have created va tracts of unattractive conifer plantations which, in t absence of planning controls, are disfiguring some of o most beautiful landscapes and national parks. T Northumberland national park is having its charact changed daily by geometric slabs of monochrome conife The Chancellor could do his bit for nature conservatio and at the same time get back some money for a mo useful purpose by ending those concessions.

The concessions mean that, to meet the real cost of £4 per acre for conifers, the tax investor needs to fork o only £120. By careful switching from schedule A schedule B tax, the tax concessions become even mo generous. This form of forestry is uneconomic witho such concessions; I would ask the Government to affir that. The Government are paying ten times more subsidise forestry than to subsidise sheep farming on th same land. I hope that the Government will take this o board and give a commitment to us in the reply.

The initial points I made are more fundamenta particularly on unemployment. It would be good to hav a comprehensive strategy for tackling that subject tonigh although precedent suggests that this is very much i doubt.

8.34 pm

Mr. John Townend (Bridlington): The Autum Statement is a vindication of the Government's economi policies since 1979. My right hon. Friend the Chancello and his predecessor deserve the country's gratitude for th way they have managed our economy. We have ha almost seven years of sustained growth. This yea manufacturing output will rise by 5 per cent., which is on of the highest rises in the industrial world.

Despite what the hon. Member for Gateshead, Eas (Ms. Quin) has said, unemployment has dropped b 500,000 and is falling rapidly. In the Bridlington an Driffield travel-to-work area in the north of Englan unemployment has fallen by 2 per cent. in the past yea and is now only 1 per cent. above the national average. A the same time, industrial productivity and profitabilit have grown fast. This has all been achieved at a time whe inflation has been progressively brought down.

The Chancellor now has a real chance to create virtuous economic circle. More growth creates highe profits and wages, which boost Government revenue. A Budget time the Chancellor will be in an enviable positio enjoyed by very few previous Chancellors. He will be abl to increase spending on health and education, as has bee announced in the statement, to reduce Governmen borrowing and taxation, and have a virtual balanced Budget for the first time in many years. That will stimulat non-inflationary growth even further.

As a result of the undoubted strength of our economy we are well placed to cope with the stock market crash which has taken place in most of the world's stock markets, and with the resulting world depression that i being forecast by many people, including many hon. Members, and most of our competitors. There is no doub that if there is a world recession we will be affected. Two

aspects of the economy must be watched carefully. The first is the competitive position of industry, which is likely to be adversely affected by the recent strengthening of sterling. We should be reluctant to increase interest rates further, as that would push the value of the pound even higher. I suggest that at Budget time there is a good case—I agree with my right hon. Friend the Member for Guildford (Mr. Howell)—for tightening the fiscal stance and allowing interest rates to fall and sterling to stabilise at a slightly lower level.

It would be damaging to our competitive position if unit labour costs rose faster than those of our industrial competitors. For several years, wages have risen significantly faster than inflation, but unit labour costs have been kept down by a massive increase in productivity. The rate of increase, which by historical standards has been large, is unlikely to be sustainable over many years. Recent increases of wages by 7 to 8 per cent. are worrying. Despite the pressure from many sources, the public sector, as the largest employer in the land, has a responsibility to set an example in keeping wage increases under control in 1988.

I have some apprehension about the level of public spending. Since 1979 the Government's policy on public spending has been progessively watered down. The Treasury Select Committee, on which I am privileged to serve, has drawn attention in previous reports to the policy changes, and that is repeated in paragraphs 13 and 14 of the report on the Autumn Statement. I was one of those who strongly supported the 1979 policy of reducing spending in real terms. I was unhappy that this was not achieved and that spending rose by 2·25 per cent. in real terms between 1978-79 and 1982-83. The Government then faced the facts and changed their objective to holding public spending broadly level in real terms, but regretfully they failed to achieve that objective.

The policy now is to let spending rise in real terms—it rose by 1·75 per cent. from 1982-83 to 1986-87—so long as it falls as a percentage of GDP. I was perturbed when the Chancellor informed the Committee at one of its recent meetings that in a recession the Government might let spending rise as a percentage of GDP in any particular year. Government spending, excluding the proceeds of privatisation, which is planned to be 42 per cent. of GDP in 1988-89, is far too high. We should have a target to get that figure down to under 40 per cent.

Without doubt the taxation rate on individuals is still too high. Our top rate of 60 per cent. is far too high when compared with our major industrial competitors. The bottom rate of 27 per cent., on to which is added 9 per cent. national health insurance contribution, making a total starting rate of 36 per cent., is also far too high.

Dr. Marek: The hon. Gentleman must get his facts right. Our top rate is not all that high. Only the United States and possibly one other country have a top rate lower than ours.

Mr. Townend: If the hon. Gentleman examines the facts, he will find that in many other countries the top rate starts at a much higher level of income.

Despite the excellent efforts by the Treasury in particular and the Government in general, expenditure in some areas is not very well controlled. The DHSS budget is spending £69 billion a year. I asked in a written question what was the cost to the United Kingdom taxpayer of DHSS payments to citizens of the Irish Republic. I received the reply that the Department did not know, as no separate records are kept. I thought that that might be understandable; perhaps all non-United Kingdom citizens were lumped together under one heading. Accordingly, I put down another question asking the total cost to the Exchequer of DHSS payments to non-United Kingdom citizens. I received the same reply—the Department had not the slightest idea.

I am sure that we are not receiving value for money in many parts of the Health Service. We have been pouring in billions of pounds of extra money every year, yet the demand for more resources by those with vested interests is rising like a crescendo. I find it strange that we have far more nurses per hospital bed occupied than have, for instance, Germany and France.

Such massive consumer resources should be split up. They are far too large for any single Cabinet Minister to oversee. There should be separate Cabinet Ministers for health and for social security. If we do not want an extra Cabinet Minister, social security should be tacked on to employment. That would be far more logical.

Let me say a brief word about the world scene. If the United States must solve its dual problems of the trade and the federal deficits, it will inevitably cease for a period to be the engine of the world economy. If we are to avoid a world recession, other countries will have to take its place.

The United Kingdom, with its growth rate in the past year, has certainly played its part—especially in view of its balance of payments deficit, which Opposition Members have pointed out. The world, however, must look to the two major surplus countries to play their part if we are to avoid recession. They, of course, are Germany and Japan. Although both countries make gestures by stimulating their economies, they have not done enough to keep world trade growing at the required rate. In particular, Japan's actions to open up its home markets to imports have been pitiful. Japan needs to be pressurised more effectively and, indeed, threatened with retaliation by all members of the G7 group.

It is interesting that our Foreign Secretary said on returning from Japan that he was hopeful that the discrimination against Scotch whisky would end—not now, but within a year. It is always the same with the Japanese: they will do it, but not now. It is not convenient; it is not politically possible; it is in the future. It is always the same old story.

I support the remarks of my right hon. Friend the Member for Worthing (Mr. Higgins) about intervention. It is very dangerous for us to intervene to keep up the value of the dollar when the United States is not putting its own money at risk. Table 4 on page 12 of the Select Committee report shows that the brunt of the intervention has been borne by Japan, Taiwan, the United Kingdom and Germany, not by America.

This is a year in which the Chancellor has the resources to make significant reductions and, I hope, significant reforms in taxation, and to stimulate enterprise even further. However, all the big spenders have the scent of money in their nostrils, and every pressure group imaginable is demanding more and more spending. The Chancellor should not give in to those strident demands. He should use the resources available to lower borrowing, and to reduce interest rates and taxes. Our economy is in a healthy state, and the hand on the tiller is perhaps the

[Mr. Townend]

most able of this century. There may be economic storms ahead for the whole world, but we can be hopeful that Britain will come through relatively unharmed.

8.45 pm

Mr. Alex Salmond (Banff and Buchan): A few years ago, a bright young financial journalist wrote:

"In my mind the great social justification for a mildly inflationary economy is that a society in which borrowers do better than lenders of money is fundamentally more attractive than one in which the reverse is true."

I have often wondered what happened to the ideas and ideals of that young journalist—particularly now that he occupies No. 11 Downing street. One of three cardinal errors in the Government's approach to the economy has been consistently to create an economic environment that has favoured the lenders rather than the borrowers of money. This culminated in 1986, when real interest rates over the average for the year—taking the three-month Treasury rate compared with inflation—reached plus 7 per cent., one of the highest rates of the century.

The Government claim consistency for their economic policies. Certainly interest rates, at least, have been consistently high, but the reasons for that have been changing all the time. When the Government first came to office, there were high interest rates in hot pursuit of sterling M3. That was eventually given up as being unmeasurable. Some three years ago, the Chancellor hiked interest rates to stabilise the currency, and latterly we have had high interest rates to stop so-called "overheating" in the United Kingdom economy. The phrase "overheating" comes as a bitter irony to regions whose economy is still in deep freeze. Industrial production in Scotland, for example, has not even returned to the levels of 1980. How, then, are we to reflect on a Government who talk about high interest rates to stop overheating of the economy?

Conservative Members used to say—perhaps they still do—that there was a direct relationship between the level of interest rates and that of public borrowing: the higher the level of public borrowing, the higher that of interest rates. Among the many "achievements" of the present Chancellor has been to establish that, in the United Kingdom over the past eight years, there has been an inverse relationship between the level of public borrowing and that of interest rates. Over the period between 1979 and 1986, the public sector borrowing rate went from £10 billion to £3·5 billion. Over the same period real interest rates rose from minus 1 per cent. to plus 7 per cent. Under the Government, the lower the level of the PSBR, the higher the level of real interest rates.

What has it taken to get any amount off the real level of interest rates? It has taken a 25 per cent. stock market crash. I was talking the other day to one of my constituents, a hard-pressed farmer, who asked why there was at last some relief in the level of interest rates. I replied that the reason was a 25 per cent. stock market crash. He replied that he wanted a fall of another 25 per cent. so that he would secure another 2 per cent. off the interest on his borrowing.

That reflects real feeling in the real economy—the manufacturing and the producing economy—that its interests are being made subservient to those of the financial economy. Instead of growing with the manufacturing economy, the financial economy has grown at its expense. In the 10 years between 1976 and 198 financial sector increased its share of gross dor product from 11 per cent. to 16 per cent. In the period, the manufacturing sector declined from 2 cent. to 24 per cent. The financial sector has been all to grow at the expense of the real economy. Government have committed the error warned of previous Tory Chancellor of making industry too and finance too proud.

In later life Churchill conceded that he was prol the worst Chancellor in British history. To be fair t great man, he wrote that before the term of office c right hon. and learned Member for Surrey, East (S Howe). That right hon. and learned Gentleman ha distinction of wasting the greatest economic opport of modern times—more than £100 billion of oil rev protection for the United Kingdom's balance of paym For generations successive Governments have "blown off course" because of pressure on the balan payments. The Government came to office with constraint, but what did they do? They invented their constraint and introduced the sterling M3 target.

I was interested in the remarks made by the right and learned Member for Richmond, Yorks (Mr. Brit who demonstrates that the spirit of 1979 to 1981 haunts the Conservative Back Benches. However, ho earth can he talk about regenerating the regional econ of the United Kingdom when he simultaneously advo a policy of fiscal retrenchment?

I regard the appropriation of Scottish oil revenu probably the greatest piece of international larceny the Spanish stole the Inca gold. However, such a would have been much easier to bear if the oil reve had been used to finance expansion and investment i economy instead of being used to finance monet experimentation and retrenchment, and if Scotland not been forced to bank-roll the Government's econ policies for the past eight years. Despite that, Chancellor still has the effrontery to come to Scotland tell the people how dependent we are on the largesse o Treasury!

The monetarist experiment is now over, but economic consequences live on. They live on with th emergence of the balance of payments as the n restraint in the United Kingdom economy. In the Aut Statement discussed today we have had the forecast £3·5 billion balance of payments deficit this year and is the possibility of it increasing next year to £5 billio £6 billion. The United Kingdom will have to pay its through the world without the comfort of massiv revenues and with a vastly reduced industrial base.

The third major failing in the Government's appro to the economy is their lack of any attempt to redres serious regional imbalances in the United Kingd Perhaps the greatest single cause of inflationary pres within the United Kingdom economy at the mome spatial imbalance. The south-east the south-west and Anglia are bidding up prices throughout the cou Government policy, far from redressing that balanc many ways reinforces it.

Let us consider the fiscal and transport subsidies are available to the south-east of England, Lon weighting, and the massive defence expenditure b along the M4 corridor. Such subsidies, together mortgage tax relief, represent massive implicit subs for the most privileged corners of the United Kingd

The south-east of England houses 30 per cent. of the United Kingdom population, but it obtains 50 per cent. of the available mortgage tax relief. That represents an excess subsidy over that region's population share of £1 billion. That should be compared with the regional aid budget for the whole of the United Kingdom. We find that mortgage tax subsidy—an excess subsidy for the south-east of England—is now worth more than the entire regional aid budget for the rest of the United Kingdom, and that is before taking into consideration the recent announcement on regional aid.

It is part of the hypocrisy of the present Administration that public expenditure in the regions and nations of the United Kingdom is described as an unacceptable subsidy, but massive tax subsidies for the south-east of England are said to be "fostering the enterprise economy".

The Government have critically weakened the United Kingdom's industrial base as a result of high interest rate and high exchange rate policies. Secondly, the vast opportunities of the oil revenues have been wasted. Thirdly, and perhaps most important, no attempt has been made to redress the maldistribution of resources. The Government have concentrated power, income and wealth in the south-east corner of the United Kingdom, which just happens to be occupied by the Conservative party's friends, sponsors and voters.

8.54 pm

Mr. Andrew Mitchell (Gedling): I shall be brief, not least because I am an enthusiastic co-sponsor of the early-day motion proposed by my hon. Friend the Member for Wokingham (Mr. Redwood) that urges that Back-Bench speeches should be limited to 10 minutes.

I wish to make three points. First, this year's Autumn Statement has been delivered against a background of profound international turbulence and nervousness in the financial markets. For many years, we were used to the British economy being rather less certain, more turbulent and less successful than other Western, or indeed Eastern, developed economies. Now the position has been reversed. In many ways, our economy is performing in much the same way as it did in the 1950s—inflation perhaps a little lower here and growth perhaps a trifle higher there. However, in the 1950s we were performing much worse than our main competitors—now we are performing rather better.

There must be something refreshing and perhaps invigorating for my right hon. and hon. Friends on the Treasury Bench about the way in which their policies and views have been copied around the world. That has occurred not only in countries with Administrations that follow avowedly free-market policies. So-called Socialist Governments in Scandinavia, Spain, Australia and New Zealand are pursuing policies similar to our own. That can hardly be dismissed as coincidence. In New Zealand and Australia, there has been a conversion to policies traditionally denoted as Thatcherite—a conversion to policies of minimum tax interference in the workings of the market and a philosophy of tax neutrality. It is interesting to note that the Labour Governments of those countries were returned to power in the past year—re-elected on such economic policies.

Over recent years, we have seen the internationalisation of the markets in terms of competition, supply side and tax regimes. Those countries that bucked that trend—as France did for a while—are now safely back on board. The alternative is simply too unpalatable. The countries that are winning are those which have competitive supply-side economies, which have competitive tax regimes and labour markets that work, and which are privatising and deregulating.

It is a truism that such greater internationalisation makes international co-operation vital. I believe that the concerted action behind the Louvre accord is absolutely essential. The accord has nothing to do with stopping international trends. It is not about seeking to prevent long-term market adjustments. It is about ensuring that the least amount of concerted intervention has the maximum impact on limiting the gyrations of the currency markets. Without such intervention, our industries and economies are too much at the mercy of the currency speculators.

My second point is that we are now in a strong position because of the consistency and sense of purpose of the policies that we have followed for the past eight years. Those eight years of caution and prudence have paid off. We have finally got public expenditure under control. We should keep growth in public spending within the prospective growth of the economy. The worst message that we could now give is that we have money to burn.

The corporate reforms enshrined in the 1984 Budget have had a dramatic effect. Corporate profits are now at an all-time high, with all the consequent gains for investment and new employment. I now look forward to a Budget that will include the major personal tax reforms that would be most beneficial to the supply side of the economy.

My third and final point is that I have some sympathy with paragraph 19 of the Select Committee report that deals with the determination of public expenditure priorities centrally, and particularly in respect of the NHS. The report makes the point that NHS expenditure has massively increased. Through medical research and discovery and the opening up of marvellous new medical cures and treatments, the demands and the need for funding medical care are increasing and will continue to increase. How we bridge that gap and how we increase the amount that we spend as a country on health care is a matter which exercises all hon. Members on both sides of the House. It is not a matter which I propose to pursue now.

However, the manner in which we target additional funds to the NHS is relevant to the debate. An overrun budget in a hospital department or a growing waiting list are not necessarily evidence only of need. They may be evidence of gross inefficiency and the misuse of resources. For example, we know that some hospitals spend three times as much as their neighbours on the same operation. We need to know much more about that phenomenon within the NHS if we are to ensure that increases in funding are to reach directly and effectively those in need. To achieve that aim we must develop the internal market within the NHS. That is the best way to ensure value for money, support better health practice and enable funds to stretch further in the interests of patients.

The Autumn Statement offers steadily rising living standards, rising employment, low inflation and impressive growth. It was presented to the House against the background of an increasing international consensus of Governments of both the Left and the Right on the rectitude and success of this Government's policies.

[Mr. Andrew Mitchell]

Tonight we shall see whether Opposition Members are moving towards accepting that consensus, or whether they wish to buck the trend and remain out in the cold.

9 pm

Mr. Austin Mitchell (Great Grimsby): I want to emphasise how much the Chancellor has done during recent months to kill the goose that laid his golden eggs through a series of actions which have been directly harmful to British manufacturing industry.

The first and most dangerous of those actions was to encourage the pound to rise in value. The system of putting the pound into a relationship with the deutschmark when the deutschmark has to go up means that the pound has been rising and becoming dangerously uncompetitive. There has been a major loss in competitiveness during the past few months. A major real over-valuation compared with 1986 has emerged.

That tendency has been further sustained by the high interest rate, which the Chancellor refuses to reduce. Indeed, the Bank of England does not want to reduce it because it considers that the Chancellor has allowed credit to expand so enormously that any reduction in interest rates will boost the credit bubble again. Therefore, we are trapped in a policy of high interest rates and an over-valued pound, when it is logical that the pound should fall with the dollar, if we are to maintain our competitiveness in the American market which has produced two thirds of manufacturing exports since 1979. We have become dependent upon the American market. The dollar still has some way to fall. It is no use the world trying to shore up the dollar. We cannot push water uphill by international agreement. The pound needs to come down with the dollar.

The terms of trade in manufactures are now, at 104, worse than they were at the height of the monetarist depression in 1981. That forebodes the same consequences for manufacturing industry — the loss of jobs and exports and the rise of imports—as resulted from that depression. It means that expansion must now come to an end. We are now at an interesting turning point which will prove either the monetarist, moralist philosophy of economics that we have heard so much about from Conservative Members or the argument that I emphasise, that competitiveness and industrial health are based on the exchange rate, and that we need a competitive exchange rate for a healthy, exporting, competing manufacturing industry.

If the exchange rate hypothesis is correct, the economic consequences of the next few months will be serious to British industry. If the monetarist, moralist interpretation —to which several Conservative Members have referred —is correct, we shall be able to ride it out with only a slight setback in growth. We are now at that interesting test point. It is my thesis that the Chancellor needs to provide for some of the problems that we will have with our exports by expanding the domestic economy much more than he seems to envisage with the present half-cocked expansion, which is doing nothing to make up the ground we have lost or to bring down unemployment.

As a country, we are under-borrowed compared with competing economies and compared with what we need to do to sustain economic activities. If the exchange rate thesis is correct, it is ludicrous to cut borrowing, and even more ludicrous to be over-funding to try to d the credit explosion, which is what the Gove doing.

I conclude by saying that the next few m provide a serious test, which bodes ill manufacturing. With the over-valued pound, t trade and the high interest rate burdens with compelled to compete, the prospects for manufacturing and for a continued fall in une are dire indeed.

9.4 pm

Mr. Gordon Brown (Dunfermline, East): Th an interesting and informative debate in whic had a maiden speech by the hon. Member for (Dr. Goodson-Wickes). He concentrated, ap for his position as a doctor, on many of the is the Health Service. His speech was eloquent an in its delivery, even if it concentrated on the si of the Health Service at the expense of the dark the horizon.

The debate was also dignified by speeches Chairmen of the Select Committee on Treasur Service and the Public Accounts Committee. has been graced too by speeches from my Friends the Members for Blaenau Gwent (Mr. Bethnal Green and Stepney (Mr. Shore) and fro Friends the Members for Durham, North (M Gateshead, East (Ms. Quin) and Great Grim Mitchell).

The debate may be remembered most for the speech by the right hon. Member for Shropsh (Mr. Biffen) who suggested that the 1p or 2p otherwise have gone to tax cuts would be bette the National Health Service, the amount being if reckoned at 2p. He has done more in a few speak up for the traditions of one-nation Toryis Chancellor has done in eight long years as a mem Conservative Government.

When we face one of the biggest crises in th Health Service in its 40-year history, when we st million unemployed and 5 million on supp benefit, and when 8 million are dependent on the and 16 million are on low incomes, one m thought that the Chancellor would at least ha this afternoon to consider some of the tasks th undone. One would have thought that congratulation might have been interrupted to of the poverty, deprivation and misery in our that we might have heard from the Chancello promise or a commitment, at least the offer t using some of our national resources to relieve further to reduce unemployment and to help the Health Service, which is in such need.

But the truth about the Government has been as my right hon. and hon. Friends have said so e Even though the Government have the money windfall of North sea oil revenue being hi expected, money available to them by good fort than by good management — even though been made aware from both sides of the Hou needs of the people, even though to secure re-ele made certain promises and even though they c themselves the employment benefits of spen investing the money, the Government refuse enough on Britain. Money that was once wi

grounds of financial prudence is now withheld for reasons that can only be described as ideological. Again and again in the last eight years the Government have said that they would spend if they could. Now they can, and they will not.

If the economy is as successful as the Chancellor has said, why cannot he spend sufficient money to provide a decent level of pensions for 9 million pensioners? Why has he had to freeze child benefit for the 7 million mothers and 12 million children who depend on it, and why for the first time in 40 years has he had to introduce charges for a visit to the optician and dentist to raise £170 million?

If the economy is fundamentally far stronger than it has ever been, as the Chancellor said at the new year, and if we are to look forward to long-term sustainable, secure growth and rises in living standards, why by the one test of these economic prospects—the level of investment in training, in education, in research and development, and in machinery and plant—have the Government done worse and why are they still doing worse than all our major competitors? Why as a result of the Autumn Statement will the Government continue to do worse in the next three years?

Why are we investing less in ourselves—as a share of our national income—than all our major competitors, including Japan, which appears to be investing 50 per cent. more than we are? Why is no other country in the industrialised world, with the exception of Belgium, investing less in its economy? Why are we investing less as a share of our gross national product in the oil-rich 1980s than we did in the 1960s and the 1970s?

If the Chancellor will not listen to me, will he listen to the Confederation of British Industry, which had this to say a few weeks ago about our growth rate:

"The momentum will not be sustained without much higher levels of investment in research, development and training, as well as fixed capital."

And, if he will not listen to the CBI, will he not listen to the Engineering Employers Federation, which said in its Budget submission:

"We believe the level of investment expenditure in the UK to have become disturbingly low . . . What concerns us is that growth will be unsustainable without increased investment, training and research and development."

Faced with that record of low investment generally, might we not have expected the Chancellor to be telling us in his Autumn Statement how he is to bridge that gap in all those major areas, how he is going to make up that investment shortfall, especially when we know that in the public sector we invest 40 per cent. less per head than is invested in Germany and 200 per cent. less than is invested in Japan?

Is it not the case—and I expect detailed answers from the Chief Secretary when he replies this evening—that, far from narrowing, that gap will widen as a result of the Autumn Statement: £100 million a year less in local authority direct investment each year until 1990; £800 million a year less in public sector capital investment each year until 1990; a 2, 3, 4 per cent. decline in the amount of money invested by the Government in our economy? No wonder the CBI has also said that

"the cuts in public sector capital spending must be reversed."

The Government's argument throughout all this is that spending has been sufficient, even when all the evidence from doctors, teachers, industrialists and public servants has been the opposite. If the Chancellor believes that spending is sufficient, has he looked at the state of our schools? One million of our primary schoolchildren a being educated in classrooms built before the first wor war, on which, as a result of the Autumn Statement, on 2 per cent. of the money needed for vital repairs is to spent. Has he visited our hospitals, where two thirds of t wards were built in the days of the voluntary and chari hospitals and even now nurses are having to leave the patients to run flag days to raise money for vit equipment and repairs? Has he seen the condition of o inner cities and our regions? Has he looked at our roa and railways? Does he not understand that what we do n invest in infrastructure today we shall have to spend more unemployment tomorrow?

Nowhere is the need for greater investment more cle than in research and development, science and innovatio Prior to the last election the Government promised th they would spend more money in this area. They promise more support for single industry research. The commissioned and received the Bide report on informatio technology. They gave the impression that they woul sponsor further space research. They promised £20 million for the collaborative programme in electronic called LINK. But since the election there has been not penny more for single industry support, which is no abolished; not a penny more for space research, a further, we pull out of the European programme; not penny more for the second stage of Alvey, for which th demand was for £400 million and which is to receiv around £30 million; not a penny, after 13 months, for th LINK programme in electronics. Is it not a scandal that 13 months after the Prime Minister announced th creation of the LINK programme in electronics, not penny has been spent, especially when the Prime Ministe said as she announced it in December 1986 that it was "essential that advances were rapidly exploited"?

The Government claim that they are spending mor when they are spending less, as a Government, o industrial research and development. Perhaps that is wha the Department of Trade and Industry meant when i claimed recently in its press release that it was "helping to translate science fiction into fact".

All this has happened since the Prime Minister took personal responsibility for our research and scientific effort.

Education, promised more in the Autumn Statement and at the election, receives less after we take into account the election year teachers' salary commitments and redundancies in our universities. The vast majority of British young people leave school at the earliest opportunity without qualifications. Half as many workers in Britain have technical qualifications than their counterparts in the United States, Japan and West Germany. A lower proportion of our people are in higher education than in any European country with the exception of Portugal. If we followed the example of Japan, the United States and West Germany, 500,000 more pupils would stay on at school. One million more pupils would leave with higher grade qualifications and there would be 500,000 more people in our universities and colleges.

We are now doing worse than countries far smaller than ourselves. South Korea, with a population of 50 million, has 1,200,000 university and college students, yet Britain, with a bigger population, has only 800,000. Our best prospect now appears not to try to stay level with Japan, but to keep up with Taiwan, not to beat West Germany,

[Mr. Gordon Brown]

but to stay up with South Korea. Are Conservative Members proud of the fact that, instead of pursuing the ambition to have the best educated, best trained, best qualified working population in the world, we are spending much less than most of our European competitors on education?

The cuts are nowhere more obvious and alarming than in the Government's policy towards our regions. The latest Government figures show that more than one million jobs have been lost since 1979 in the north, Scotland and Wales. The latest Government figures published in December show that the real value of manufacturing investment is still 35 per cent. lower in the north than it was in 1979, 33 per cent. lower in Yorkshire, 30 per cent. lower in the north-west and 27 per cent. lower in Wales. Most damaging of all is the high permanent unemployment, emigration and forced depopulation in one part of the country when we have overheating, congestion, skill shortages, pressure on the green belt and escalating house prices in another part of the country. That is neither good for the regions nor for the country as a whole.

What is the Government's reaction? On Tuesday they published a White Paper which makes a virtue of the fact that they will cut automatic regional aid which was worth £800 million in 1979, £200 million this year and will be worth nothing in the future. They plan to replace it with private consultancy services, one-stop shops and advisory services whose chief feature is that they will benefit the more prosperous regions more than they will ever benefit the disadvantaged regions. What has happened to the bipartisan tradition in regional policy? Regional policy was started by a Conservative Government when unemployment in the regions was 4 per cent. to 5 per cent. The Government are now abandoning it when unemployment is still about 14 per cent. to 15 per cent. in most of our industrial regions.

What about the promises to the inner cities? They are now in danger of moving from depression to recession, without ever having enjoyed an intervening period of recovery. Where is the new investment that will benefit the inner cities? Does the Minister not realise that the small amounts given by the Prime Minister to urban development corporations, city action forces and inner city task forces have already been taken away in cuts in rate support grant, and regional aid, and further cuts, even at the heart of the urban programme?

I do not know how Conservative Members can deny that. At the election the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry made a great virtue of the fact that the programme for the inner cities would have to be self-financing. The Chief Secretary said:

"We will not succeed by spending money".

The British economy was not to have performed like that. It was to be quite the reverse. I shall finish the quotation:

"We can only tackle the problems of the inner cities by direct action to encourage local initiative, by giving people the opportunity to be self-reliant."

Does closing schools in the inner cities provide the opportunity to be self-reliant? Does cutting the number of beds and wards in hospitals give patients the opportunity to be self-reliant?

Did the Government ever intend to do anything for the inner cities? We are told that on election night the Prime Minister said that something had to be done for the inner cities. But when it was suggested to the Pr when she visited the north-east a few month walkabout that she had said that something h for the inner cities, she said:

"That was not quite what we said."

Notice the royal "we".

"We said that we wanted to win back those our cause."

That was not a commitment to jobs in the in to votes in the inner cities. Success is to be j how much people in the inner cities were as how much the Tory party in the inner cities

Is that not the old trick — to hold ou possible by denying that there is a problem cities, the Health Service, or the educatio anywhere else, and then to turn out a huge a initiative more to do with public relations policy changes?

Is that not what happened to the ente announced with a great flurry in 1979 abandoned by the Government with a pre Christmas eve? Is that not what happened w new initiative for 20 city technology colleges October 1986 by the Secretary of State fo only four of which have been designated which has been opened?

What about all the other initiatives? Reme 2000 and Mr. Richard Branson of Virgin R Branson was brought in to clean up the litter. cleaned up; the litter remained — governn grand and great design, but government by government by gesture. We do not get job c our inner cities and regions, simply advertisin

As we gear the next election, the Prime return to the inner cities and, just as s unemployment, she will declare the proble deprivation to be solved, no doubt after 19 c definition of "inner city". The nation knows t city crusade is a crusade without cash. The pro inner cities and regions will last until dom Government's policies are all that confront t

What of the National Health Service wh mentioned by so many people this evening know that the NHS needs at least an addition above inflation for demography; when it nee per cent. to keep pace with technology; wh that, to make good the shortfall that exists at and to make up for the nurses' salary awar never properly funded, another 1 per cent. is n we know on the Government's own figures, gi to Select Committees and in documents that to the House, that the minimum that the He would need is an increase in real terms above more than 3 per cent., what is the proposal in Statement? What is the proposal, strip pretentions, after taking into account the an just before Christmas of another £100 millio

When the Health Service needs at least an cent. above inflation, the Autumn Statement per cent. That is the best that the Autumn St do. We find ourselves with one quarter of the is needed. *[Interruption.]* The Chief Secretary will give the figures. The statisticians in the T now be at work. The figures are clear in t Statement. One should take account of th

spending is to rise by £100 million this year, and if that is not compensated for next year by another announcement there will be a cut.

The Government used to tell us that they would spend if only they had the money. Now they have the money and they still refuse to spend. It is not a shortage of cash in the Treasury that is depriving the Health Service of resources; it is a shortage of compassion and concern on the part of the Government. It is not the absence of money; it is the absence of morality in the Government. If they do not accept what we say, let them look at the evidence around the country. I shall not take the most publicised versions of what has been going on in different areas and communities. All one needs to do is to listen to the health authorities, the doctors and the patients.

One has only to listen to the consultants in Birmingham who, on Monday, had to form a committee to save the Health Service; to listen to the Cornwall health authority, which yesterday had to close a 79-bed hospital to save £500,000; to listen to the Greater Manchester health authority, which says it cannot even pay its salary bills and whose cash is running out—any other authority in that position would have been declared bankrupt; to listen to the people from the midlands whom the Prime Minister refused to meet this afternoon; to listen to the Shropshire health authority, which is faced with a decision to close 10 hospitals with a loss of 367 beds; to listen to them all to know that waiting lists are at 850,000 throughout the whole of the United Kingdom, we have lost 46,000 beds since 1979, 30,000 nurses are leaving the Health Service every year, and if the Government do not spend the money that is required, the Health Service faces the rest of 1988 with a crisis on its hands.

The position of the Government and of the Prime Minister is that the private sector must be encouraged to bridge the gap, even when she knows that the National Health Service is more efficient, less administratively expensive to run and that, in a unique way, it combines economy with equity. Even though all those things are known, and the Prime Minister knows that the public want to spend money on health—and want it spent on the National Health Service—she refuses to invest any more. She would prefer private money being used ineffectively to public money being used productively. She believes in the private sector, not because it is more efficient—it is not—but because it is the private sector. She opposes the extension of public provision, not because she thinks it is inefficient, but merely because it is public. In that way, she would reduce our great National Health Service, which is internationally admired and the envy of the world, to the economics of her corner grocer shop and the morality of the worst ethics of the stock market. Thereby denying people the security of a national service and replacing it with the uncertainty of dependence on free market forces, she then parades that choice as an extension of freedom.

My right hon. and hon. Friends have said today that the Chancellor faces a choice. We are told that he is considering reducing the top rate of tax for the top 4 per cent. of the population, at a cost of £850 million. Why does he not spend that money properly on the National Health Service, education and the public services? We are told he is considering abolishing capital gains tax, which is paid by the top people in this country, raising just over £1 billion. We are told that he is considering abolishing inheritance tax, which raises £1 billion from those who are rich enough to inherit sums of more than £90,000. Is it clear to the Chancellor that the wish of the country of the vast majority of its people is that, instead of tax to make the rich few who will benefit from them richer, money should be spent on our Health Service, pu investment and the expansion of our public services?

No Government have had the advantages of North oil revenues of £60 billion of windfall money that Government have enjoyed. During these past eight ye no country has lost so many jobs in productive indust or has invested so little a share of its national incom its industry or public services, with the result that country faces the future so ill-prepared for the proble of the 1990s or the 21st century. If the Germans discovered oil, would they have closed down the Ruhr invested all the money abroad? Would the Japanese h closed down their computer industry and put all th money abroad?

The message to the Chancellor from the country clear. As my right hon. and learned Friend the Mem for Monklands, East (Mr. Smith) said earlier, Chancellor may have changed his tune about importance of the money supply and about the wisdom leaving interest rates and exchange rates to the vagaries free market forces, but on the issue of public investme especially investment in the National Health Service, has refused to learn from his mistakes. Even when he the money and knows the needs, even when the Pri Minister has made promises, and when we can see employment benefits of investing in the National Hea Service, in education and the industries of this country, Chancellor refuses to invest more in Britain. His i message of dogma and ideology. What this country nee is realism and common sense, and for that it will have look to the Labour party.

9.30 pm

The Chief Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. John Majo

The hon. Member for Dunfermline, East (Mr. Brown) h just made his debut as an Opposition Front Ben spokesman on the economy. He spoke with considera eloquence and passion, but what he said was a welter misleading and half-understood statistics, almost all which were wholly inaccurate.

The hon. Gentleman had much to say about jobs, b nothing to say about falling unemployment. If the ho Gentleman read the Autumn Statement, he clearly did n understand it. He refered to social security cuts, but ma no acknowledgement of the £48·5 billion that is ma available in the Autumn Statement. He referred education restraint, with no acknowledgement of the ext £630 million over last year's provision.

The hon. Gentleman referred to inner cities with acknowledgement of the fact that this year's publ expenditure plans will bring total urban spending to £5 million a year, which is two and a half times more in re terms than the amount spent by the Labour Governme at any time during their period of office. The ho Gentleman made no reference to the substantial growth initiatives that the Government have produced in rece years for the inner cities, such as urban developme corporations, urban development grants, urban regener tion grants, enterprise zones, the inner city initiative an Estate Action. None of those initiatives has reached th

[Mr. John Major]

hon. Gentleman. I do not know where he has been for the last few years, but I dare say that Rip Van Winkle is better informed than the hon. Gentleman about what is going on.

The hon. Gentleman referred to investment, but made no mention of the fact that in the economy as a whole investment was at record levels last year. Indeed, in the first three quarters of 1987 it was up 3·5 per cent. on the previous year's record figures. All those facts were overlooked by the hon. Gentleman in his welter of misleading statistics.

However, until the hon. Gentleman's speech we had had an interesting and thoughtful debate, which was marked by several excellent speeches, including an extremely eloquent maiden contribution from my hon. Friend the Member for Wimbledon (Dr. Goodson-Wickes). My hon. Friend paid a warm and generous tribute to his predecessor, Lord Havers. We all join my hon. Friend in wishing the noble Lord a full recovery soon from his recent illness.

My hon. Friend called for more publicity for payroll giving to charity. I congratulate him on turning his maiden speech towards a most important and interesting topic. I shall certainly draw his remarks to the attention of my right hon. Friend and I hope that those in industry and commerce who deal directly with payroll giving will take my hon. Friend's remarks to heart.

My hon. Friend has the triple attributes of being an occupational physician and barrister and a former serving officer in the Army. I have no doubt that the House will make ample use of his knowledge and talents in all of those areas, and will look forward to hearing from him on many occasions.

It is not often that events in the world economy take centre stage in British politics, but the effects in world markets and the responses of the major countries have justifiably and understandably raised serious questions in people's minds. It was, therefore, entirely appropriate that my right hon. Friend the Chancellor should have devoted so much of his opening speech to those issues.

While the fall in stock markets and the instability of the dollar have made the outlook more uncertain, this is clear to those who wish to see it. The British economy has the strength to weather any external difficulties that might arise. That strength is founded on the sound public finances that we have set out clearly in the Autumn Statement. The statement sets out our broad plans for public expenditure. The House may wish to know that the public expenditure White Paper, which will give our detailed plans, and better inform the hon. Member for Dunfermline, East, will be published next Wednesday. I am sure that we will then have the opportunity to debate it in the normal way, once the Select Committee has concluded its consideration.

The right hon. and learned Member for Monklands, East (Mr. Smith), who is at present enjoying a no doubt fascinating conversation with his hon. Friend the Member for Wrexham (Dr. Marek), spread his net quite widely. I shall turn to his comments on the National Health Service in a few moments.

When the right hon. and learned Gentleman hinges his remarks on opinion polls, as he did, perhaps I may remind him of an opinion poll last June that left him in Opposition and the Government in power with a substantial majority. Before he starts lecturing the Governme polls and public attitudes, he might rem of the election just a few months ago.

It was generous of the right ho Gentleman to assume that my right Chancellor might have a fiscal adjustment Budget. That is not only generous, but before that June opinion poll the right Gentleman and his hon. Friends were the country to expect higher taxes and pu cuts.

I am gentler than my right hon. Friend so I will not quote the explicit words Member for Birmingham, Sparkbrook [HON. MEMBERS: "Go on."] No, I am mu that. The fact is that the Opposition we public expenditure and they have chan about our tax prospects. If the Opposition and have changed their minds so rapidly I am not sure why they should assume th now in anything that they say.

Before I respond to the right ho Gentleman's remarks, I wish to deal with our public finances, as set out in the Aut Much of what has been said today reinfor the background to the debate is extrem Growth in manufacturing output contin there is a secure outlook for investment

My right hon. Friend promised tha specifically with public expenditure, and so. Our plans include cash increases in th of £2½ billion and £5½ billion in the next t of which is directed specifically to priority emphasise for the right hon. and learn interest that they are increases, not expenditure. Our plans also show a welcom in the share of national income tak expenditure, with the trend set to contin cent. of gross domestic product in 1986-87 by 1990-91. That will be of special pleas hon. and learned Friend the Member Yorks (Mr. Brittan), who expressed his c off inflationary pressures and urged cauti stance. I agree without qualification that caution are vital and I know that the Chan heard my right hon. and learned Friend' great interest.

Public borrowing this year is also down of gross domestic product — £1 billio noticeably better than earlier expectations for 18 years. This is in sharp contrast to e industrial world, where the ratio of Gove income has been rising. Here, as an act of bucked the trend, and our debt interest decreased from 5½ per cent. of GDP in 19 cent. this year. Lest that seem an arcane point out that the decline, which is set to c that within our medium-term plans we are more on priority programmes and less on

The 1 per cent. reduction in debt inter £4½ billion — precisely the sum by whi spending is increased before taking accoun hope that it is not too unkind to remind if borrowing had stayed at the same proport income that we inherited, the increased ser year would have been £8½ billion — nea

standard rate of income tax. That is where increased borrowing would have got this Government and the taxpayer, and that statistic was noticeably missing from the speech of the right hon. and learned Member for Monklands, East.

Nor did the right hon. and learned Gentleman make any mention of his pre-election claims of higher taxes and lower public expenditure if the Government were re-elected. Nor, interestingly, in view of the way that he twitted my right hon. Friend the Chancellor about not covering all aspects of policy, was there any reference to the new economic strategy that the leader of the Labour party commissioned from the shadow team six months ago today. It may be that the future of other policies launched yesterday encouraged the right hon. and learned Gentleman to remain silent. In any event, Labour policies remain a secret after six months, while the alliance's have become a catastrophe after six hours.

The debate has repeatedly returned to public expenditure priorities, and the right hon. Member for Blaenau Gwent (Mr. Foot), his right-hon. and learned Friend the Member for Monklands, East, my right hon. Friend the Member for Shropshire, North (Mr. Biffen) and a number of other right hon. and hon. Gentlemen referred specifically to the National Health Service. My right hon. Friend the Member for Shropshire, North set out some intriguing principles for the reform of the National Health Service and I have no doubt that they will be widely read and considered, although they seemed to receive no endorsement from Opposition Members who still live in a time of many years ago.

Few people would doubt the genuine affection in which the National Health Service is held. It has been manifested in recent weeks in calls for greater funding and I will return to that point in a moment. First, I wish to refer to Opposition Members who in recent years have repeatedly claimed that the Government simply do not care about the National Health Service.

Miss Marjorie Mowlam (Redcar): The Minister's performance is absolutely pathetic.

Mr. Major: Not only is this not true, but remarks like that simply trivialise and debase what ought to be an important national debate—and the hon. Member for Redcar (Miss Mowlam) illustrates the point far more eloquently than I can. I have no doubt that Opposition Members care about the National Health Service, and I have no doubt that their predecessors cared 10 years ago when they imposed on the Health Service the largest capital cuts it has faced at any time in its history. So the question is not about who cares—we all care—but about how to achieve the quality and quantity of service that we all wish to see. In that, money cannot be the whole answer. The pressures are clear.

The hon. Member for Walsall, North (Mr. Winnick) is present with us. Lord Wilson of Rievaulx once referred to the hon. Gentleman as the silliest man in the House. Clearly, that was one of the noble Lord's characteristic understatements.

The pressures on the NHS are clear. Demographic changes, an aging population, medical improvements and greater expectations have all led to the calls for greater funding. If we are genuinely concerned not about making political points but about getting the best possible Health Service, that cannot be the whole answer. *[Interruption.]* It is interesting that the Opposition are not ge interested in the Health Service but only in partisan political points about the Health Service.

The House is familiar with the growing re devoted to the service, the increasing number of p treated and the increasing number of medica employed. *[Interruption.]* I see that the hon. Mem Walsall, North is making his usual inte contribution; he is welcome.

Mr. Winnick: Does the Minister use the NHS?

Mr. Major: The answer to the hon. Gentl question is yes.

For next year, the net increase for the whole National Health Service is £1·15 billion and a increase is already committed in the public expe plans for the second year in the public expe programme. To that £1·15 billion must be add proceeds of cost improvements programmes, generation schemes and, to supplement programmes, the resources raised by surplus land

We are witnessing extensive public examination resources put into the Health Service and I believe need equally careful consideration of what we get the Health Service as a result of the money that we p it. Some of what we get is familiar and welcome: th medical staff responsible for patients, the extra 1 in-patient cases, the extra 500,000 day cases and th 3·75 million out-patient cases. Those improvements service are concrete evidence that the Governmen put in extra resources for care and that they ha used.

As the right hon. and learned Member for Monk East and my right hon. Friend the Member for Shro North acknowledged, Governments alone cannot m infinite demands for health care.

We have to ask some uncomfortable manag questions of the NHS if we are genuinely to confro difficulties of getting the best possible patient care resources that are made available. Why are surgical beds in some parts of the country empty for seven days between patients but occupied again than half a day in other parts of the country? question deserves an answer. Why does it cost m some hospitals than in others to do the same operati the same type of patient? Why can so few authorities tell us what a particular operation costs do general surgery patients spend two and a half d hospital before their operations in some health di while in others they spend less than a day? Why, there are said to be nursing shortages, do four overlaps on nursing shifts still exist? Those gen concerned to improve the quality of our health care b that those questions, as well as the question of reso need to be addressed.

Moreover, those questions need an answer before the Opposition can know that shortage of funds problem. If the answers are unsatisfactory, the ca looking first to improve value for money bec unanswerable.

Mr. Winnick: Will the Minister give way?

Mr. Major: No, he will not.

That is why, when responding to the problems a this year, we insisted that the extra funds

[Mr. Major]

accompanied by an improvement in the arrangements for monitoring Health Service performance and why I believe that the results of that monitoring should be published in the interests of getting the best patient care.

Mr. John Smith: The Chief Secretary to the Treasury is aware that yesterday the heads of the three royal medical colleges met the Secretary of State for Social Services, who gave them certain assurances. Will the right hon. Gentleman say whether, in real terms, any extra money, on top of that committed in the Autumn Statement and in statements since, will be given to the National Health Service?

Mr. Major: The right hon. and learned Gentleman anticipated what I was about to say in a couple of paragraphs' time.

We all wish to ensure that patients are treated as well and as speedily as possible. If we are to do that we cannot and should not exclude medical practice and medical efficiency from consideration in the future. It is neither acceptable nor credible simply to blame the level of funding.

The right hon. and learned Member for Monklands, East referred to press comments following the meeting between the Secretary of State for Social Services and the presidents of the three royal colleges. I cannot answer for those press reports, but I can confirm that my right hon. Friend made it clear to the presidents that we had recognised the need to increase resources for health care in the public expenditure round that we have just concluded. Furthermore, last month we announced an additional £100 million for the National Health Service for the current year, and next year we plan to make available a record £21 billion, which is 32 per cent. more in real terms than under the last Labour Government.

We are launching the new income generation scheme and taking powers to increase health authority powers. As my right hon. Friend the Member for Shropshire, North said, we see the private sector as having an important role to play in the provision of health care. That is what my right hon. Friend made clear to the three presidents, and he did not suggest to them that further sums were about to be added to this year's public expenditure settlement.

The increase in public expenditure in real terms for the next year, in terms of the specific increase identifiable in the public expenditure White Paper, is around 2·1 per cent. With the income generation scheme and other schemes, that is likely, based on precedent, to be raised to a real-terms increase of about 3 per cent. in the next year, which is precisely the sum that the hon. Member for Dunfermline, East said was needed. That is the sum that will be available in the next year for the public expenditure settlement that has just been concluded.

The Autumn Statement shows that the National Health Service has been a major beneficiary, with an increase of £700 million over plans in England. There have been other significant additions to the programmes that I have mentioned and other programmes as well.

Mr. Winnick: Will the Minister give way?

Mr. Major: No.

The plans for education have been increased by £600 million, providing additional funding for universities, for basic science and for improving th buildings. There are additions fo particular to provide for an exp building programme that will an million in the next financial year.

We have also, contrary to w substantial additions to our cap capital spending will be about £22 billion more than we had previou increase, spending by nationalised about £660 million, and spending particularly on housing, another £

Priorities have been the theme o The Select Committee report, for w hon. Friend the Member for Worth his colleagues, posed two importan priorities determined and what is th they are set? My right hon. Fri Worthing echoed those questions a that he will follow them up when takes evidence on the public expen am delighted that he did so, for not heart of successful planning an expenditure, but they reveal clearly this Government and the Labour p

For the Government, the settin establishing the total public spendin in the light of the need to keep bo meet the Government's objectives f choosing what can be afforded for in and costing them. The approach o quite different but quite simple. I "Give them the money and to hell w however inflationary they may be."

The right hon. and learned Mem East has made that plain. He wrote ago:

"I'm not sure it's important to cos

Later he said:

"I'm cautious about writing down added up by the Conservatives."

Until the right hon. and learned Ge is necessary to cost everything and a to be an Opposition spokesman, let the Exchequer—not that he is like with their policies.

The Select Committee, to its c something a good deal more soph veers to the opposite extreme o philosopher's stone. I fear that that is no magic mechanism for comparin spending on one programme as aga end, the judgment must be political. a full appraisal of spending options, output so that the judgments can be

Mr. Winnick: This is rubbish.

Mr. Major: The hon. Gentlema rubbish. The prospect for reviewing p but the public expenditure survey is threads together year upon year.

Mr. Winnick: That is all he is goi

Mr. Speaker: Order. The hon. Me across the Chamber.

Mr. Major: It is clear that the legacy of the noble Lord has upset the hon. Gentleman.

I know that my right hon. Friend and the Select Committee are uneasy that Departments are expected to look first to their own cash provisions to finance new initiatives. I make no apology for asking a Minister seeking additional resources to see what in the first instance he can contribute from his own programme to offset the savings. If savings cannot be found, his bid will have to be considered alongside those from other Departments and against the possibility of making reductions in existing programmes. To allow Departments to post off bids to the Treasury without having searched for offsetting savings would substantially weaken public expenditure control, and I have no intention of permitting that to happen.

We have heard a little today about cuts, but not as much as we often do. The dog has barked less loudly than usual. It may be that the Opposition are beginning to realise that it is possible to increase spending, reduce borrowing and cut taxes if we pursue policies that lead to an expanding economy. I remind the Opposition what real cuts look like: a 30 per cent. reduction in capital spending on hospitals and a 40 per cent. reduction in roads capital spending — the product not of this public expenditure survey but of those conducted by Lord Barnett.

Let me tell the Opposition what Tory "cuts" look like: a 36 per cent. increase in National Health Service capital spending, a 30 per cent. increase in the roads programme, and further increases in the coming years. Our cuts have been in borrowing and inflation, not in hospitals and roads. The cuts we have seen have been cuts by the Labour party in Labour headquarters in Walworth road and in the axing of that most enjoyable publication "Labour Weekly" only weeks after reporting that Labour lost the election on economic issues. "Labour Briefing" also has little affection for the Labour party, as it clearly shows.

The Autumn Statement reflects the greatly improving prospects for the economy. Public spending and borrowing are under control. Inflation is low and will remain so, investment is rising, unemployment is falling and there will be growth this year and next year. The Autumn Statement is a further signpost on the route to prosperity, and I commend it to the House.

Question put, That the amendment be made:—

The House divided: Ayes 227, Noes 283.

Division No. 156] **[9.59 pm**

AYES

Abbott, Ms Diane
Adams, Allen *(Paisley N)*
Alton, David
Anderson, Donald
Archer, Rt Hon Peter
Armstrong, Ms Hilary
Ashdown, Paddy
Ashley, Rt Hon Jack
Ashton, Joe
Banks, Tony *(Newham NW)*
Barnes, Harry *(Derbyshire NE)*
Barnes, Mrs Rosie *(Greenwich)*
Barron, Kevin
Battle, John
Beckett, Margaret
Beith, A. J.
Benn, Rt Hon Tony
Bennett, A. F. *(D'nt'n & R'dish)*
Bermingham, Gerald
Bidwell, Sydney
Blair, Tony
Blunkett, David
Boateng, Paul
Boyes, Roland
Bradley, Keith
Bray, Dr Jeremy
Brown, Gordon *(D'mline E)*
Brown, Nicholas *(Newcastle E)*
Brown, Ron *(Edinburgh Leith)*
Buchan, Norman
Buckley, George
Caborn, Richard
Callaghan, Jim
Campbell, Menzies *(Fife NE)*
Campbell, Ron *(Blyth Valley)*
Campbell-Savours, D. N.
Canavan, Dennis
Carlile, Alex *(Mont'g)*
Clarke, Tom *(Monklands W)*
Clay, Bob
Clelland, David
Clwyd, Mrs Ann
Cohen, Harry
Coleman, Donald
Cook, Frank *(Stockton N)*
Cook, Robin *(Livingston)*
Corbett, Robin
Corbyn, Jeremy
Cousins, Jim
Crowther, Stan
Cryer, Bob
Cummings, J.
Cunliffe, Lawrence
Cunningham, Dr John
Dalyell, Tam
Darling, Alastair
Davies, Rt Hon Denzil *(Llanelli)*
Davies, Ron *(Caerphilly)*
Davis, Terry *(B'ham Hodge H'l)*
Dewar, Donald
Dixon, Don
Dobson, Frank
Doran, Frank
Douglas, Dick
Dunnachie, James
Dunwoody, Hon Mrs Gwyneth
Eadie, Alexander
Eastham, Ken
Evans, John *(St Helens N)*
Fatchett, Derek
Faulds, Andrew
Field, Frank *(Birkenhead)*
Fields, Terry *(L'pool B G'n)*
Fisher, Mark
Flannery, Martin
Flynn, Paul
Foot, Rt Hon Michael
Foster, Derek
Foulkes, George
Fraser, John
Fyfe, Mrs Maria
Galbraith, Samuel
Galloway, George
Garrett, John *(Norwich South)*
Garrett, Ted *(Wallsend)*
George, Bruce
Gilbert, Rt Hon Dr John
Godman, Dr Norman A.
Golding, Mrs Llin
Gordon, Ms Mildred
Grant, Bernie *(Tottenham)*
Griffiths, Nigel *(Edinburgh S)*
Griffiths, Win *(Bridgend)*
Grocott, Bruce
Hardy, Peter
Harman, Ms Harriet
Hattersley, Rt Hon Roy
Healey, Rt Hon Denis
Heffer, Eric S.
Hinchliffe, David
Hogg, N. *(C'nauld & Kilsyth)*
Holland, Stuart
Home Robertson, John
Hood, James
Howell, Rt Hon D. *(S'[illegible]h)*
Howells, Geraint
Hoyle, Doug
Hughes, Robert *(Aberdeen N)*
Hughes, Roy *(Newport E)*
Hughes, Sean *(Knowsley S)*
Hughes, Simon *(Southwark)*
Illsley, Eric
Janner, Greville
John, Brynmor
Jones, Barry *(Alyn & Deeside)*
Jones, Ieuan *(Ynys Môn)*
Jones, Martyn *(Clwyd S W)*
Kaufman, Rt Hon Gerald
Kennedy, Charles
Kinnock, Rt Hon Neil
Kirkwood, Archy
Lamond, James
Leadbitter, Ted
Leighton, Ron
Lestor, Miss Joa
Lewis, Terry
Litherland, Robe
Livingstone, Ken
Livsey, Richard
Lloyd, Tony *(Stre*
Lofthouse, Geoff
Loyden, Eddie
McAllion, John
McAvoy, Tom
McCartney, Ian
Macdonald, Calu
McFall, John
McKay, Allen *(Pe*
McKelvey, William
McLeish, Henry
McNamara, Kevi
McTaggart, Bob
McWilliam, John
Madden, Max
Mahon, Mrs Alice
Marek, Dr John
Marshall, David *(*
Marshall, Jim *(Le*
Martin, Michael *(*
Martlew, Eric
Maxton, John
Meacher, Michael
Meale, Alan
Michael, Alun
Michie, Bill *(Shef*
Millan, Rt Hon Br
Mitchell, Austin *(*
Moonie, Dr Lewis
Morgan, Rhodri
Morley, Elliott
Morris, Rt Hon A.
Morris, Rt Hon J. *(*
Mowlam, Marjorie
Mullin, Chris
Murphy, Paul
Nellist, Dave
Oakes, Rt Hon Ga
O'Brien, William
O'Neill, Martin
Orme, Rt Hon Stan
Patchett, Terry
Pendry, Tom
Pike, Peter
Prescott, John
Primarolo, Ms Dav
Quin, Ms Joyce
Radice, Giles
Randall, Stuart
Rees, Rt Hon Mer
Reid, John
Richardson, Ms Jo
Robertson, George
Robinson, Geoffre
Rogers, Allan
Rooker, Jeff
Ross, Ernie *(Dund*
Rowlands, Ted
Ruddock, Ms Joan
Salmond, Alex
Sedgemore, Brian
Sheerman, Barry
Sheldon, Rt Hon [illegible]
Shore, Rt Hon P[illegible]
Short, Clare
Skinner, Dennis
Smith, Andrew *(Ox*
Smith, C. *(Isl'ton &*
Smith, Rt Hon J. *(*
Snape, Peter
Soley, Clive
Spearing, Nigel
Steel, Rt Hon David

[Mr. Jones]

Compensation Board on a statutory footing. My hon. Friends and I welcome the further strengthening of the compensation provisions, because this is an important element of sentencing and should be used far more effectively by the courts. It is distressing that prosecuting counsel, solicitors and magistrates are often reluctant to use the powers and to inform victims and injured parties of their rights. Very often they are advised, even in circumstances where a compensation order could be made, to pursue the matter through the civil courts, which leads to greater distress, expense and delay. I would like to see more use made of compensation orders and to see the Bill strengthened in this regard.

One of the most contentious parts of the Bill is the abolition of the right of peremptory challenges of jurors. Many hon. Members have expressed their disagreement to the abolition of this basic and fundamental right. I ask myself: if the right has existed and served the legal system for so many years, why should it now be right to abolish it? A defendant might be prejudiced by having to show cause, yet a defendant has the right to have a jury which is representative of the community in terms of the race, age or sex of the defendant, and that right should continue.

During my intervention I sought to make the point that a recent survey showed that where the right of peremptory challenge had been used, 46 per cent. of defendants were acquitted, and where it had not been used 45 per cent. of defendants had been acquitted, so it does not seem, as Conservative Members have argued, that the right favours the defendants, because it does not have that effect. Not only must justice be done, it must be seen to be done. Defendants, having been given the right, should be entitled to think that their trial is fair.

I have tried to deal briefly with many issues in the Bill. I hope that in Committee we shall have the opportunity further to strengthen the Bill and to withdraw some of the contentious issues. I hope that at the end of the day the Minister, having listened to the many contributions, will reconsider some of the most controversial aspects of the Bill.

8.24 pm

Mr. Kenneth Hind (Lancashire, West): I am grateful for the opportunity to raise some points on the Bill. I congratulate my right hon. Friend the Minister and my hon. Friends in the Home Office for producing a forward-looking and progressive Bill. I will not detain the House by discussing its many clauses. Prior to the last election, I was a member of the Standing Committee on the Criminal Justice Bill 1987, on which this Bill is based, and voted in favour of many clauses.

I welcome some of the new clauses, particularly those on possession of knives and offensive weapons, which are very necessary. There is good evidence from a study carried out in Scotland of the need for some form of stop-and-search legislation, particularly allied to knives, which will be a major preventive measure and will make our streets safer.

In the previous Bill, the clauses on child abuse provided that children could give evidence by video link. Those of us who have been involved in cases where children have been the victims of crime are well aware that young children find it traumatic to give evidence in open court, particularly on crimes of violence or sexual crimes, when they have difficulty repeating the details of the incident. It is important to do everything we can to soften the trauma of that experience, and the Bill is a move towards that.

The hon. Member for Newcastle-under-Lyme (Mrs. Golding) commented on the taking of videos of children, and perhaps the Government will consider that that could be a positive move. The video could be taken immediately after the complaint is made, so that the jury will be able to see how the complaint was made and the effect of the crime upon the child. The normal course of cross-examination could follow.

Mr. John Patten: Does not my hon. Friend, who is an expert in these matters, feel that a recording taken essentially for investigative reasons by the police, but perhaps also for therapeutic reasons by medical authorities, is a different animal from the evidence that a court should have in front of it? In addition, it would not spare the child, quite rightly, from cross-examination.

Mr. Hind: I take my hon. Friend's point; it would be wrong if the child were not cross-examined. Any suggestion that a video of the evidence should be taken and presented to the court without being tested would be wholly wrong, and I certainly would not support any move in that direction. Whatever happens, the defendant's counsel must have the right to test the evidence.

I support the move to allow a child to give unsworn evidence which could result in a conviction, because in many cases of abuse the child is the only witness and is not capable of giving sworn evidence, so the removal of the need for corroboration would open the door to examine and convict people who commit these most horrible offences. However, I press Ministers to ensure that the judge makes it clear to the jury that there are dangers in convicting on uncorroborated evidence. I hope that that will be part of their thinking when these matters are debated in Committee.

The Opposition's third criticism involves the increase to a life sentence of the penalty for carrying a firearm during a crime. I accept some of the criticisms, but one must not underestimate the deterrent effect, particularly on young unsophisticated criminals, of realising that if they take a firearm to commit an offence, their punishment will be life imprisonment. They will know that, because of the way in which our sentencing system operates, that will not be life imprisonment in the strict sense, but it will be a deterrent.

We must not undermine our deterrents with intellectual arguments which appeal to Members of Parliament, but do not appeal in the same way to those who will involve themselves in such offences. Having defended many young men who have gone into post offices with firearms, I am sure that if they had known that the likely outcome was a sentence of imprisonment, they would not have done it.

What we need in the Bill is a new sentencing manifesto and I hope that the Government will consider that in future. We have begun the process. I welcome the introduction of the right of appeal to the Court of Appeal through the auspices of the Attorney-General. Many of us in Committee on the previous Bill argued long and hard for that course of action and I am pleased that my hon. Friends have accepted our argument.

Mr. John Patten: We are a listening Government.

Mr. Hind: I take my hon. Friend's point that this is, indeed, a listening Government.

My one reservation about the proposal is the suggestion that the matter should go through the Attorney-General. I have always felt that the role of the Attorney-General is difficult. On the one hand, he is the Government's adviser and, on the other, he is the head of the prosecution service. The danger in his being head of the prosecution service and being answerable to Members of Parliament is that circumstances could arise in which hon. Members jump to their feet and say to the Attorney-General, "What will you do about the case of Snooks at Grimsby Crown court? He got only six months and he should have got two years." I am sure that some of us have certain hon. Members in mind and we do not want to bring that sort of question into the political arena. I press my hon. Friends to consider introducing a division between the judicial and executive functions of the Attorney-General. We should not put the two together.

The one way to deal with that is by giving the power either to the Crown prosecutor in each region or to the Director of Public Prosecutions. A code of practice could be laid down by the Court of Appeal by direction or by the Attorney-General. Everything would then operate within those guidelines and could be seen. In that way we would keep out everday criminal cases from the Chamber. There is a danger that individual criminal cases could become part of our daily deliberations, which many hon. Members would regard as retrogade and unnecessary.

The most important aspect of the sentencing provisions — this must not be forgotten when the right hon. Member for Birmingham, Sparkbrook (Mr. Hattersley) talks about a crisis—is that the crisis was brought about by the Labour Government's lack of long-term planning between 1974 and 1979. The reason is simple. When the present Lord Carlisle was the Under-Secretary of State in the Home Office in 1972, he produced a report, which was accepted by the Government, proposing a long-term prison building programme. In 1975, the Labour Government shelved that programme when they were going cap in hand to the International Monetary Fund because of their economic policies. As a consequence, in 1979 the incoming Conservative Government inherited the problem of no long-term prison building programme and that has created the present crisis.

The drive to build new prisons, which my hon. Friends have set in train, will eventually begin to solve the problem. Meanwhile, there is a shortage of prison places, so we must look for alternative ways of dealing with the problem. That is why I say that there must be a new sentencing manifesto. Although it will not be included in the Bill, I hope that consideration will be given to that matter.

The second problem — stemming from a lack of prison places—that has led to the crisis is the fact that, because of the shortage, magistrates and judges have been pressured into having a ladder-type sentencing policy. That involves avoiding sending a convicted person to prison, a detention centre or youth custody at all costs. What happens is that these people make four or five appearances in court before they receive any form of custodial sentencing. That increases pressure on the prison system because the sentences imposed are inevitably longer, particularly for youths, than they would otherwise be.

Young people come before the courts and have an absolute discharge, then a conditional discharge, then a supervisional one and then a care order—that is four appearances — before they are sentenced to youth custody. The same happens to adults. First they are fined, then they receive a conditional discharge, then probation orders, then community service orders, then suspended sentences and eventually they are sent to prison.

Prisons have two functions: first, punishment and, secondly, rehabilitation.

Mr. Keith Vaz (Leicester, East): They have failed.

Mr. Hind: Prisons have failed for many of the reasons that I have given. By the time many offenders are given custodial sentences, they believe that they can get away with crime. They have got away with it so often because of the pressures created by the Labour Government with their short-sighted policy on prison building.

Perhaps we should consider sending people to prison sooner for shorter periods. Many prison governors would agree with me that in old-fashioned prisons where there are three men to a cell, slopping in and out, somebody who is locked up for a fortnight will remember it. If prisoners are released after a short sentence, they will not have become used to the system, and the deterrent effect of the unpleasantness of the prison will still burn in their mind. Then comes the next stage of rehabilitation.

Perhaps my hon. Friends will consider combining short prison sentences with supervisional community service, particularly for those who are offending for the first or second time. The sentences can be so short that offenders can use their holiday entitlement to serve their sentence, as a consequence of which they will not lose their job. We must consider flexibility in sentencing and ensure that the deterrent effect of serving a sentence is burning in offender's minds when they are released and that they are not used to the prison system as is the case with longer sentences. If we close the door behind offenders for a short time, we shall provide a real deterrent.

I urge my hon. Friends to consider Holland's weekend prison system. I know that it has flaws, but it is an alternative. People working during the week give up their time at weekends to serve their sentences. That is particularly appropriate for football hooligans and for violent offenders who get drunk in public houses and fight in the evenings. Such people can be adequately punished in that way. I urge those thoughts for the future, perhaps not for inclusion in the Bill but as the beginning of a way forward. The Conservative party has taken a radical step in the review of sentencing policy as a whole. Punishment is part of any custodial sentence, which should not be a pleasant experience. Rehabilitation is the other aspect, but punishment is quite important.

I hope that in Committee the Government will bring in an amendment abolishing the right to silence in a police station. For too long, that ancient prerogative has protected guilty men. It came into existence at a time when defendants could not give evidence at their own trial. It was unfair that they should have to give an explanation without warning which they could not subsequently deny when the matter came to trial. That situation, however, has long since ceased to exist. Following the Criminal Evidence Act 1892, defendants have been able to give evidence. Some say that that is the best thing that ever happened for the prosecution, but that is another matter. Many further safeguards have since been built into the law. The defendant can have his solicitor present. His statements can be tape-recorded. If no tape recorder is

[Mr. Hind]

available, contemporaneous notes are made of every question and answer and every page is signed. There can be no greater safeguards, so do we need the right to silence?

I commend my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary's remarks about taking one step forward. I hope that he will include such a step in the Bill. The public cannot understand why a person charged with rape can refuse to make any comment to police officers investigating the case and later, through his counsel, suggest for the first time that the girl in the witness box consented to sexual intercourse with him. That cannot be allowed to continue. The Bill is an opportunity to end that situation.

The simple solution is to tell the defendant that if he refuses to answer the legitimate questions of the police it will count against him in his trial and when in the witness box he may be asked for an explanation. The right to silence is a fossil and it is time that it was ended. The Bill provides an opportunity to deal with the problem.

I am not alone in pressing that course. A recommendation was made 15 years ago by the Criminal Law Revision Committee, of which Lord Justice Lawton was chairman, but we are still saddled with the problem. As a result, the number of cases cleared up in the past few years, especially since the Police and Criminal Evidence Act, has declined. If there were an obligation for the defendant to say something, I believe that the clear-up rate and the number of convictions would increase, because the defendant could not hide behind a mechanism which operates against the interests of the state, the victim and everyone else concerned in the case.

Finally, the Bill includes much-needed advances in relation to victims. I have already referred to children. The Criminal Injuries Compensation Board will have new powers to sort out that long-standing problem. As a statutory body, its position will be much clearer. The Government have encouraged victim support associations, of which I am proud to be a president, and have pursued area watch schemes and many other new ideas in crime prevention. The Bill takes many of those Conservative ideas a further step forward. It is a major piece of legislation which will improve the detection of crime and safeguard its victims. I commend it to the House.

8.46 pm

Mr. Keith Vaz (Leicester, East): As others have pointed out, we are debating these measures at a time when crime in this country has reached record levels. The reason for those record levels is directly related to the Government's policies. I was astonished to hear the hon. Member for Lancashire, West (Mr. Hind) seek to blame the Labour Government for most of the crimes committed under the Conservatives. The facts speak differently.

In the city of Leicester and in the county of Leicestershire, in some areas crime has risen by 100 per cent. or sometimes even 200 per cent. Pleas by the chief constable, Michael Hirst, for more officers to patrol the outer estates and the inner-city areas have fallen on deaf ears. The Government seem to think that they can solve the problem of crime by building more prisons. In fact, what is needed is a commitment by the Government to build more homes, to provide a decent social services system, and to reform and revitalise the National Health Service.

Bearing in mind that offenders are likely to reof building prisons will not solve the underlying prob The Bill will not solve the underlying problems of and vandalism in the outer estates of Leicester suc Thurnby Lodge, Rowlatts Hill and Northfields. demand there, like the plea of the chief constable, more resources and a better system of justice.

My right hon. Friend the Member for Birming Sparkbrook (Mr. Hattersley) was right to talk of the in our criminal justice system. In part, the crisis de from the method of sentencing, the type of magist recruited to the bench and the log jam of cases yet heard. In many major cities, the Crown prosecu service is also in crisis. After almost a year, half the for lawyers in the Leicestershire Crown prosecution se have still not been filled because lawyers are not conf to join a system which is in crisis. The Bill continues a course of action which began in 1967 to restrict remove the rights of defendants.

I wish briefly to refer to the clause dealing with peremptory right of challenge and to trace the histo the way in which jurors' rights have been removed. heard from the hon. Member for Lancashire, West th was his fervent hope that the Government would ab the right to silence. I am a solicitor and I practised i North Leicester advice centre for more than a year a half; and before that I practised in other law centr remember noting when I read my textbooks wh became a lawyer that our system of justice entren certain rights that are necessary to protect the defen because we are supposed to have a fair system of ju in this country.

By removing the peremptory right of challenge, th continues a path that was started in 1967 with the abol of the unanimity verdict. That path was continued in with the removal of certain cases from juries. In 197 process of jury vetting began, and in 1984 the numb people disqualified from sitting on juries was double the Juries (Disqualification) Act. The latest ch proposed in the Bill will ensure that defendants will n tried by their peers—people who are representativ the community. As we know, juries are not represent of the community. I believe that that will specifically a black people and women and cases that may have r connotations or cases involving rape for which there be all-male or all-white juries.

Another clause in the Bill seeks to extend from eig 28 days the period of remand in custody. We heard ea that the prisons are overcrowded. Welford road pris Leicester is the most overcrowded prison in the cou Despite that, and despite the fact that the Governmen not prepared to provide additional resources for governor of the prison on an emergency basis, I received no representations from the prison governo the prison officers to the effect that they would sup any plan to extend the time allowed for a defendan remand.

With its present eight-day limit, the remand hea provides an opportunity for defendants to apply befor magistrates for a change in status and possibl reapplication for bail. That allows solicitors opportunity to meet the defendants at the courts, and is slightly better than a solicitor meeting the defenda prison. It gives the prisoner an opportunity to meet fri

and relatives, which may not have been possible in prison; and we must remember that that prisoner has not been convicted.

The cost arguments put forward by the Government are not sustainable. Even though there has been a large increase in costs to the legal aid system, I hazard a guess that it would be cheaper for a solicitor to see a client at the magistrates court where he or she might be able to see other clients than it would be for solicitor to a go to prison to see a remand prisoner.

Another clause concerns the proposal to allow the prosecution to appeal against excessively lenient sentences. I believe that that would give the prosecution an opportunity to try a defendant twice. Once a defendant has been through the distress of a trial, he would have to be brought before a higher court and receive a more severe sentence. That would give the press an opportunity to perform all kinds of activities to discredit or discuss cases that have already been before a lower court.

Lord Wigoder said on 14 July 1987:

"that man will be set free, perhaps given a suspended sentence or fined heavily at, let us say, the Central Criminal Court. He will go back to his wife and children, back to his job, and will start to rebuild his life. Then, six months later or thereabouts, he will be called back to the Court of Appeal and told, 'We are very sorry. The trial judge made a mistake and you have got to go straight off to prison for 12 months.' That I described last time we debated this issue as being a piece of sheer cruelty, and I am sure that that is what it would be." —[*Official Report, House of Lords*, 14 July 1987; Vol. 488, c. 941.]

It would be sheer cruelty for a person to be allowed to go through a trial and then, on the advice of the prosecution, for the Attorney-General to seek to take matters further.

Just to show that Oppostion Members are not killjoys and prepared to accept none of the Government's proposals, may I say that I am pleased by the advances that will be made in the Bill concerning video-linked evidence and the Criminal Injuries Compensation Board. It is high time that children were spared the distress of having to go through the court procedure. I would like to see video linking extended to all courts, including the juvenile court, where children are placed in difficulties during care proceedings if they have to give evidence against their parents.

I hope that the Minister will confirm in his reply that it is important that defendants are given the right to examine the video properly and question the evidence that it contains, including the right to question the technical nature of how any video evidence was taken. That important safeguard should be protected in the same way that in certain police stations in Leicester where tape recordings are made of defendants giving evidence the defendant can challenge that evidence and is assured of the important safeguards that are taken to protect what he says.

I welcome the Government's decision to place the Criminal Injuries Compensation Board on a statutory basis and to allow an appeal on a point of law from a decision of the board. However, I should like legal aid to be available for applications to the board. The board should be given a statutory power to award costs. When the Legal Aid Bill reaches this House from the other place, I am sure that we will see the Government's real intentions with regard to legal aid. The Government aim to cut legal aid and, in their words, cut costs. That means that justice will have a price on its head. It is important that victims of crime should have legal aid to argue complex legal arguments before the board.

It is important that the Minister, when he replies, should tell us how much money will be made available to publicise the schemes. I found at the law centre where I worked, and the local citizens advice bureau has informed me, that insufficient Government resources are available to publicise them. It is possible that people are unaware that they have such rights. In Leicester, we have a victim support scheme which provides such information. However, it is run on a shoestring and is not in receipt of any substantial payments from central or local government. If the Minister is prepared to put aside a great deal of money to publicise such schemes, the welcome changes proposed in the Bill will have been worth it.

The Bill could have changed many of the inadequacies and imperfections of our criminal justice system. Instead of doing that, it seeks to restrict the rights of individuals in an unconstructive way. I hope that in Committee suitable amendments will be incorporated to bring the delays in our courts system to a rapid conclusion.

8.59 pm

Mr. Tony Baldry (Banbury): The Bill provides a number of important messages. The first is that the Government and the Conservative party are not prepared to tolerate violent crime. For that reason, I welcome the provision that increases the maximum sentence for carrying firearms from 14 years to life imprisonment. In 1986, the last year for which figures are available, far too many robberies were committed with the use of firearms. The Bill provides the clear message that those who seek to use firearms to perpetrate offences risk substantial prison sentences.

Likewise, I welcome the fact that the law is to be tightened considerably in regard to those who go out armed with knives. There has been a distrubing growth in the use of knives in the perpetration of offences. Therefore it is to be welcomed that there are provisions for strengthening the law dealing with the sale and possession of offensive weapons, and that it will be an offence to have, in a public place, a blade or a sharply pointed instrument without good reason.

Secondly, the Government and the Conservative party are not prepared to tolerate child abuse. For far too long, child abuse has been a growing concern. It is right that steps should be taken to combat the evil of physical and sexual abuse of children. I welcome the fact that the Bill will enable child witnesses to give evidence by live video link when the offence is a sexual or violent assault.

For far too long child abuse has been a hidden crime, and the Bill is to be welcomed for giving greater protection to children. It will also ensure that the fact that there is no corroborative evidence is no longer a barrier to conviction in child abuse cases. That has often created a sense of great injustice, and on occasions has provided an artificial barrier to conviction. It is right that courts should be able to consider all factors when deciding what weight should be placed on a child's evidence. It cannot be right to have artificial barriers. Therefore, it is good news that the procedures will be improved whereby children can give evidence in court and that the sentences on those who indulge in physical or sexual assault on children are to be increased so that those who are guilty of sexual or sadistic child murders will serve at least 20 years in prison.

[Mr. Tony Baldry]

The maximum penalty for attempted rape is to be life imprisonment, and the maximum sentence for indecent assault on a girl is to be 10 years. The maximum penalty for cruelty to children is to be raised from two to 10 years. It is also right that the Government will introduce an amendment to make the possession of child pornography an offence. Every effort will be made to eliminate child abuse in Britain.

Thirdly, the Government and the Conservative party are determined that no one shall be enriched or shall benefit from their crime. To that extent it is welcome that there will be new powers for the confiscation of the proceeds of crime. There is a precedent in the Drug Trafficking Offences Act 1986 which enabled the courts to confiscate the assets of drug traffickers, but there are many other highly profitable crimes.

It is right that the courts should have powers to retain defendants' assets in advance of a trial and thereafter on conviction to ensure that in certain circumstances those assets and proceeds of crime are forfeited. Likewise, the message must go out that if anybody indulges in complex crime such as fraud, the Bill adds to the Criminal Justice Act 1987 so that the perpetrators can no longer rely on the hope that the complexity of their crime will help to assure their acquittal.

Part II strikes a fair balance between the community and the defendant in regard to changing the rules on the admissibility of business documents. The Government have occasionally been criticised for not doing enough to combat fraud in the City of London and elsewhere, but we have had an impressive array of legislative approaches to ensure that anyone who commits fraud does not benefit from it. We have the Companies Acts of 1980 and 1981, which, among other things, made insider dealing an offence, the Insolvency Act 1985, the Lloyd's Act 1982 and the establishment of the fraud investigation group in 1985.

Those actions, with the Criminal Justice Act 1987, have ensured that every effort will be made to combat the growing incidence of fraud. We must remember that the opportunities for fraud have increased with computers. We are determined that every effort should be made to combat fraud.

Another message which should go out is that the Government and the Conservative party will ensure that the machinery of justice is always appropriate to the needs of the community as times change. Times do change, as is seen with peremptory challenge. The circumstances of the last century which necessitated peremptory challenge no longer exist. The right of the prosecution to appeal to the Court of Appeal if it feels that a sentence is too lenient must be in everyone's interests.

Perhaps too often we have had trial by newpaper. The possibility of reviewing sentences, however, must be a benefit to the trial judge and enhance respect for the machinery of justice if there is considerable public criticism of a sentence.

Several messages will go out from this debate. We will not tolerate violent crime. We will not tolerate child abuse. We will not tolerate people being enriched by the proceeds of their crime. We will not tolerate the growth in the incidence of fraud and will do everything we can to combat it. Finally, we will always ensure that the machiney of justice is capable of meeting the needs of today and is relevant to today's needs.

9.7 pm

Mrs. Ann Taylor (Dewsbury): I listened with
the hon. Member for Banbury (Mr. Baldry) b
little astonishment to his first remark. He did n
clear who differed from him. He said that he
tolerate violent crime and child abuse, but he d
us who does. His was typical of many Tory
which try to hijack crime.

Mr. Baldry: Will the hon. Lady vote for or a
Bill?

Mrs. Taylor: I do not know how much of the d
hon. Gentleman has listened to, but I do not t
that question is relevant to whether we share
righteous opposition to violent crime. I assure
Gentleman that what he said was not party poli
saying that he does not tolerate violent crime
abuse implies that others do, and that is offensi
House and unhelpful to the debate.

The debate has been wide-ranging, which
surprising, as the Bill is wide-ranging. I agree wi
of those who have spoken and implied that a wide
Bill is required to amend our criminal justice sys
problem is that this is not the Bill that we need. T
be no doubt that our system of criminal justice
out for reform, and our reasoned amendment—
speech of my right hon. Friend the Mem
Birmingham, Sparkbrook (Mr. Hattersley)—set
reasons why that is so.

It should have been possible to conduct a debat
reform of criminal justice with a common startin
not least because some of the facts cannot be d
After all, the Conservative manifesto for the
election last year admitted that crime had been ris
that the challenge from that should not be und
however much the party in government dis
responsibility for the rise in crime. Somehow it
that crime rates had nothing to do with the Gov
of the day.

The Government have been in office for eigh
and their mark has been firmly left on our society.
that time, we have seen a vast increase in the level
in this country. Crime is up by more than 50 per ce
1979, and is rising at an alarming rate. That is es
true of the most serious types of crime—violen
and crime in our cities. Yet, at the same time, the c
failure rate has also risen, from 58 per cent. to 68 pe
which means that two thirds of all crimes are not
The level of reoffending now stands at more than
cent. for adults, and at a staggering 80 per ce
juveniles. The Government recognise and acknowle
problem, although they try to distance themselves
and to absolve themselves of all responsibility for l
order.

If we know that crime rates are going up, that
the reason for the high crime rate is the rate of reci
and that crime is largely concentrated in deprived
it seems incredible that the Government are doing s
in the Bill to address the problems. Instead, they
some of the most fundamental problems that w
They are introducing a collection of piecemeal, un
and often unco-ordinated measures, which, when l
at in detail, are seen to do far more harm than good
remove essential civil liberties and, perhaps worst
ignore the possibility of using legislation of this ki
a complete and comprehensive review of criminal j

Let me begin however, on a positive note. Hon. Members on both sides of the House have welcomed some aspects of the Bill. As my right hon. Friend the Member for Sparkbrook pointed out earlier, several parts will have our support in Committee, although we shall want to examine the details and discuss whether the safeguards are adequate. As my hon. Friend the Member for Newcastle-under-Lyme (Mrs. Golding) pointed out, the case for introducing video links for children to give evidence in court is undeniable. While there must be protection for the defendants, with proper cross-examination procedures, videos are a step forward, and one for which hon. Members such as my hon. Friend have worked for some time. I hope that we shall see the introduction of such links in the near future.

My right hon. Friend the Member for Sparkbrook also made it clear that we shall support the Government's proposals on knives. On balance, we believe that the need to protect society against those who carry knives, and may be tempted to use them, outweighs the obvious danger to civil liberties and the potential for the reintroduction of the "sus" law.

My right hon. Friend outlined the conditions of our support. First, the proposal should not be a precedent for other changes involving the onus of proof; secondly, the power must be used sensibly if it is not to reopen old fears. We shall want to be constructive in Committee. I agree with the hon. and learned Member for Burton (Mr. Lawrence) and with my hon. Friend the Member for Norwood (Mr. Fraser) that there are other aspects involved in the selling of such weapons, and we shall want to examine that in more detail.

Another point of agreement is part of the Government's proposals on the Criminal Injuries Compensation Board. We agree that that should be put on a statutory footing, although we have reservations—to which I shall return in a moment—about some of the other changes.

There are points in the Bill which we openly acknowledge as necessary changes. The problem is that the points that we welcome are more than outweighed by the negative side of the Bill, not to mention the lost opportunities for real reform. At present, people who come into direct contact with the criminal justice system are all too often being denied their rights. All too often, victims of crime are forgotten and do not receive the support that they need. Suspects are not awarded adequate protection from injustice. Offenders are often inappropriately sent to prison and subject to degrading and overcrowded conditions where the chance of rehabilitation becomes zero.

Those who have to operate the system—the police, prison officers and probation officers—face problems and conditions that make their job increasingly difficult. The Government's new regime for prison officers, Fresh Start, has brought with it a number of serious difficulties in manning levels. This is not the time to discuss the problems in detail, but the difficulties facing the Government are, in part, the result of the significant inadequacy and the faults of our criminal justice system and of the Government's failure to act or to win the confidence of those who work in this area.

The sum total of all that is an increasing loss of confidence in the system on all sides. We should therefore be discussing proposals which would be likely to come to grips with the task and establish a system which is efficient, effective and fair. Unfortunately, we are instead discussing a Bill which contains no coherence. The Bill is a lost opportunity. It is unlikely that we shall debate legislation of this kind again for many years.

In addition, the Bill is likely to make the situation worse in several respects. I am thinking particularly of the crisis of overcrowding in our prisons. When all those involved in the system are considering alternative ways of dealing with offenders, rather than sending them to prison, the Government propose measures which are likely to result in adding to the prison population, when our priority should be to reduce it. Those proposals include increasing the penalty for the illegal possession of firearms to life imprisonment. I assure Conservative Members that the Police Federation is concerned that, if the penalty for carrying firearms is the same as the penalty for using them, there is no deterrent to the criminal who is tempted to use a firearm in pursuit of crime, as the hon. and learned Member for Burton said.

Other measures which may increase the prison population include giving the prosecution the opportunity to challenge the so-called excessively lenient sentences, giving the courts the power to place juveniles in custody when they refuse to take part in a specified activity and increasing the length of time between bail hearings from eight days to 28 days, all of which will put even more pressure on our prisons.

I wish to consider the different groups involved in the working of our criminal justice system and how the Bill affects them. The rights of suspects will be greatly eroded by the Bill and that fact, which most threatens civil liberties, should be important to the House. We all wish to see the guilty convicted, but we also wish to ensure that all individuals are treated fairly under the law and that the chances of miscarriages of justice are minimal.

The removal of the prima facie rule in extradition will take away an important safeguard from the political refugee and will deny protection to the individual from being extradited on flimsy evidence. Removing the right to peremptory challenge could unfairly prejudice the defendant's situation where, for example, as my hon. Friend the Member for Norwood said, a black defendant is faced with an all-white jury, or where the prosecution exercises its right to stand by or, in some cases, vet the jury. It is not a question of a jury providing justice, but of confidence in our jury system.

The hon. and learned Member for Burton, with whom I am surprised to agree so much, described the Government's proposals as nonsense and as a confidence trick which would not lead to more convictions. He said that it hurt him to agree with my right hon. Friend the Member for Sparkbrook, but I look forward to working with the hon. and learned Gentleman in Committee, three-line Whip or not, as he said—*[Interruption.]* We shall have to see what develops on some of the interesting points where there was agreement across the Benches.

The proposal to remove more cases from being tried by jury will serve only to add to the erosion of jury trial that has taken place over the past few years and will be important to certain people. We all know that the pressures on our courts are increasing because of the increasing levels of crime, and we know that the Government are anxious, as we all are, that congestion in Crown courts be tackled, but it is unfortunate that the

[Mrs. Taylor]

Government did not wait until they could judge the effects of their own measures introduced in 1986 to deal with that problem.

The defendant's rights will be further eroded by the provision to allow written documentary evidence to be admissible in court, even when the individual who made the statement or comment is not available for cross-examination. It is unacceptable that a judge will, for example, be able to declare admissible an individual's comment made at the scene of the crime and recorded by a police officer in his notebook even though the individual is not present in court.

When we examine the way in which offenders are treated by the Bill, we find little with which we can agree. We believe that if offenders are to be prevented from reoffending, we must deal with them both fairly and constructively. In that sense, the criminal justice system must serve them, too. By doing that effectively, it can help to prevent reoffending and further protect the community.

We cannot see the merit in giving the Attorney-General the power to send a case to the Court of Appeal, to consider a sentence that he believes to be unduly lenient. That would mean subjecting the offender to a form of double jeopardy and would give the prosecution two opportunities. Because the Attorney-General will make his decision largely on the basis of reports from the prosecution, that will inappropriately involve the prosecution in matters of sentencing. It will also involve the Attorney-General, a Minister of the Government, in the sentencing policy of the courts.

It was interesting to note that the new unholy alliance between the hon. and learned Member for Burton and my right hon. Friend the Member for Sparkbrook operated in that matter as well, as both had what the hon. and learned Gentleman called enough political nous to realise what the Home Secretary did not — the pressure that the Attorney-General would be under from the tabloid press. We believe that the danger of political considerations being introduced or being thought to have been included in that process makes the proposal unacceptable and potentially unjust for the individual being sentenced.

The Government's proposals for offenders concentrate, however, on juveniles and on pursuing custody as the way of dealing with them. That is despite the fact that 76 per cent. of boys leaving detention centres after short sentences of four months or less are reconvicted within two years, while supervised activity projects are demonstrating that they have a much better success rate in turning young people away from crime, which is surely one of our main objectives.

While I am on the subject of young offenders, I must say that I find it incredible that the Government's proposal of a unified custodial sentence allows for sexual discrimination in the sentencing of boys and girls. Boys are to be detained from the age of 14, while for girls the age is 15. I hope that the Government will not persist in setting such an example of sex discrimination and that any change to correct that discrimination will not worsen the situation for girls by making the age limit 14 for all.

The Government have made much of their apparent concern for the victims of crime, yet, as is often the way with the Government, concern is not completely matched by action. It is true that at last the Criminal Injuries Compensation Board is to be put on a statutory basis, which is to be welcomed, but, having co principle, the Government have moved on t pinching exercise for those who need help most the poorer members of society. We should rem those who live in deprived areas are most lik victims to crime. Therefore, they are most like the most help.

Yet under the Bill it is possible that people in might lose their supplementary benefit if assumes that any compensation paid to the Criminal Injuries Compensation Board in allowance for loss of benefit. The Government it possible to make two exceptions—compen rape and for funeral expenses. That is commen why cannot the Government do that for victim violent crimes? Where is the logic in the Gov position?

Should a victim who is on supplementa unfortunately suffer severe injuries as a result that is bad enough for him or her to qualify for of more than £3,000, or if compensation paymen victim's total income-generating capital above th or she will find that he or she is no longer supplementary benefit. Thus, the benefit of p compensation payment will be cancelled. The person who receives compensation will benefit any payment. The Government are claiming to b of the victim, as long as he or she is not poor, une elderly, disabled or living in a deprived area.

I should like clarification of clause 107, which the Criminal Injuries Compensation Board with to withhold and reduce compensation in circumstances. One of the criteria provided gives convictions or unlawful conduct as a re implementing the clause and withholding comp I know that the matter has been discussed previ it still needs clarification.

What does the Bill mean by unlawful conduc is not a criminal conviction? Secondly, must the conviction be in relation to the event for which is being made, or could it be a completely conviction?

We accept that an individual should not be compensation where he or she has perpetrated o in executing the crime in which the injury However, it cannot be fair if the clause refer conviction whatsoever. The provisions for victim not adequate, and those for suspects and offen positively damaging.

Another major criticism of the Bill concerns does not contain—what it has failed to deal wi many reforms are urgently needed. My right hon the Member for Sparkbrook outlined some of new disciplinary system for prisons, whi Government promised in their White Paper, a s code of standards for penal establishments, the re Crown immunity from prisons, statutory guidel custody and a reduction in the length of some se

We must make every effort to replace custody, cases, with more effective alternative ways which better opportunity for rehabilitation, especia currently, four out of five prisoners have been c of non-violent offences. The Home Secretary s severe sentences were appropriate for severe and crimes, but the majority of our prison populatio prison for crimes that fall outside those categorie

We should be seeking other forms of punishment and treatment, but in seeking alternative methods of treatment we should avoid turning to inappropriate and gimmicky measures such as electronic tagging, which is expensive and inefficient and is not the answer to overcrowded prisons.

Substantial measures are needed to improve the efficiency of our court system and reduce the unacceptable delays in cases coming to trial. One measure that could be effective is the 110-day rule that operates in Scotland. When pressed, the Home Secretary said that he would be making a statement soon. We would have had more confidence in the Home Secretary's conclusions had he volunteered that information rather than having it dragged out of him. We shall have to wait and see what develops on that proposal.

We are also badly in need of more effective procedures for bringing possible miscarriages of justice back before the courts. Recent cases have demonstrated that we do not have an adequate system for dealing with these matters and that a more effective procedure is required urgently if confidence in the system is to be maintained. The Home Secretary should not underestimate the importance of all sections of the population having confidence in our criminal justice system.

The Home Secretary said that these changes should be the last major changes in this area for many years. Unfortunately, the Bill is inadequate to meet its task and to warrant that description. The basic reason why the Government have their legislation wrong is that they are responding to individual problems as they arise. The Government have adopted a piecemeal approach to what should be a comprehensive and overall review of criminal justice. They have not, as they should have, gone back to first principles and examined the aims and the problems of our criminal justice system.

The Home Secretary should have outlined what we require from the system and then sought to introduce the necessary reforms. Some parts of the Bill might have formed part of that review while other parts of it definitely would not. The Home Secretary turned his back on that approach, and seems to be afraid to go back to first principles. We cannot help but wonder why. He must know what is required, but then he knew what was required last Friday when he feebly tried to defend the indefensible when opposing the Protection of Official Information Bill, which was introduced by the hon. Member for Aldridge-Brownhills (Mr. Shepherd).

Today, as on Friday, the powers that be in the Government, or perhaps the power—power seems to exist only in the singular—are not prepared to let the right hon. Gentleman do what he knows is required. Instead, we see the Government opting for simplistic answers to complex problems. Their attitude is simple and is as follows: the incidence of crime is increasing, so let us be tougher with criminals, and with suspects, too. That seems to be the sum total of their response. As a consequence, the Bill reduces the rights of accused and of suspects. It does nothing to help accused or the convicted. It does nothing either to increase their confidence in the system of justice.

Some Conservative Members would argue that that does not matter. They would not attach much importance to the rights of the suspected, the accused or even those convicted of crime. However, the rights of these people do matter, and for two principal reasons. First, despite the events of last Friday, we live in a democracy, not a tin- dictatorship, and in a democracy each individual rights. These are rights that we are charged w protecting.

The second reason is a practical one. The way in wh we treat offenders matters because, unless we s alienating offenders from the rest of society, we shall little to reduce the rate of reoffending. The regularity w which those who come before the courts get caught i vicious circle of crime is one of the major social proble in Britain. Recidivism is an enormous problem, yet Government ignore it, despite their so-called conc about crime rates generally.

The Government's attitude to crime is simplistic. Th think primarily about punishment and little abo preventing those who have offended from doing so aga Preventive action would be real crime prevention; it wo be meaningful and lasting. The absence of any attempt deal with that in the Bill is an obvious major defect, a is a result of the Home Secretary looking over his should as a response to calls for more punishment. He is probal going against his own better instinct in opting simplistic solutions.

The Opposition believe that new criminal just measures should be based on the principle outlined in c amendment. There should be equal rights under the l and equal access to the process of justice. The Bill is n based on that principle. Instead, it consists of a series simplistic solutions which ignore the major problem. Th is why we tabled our amendment and why we shall vo for it.

9.34 pm

The Minister of State, Home Office (Mr. John Patte We are grateful to the hon. Member for Dewsbury (M Taylor) for announcing the official Opposition's suppo for those bits of the Bill that she feels the Opposition c support.

The debate has been generally constructive, almo always interesting and sometimes positively thoug provoking. The right hon. and learned Member f Warley, West (Mr. Archer) gave us something to thi about. I do not know whether he regards this as compliment but I shall read his speech tomorrow to gle some of the nuances of his suggestions about the need keep long-term strategy in mind while legislation rolls o One must always think about the next stages.

There were equally stimulating and thought-provoki speeches by my hon. and learned Friend the Member f Burton (Mr. Lawrence) and the hon. and learned Memb for Montgomery (Mr. Carlile), whom we welcome to t Chamber. It must be a pleasant relief for him to be he away from the delightful muddle of alliance polic making. *[Interruption.]* I see the hon. and learn Gentleman is indicating assent, which I am sure will recorded tomorrow in the *Official Report*. Welcome to t real world and thanks for the speech.

We are extremely grateful to the right hon. Member f Birmingham, Sparkbrook (Mr. Hattersley) and the ho Member for Dewsbury for the general Opposition suppo for the principles of what the Government wish to do knives, although I understand that a number of ho Members think that the measures could be improved. especially welcome the strong support of my hon. Frien the Members for Lancashire, West (Mr. Hind) and f Kingswood (Mr. Hayward). I know that my hon. ar

[Mr. John Patten]

learned Friend the Member for Burton would prefer greater stringency at the point of sale, but we feel that clause 130 can adequately deal with that. We can return to that point in Committee.

I am sorry that I was not in the Chamber to hear any of the speech of the hon. Member for Norwood (Mr. Fraser). I know how worried he is about the carrying and use of knives in his constituency. I believe that he spoke of the "fashion"—a terrible word to use—of knife-carrying. He obviously wants that fashion to be turned into something very unfashionable. The hon. Gentleman welcomed the possession offence in clause 128, although he has some doubts about other aspects of what my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary and I would wish to see in the clauses on knives.

I wonder whether the hon. Member for Norwood and I shall find ourselves on the same Committee. I seem to have spent most of the past two or three years on Housing Bill Committees with the hon. Gentleman. I remember when we discussed the virtue of Donizetti's opera "Lucia di Lammermoor", which was highly irrelevant to that part of the private rented sector. We were reforming at the time and the hon. Gentleman produced a little-produced opera, also by Donizetti, known as "Amelia di Liverpool". We shall welcome more of that if the hon. Gentleman is on the Committee.

On lenient sentences, the hon. Member for Dewsbury made the extraordinary suggestion that it would be inappropriate for my right hon. and learned Friend the Attorney-General, who is in the Chamber, to scrutinise the convictions that might be referred to the Court of Appeal. She criticised the possibility of my right hon. and learned Friend acting in that way and regarded it as being overtly political. She thought that it would give the Executive too much control over the judiciary. She should tell that to Mr. Malcolm Dean, a journalist for *The Guardian*, who had the effrontery during the past two general elections to stand as a candidate for what was then known as the Social Democratic Party in the constituency of my hon. Friend the Member for Bath (Mr. C. Patten).

Mr. Dean was soundly beaten both times, but he is known as an accurate journalist. In *The Guardian* on 9 September 1983, he accurately recorded:

> "Mr. Roy Hattersley, Labour spokesman on home affairs, came out unequivocally yesterday for more controls over the judiciary . . . The key to shorter sentences would be more controls over the judiciary."

I do not know whether the right hon. Gentleman still holds that view. I entirely agree with my hon. Friends the Members for Thanet, North (Mr. Gale), for Stockton, South (Mr. Devlin), for Derby, North (Mr. Knight), for Warrington, South (Mr. Butler) and for Ipswich (Mr. Irvine) that the strengthened provision to enable the Court of Appeal to increase an unduly lenient sentence, on reference to the Attorney-General, is a clear signal that justice must be done and be seen to be done.

Mr. Hayward *rose*——

Mr. Patten: I think I can read the mind of my hon. Friend the Member for Kingswood. If he will allow me to continue, he will be able to test whether I can in a moment. If I cannot, he can then intervene.

I have listened to the objections of Opposition Members, but they have put forward no alternative proposal for dealing with over-lenient sente a problem, not because the courts are us over-lenient sentences, but because a sentence is a serious matter of grave public it occurs.

Mr. Bermingham: Will the hon. Gentle

Mr. Patten: I must first deal with my pr what my hon. Friend the Member for Kin have asked if I had let him. As I said, a sentence is a matter of great public misleading to say, as did the right hon. Sparkbrook, that the defendant will be in do The person being prosecuted will receive onl —the proper one—which will be handed Court of Appeal. Without that, public c continue to be undermined. On the point

Mr. Hattersley: I wonder whether the Mi what the noble Lord Wigoder said in the H He described a situation in which a sente completed his sentence and returned to his discover that an additional period would b sentence. How does the Minister regard th sentence and not a double jeopardy?

Mr. Patten: The eventual sentence will one for the crime. That is a matter of fact.

I think that my hon. Friend the Kingswood wanted to know why and how referred to my right hon. and learned Friend General. My right hon. and learned Friend hear of a sentence that might justifiably be Court of Appeal under clause 34 in a va Counsel at the trial might draw it to the at Crown prosecution service, or the Attorney-G be approached directly by a number of peo hon. Members. I shall now give way to the for St. Helen's, South (Mr. Bermingham).

Mr. Bermingham: Can the Minister rea many other practising lawyers that he does that the present sentencing guidelines of Appeal, and the activities of the Lord Department in respect of the appointme recorders and recorders, are wholly inadequ they have not been doing their jobs for son

Mr. Patten: These important issues have with the matter under discussion, which conc number of lenient sentences that could oc guidelines are available to the High Court a

Mr. Archer *rose*——

Mr. Patten: On the issue of child victi Friends the Members for Banbury (Mr. Ba Stockton, South, my hon. and learned Friend for Burton, the hon. Member for Newcastle (Mrs. Golding) and the hon. Member for Yn Jones) have all given their support to what Friend the Home Secretary intends to do victims. I welcome the all-party consensus to issue. I believe also that there is all-party con the Bill's provision for the better treatment o hon. Friend the Member for Leeds, Nor Hampson) spoke about that issue.

The hon. Member for Dewsbury rather ov very substantial extra resources that my right

the Secretary of State for the Home Department is committing to the Criminal Injuries Compensation Board. Another £114 million over the next three years is not an inconsiderable sum to devote to putting right the problems faced by victims. The hon. Lady totally ignored the substantial sums that we are giving to victim support schemes, all of which have been initiated by my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary.

Mrs. Ann Taylor: Does the Minister acknowledge that the reason for the need to increase expenditure in this sphere is the vast increase in crime under the Government? Will he comment on the discriminatory way in which people on supplementary benefit will be affected by his rules?

Mr. Patten: I have always agreed with those who say that crimes are committed by criminals. It is absurd for the hon. Lady to suggest that crime has risen under this Government. *[Interruption.]* I shall explain to the chortling Opposition Front-Bench team on home affairs that, alas, crime has gone up for the last 30 years in good times and in bad, in times of feast and in times of famine. The Opposition cannot get away from that.

The right hon. Member for Sparkbrook criticised the proposal to abolish the right of peremptory challenge. I know that this issue is of interest to many hon. Members. As many hon. Members have said, in the past the justification for peremptory challenge was that it provided a safeguard for the defendant in circumstances quite different from those that apply today. Both the most recent reductions in the number of peremptory challenges, were made by Labour Governments in 1948 and in 1977 when the right hon. Member for Sparkbrook was on the then Labour Government Front Bench. The number now stands at three, but they are no longer needed because the defendant is adequately protected without them.

In modern circumstances it is positively objectionable that the defence should be able to influence the composition of a randomly selected jury even though it can show no good reason against the selection of a particular juror. The juror has come to court to do his or her duty. He or she — in this case "he", given the example that I shall use — does not wish to be challenged and finds himself unceremoniously bundled off the jury because he is wearing a tie and reading *The Daily Telegraph*. Nor does he wish to be bundled off the jury for not wearing a tie and wearing *The Guardian*. *[Interruption.]* I should have said for reading *The Guardian*. In some circumstances some people do wear *The Guardian* and many people suggest that that is one of the best uses for that paper on a cold night.

The hon. and learned Member for Montgomery complained about the peremptory challenge, but his complaint was rather odd and eccentric. I think this was the only occasion on which I have seen him display that characteristic Liberal trait of eccentricity. He criticised our willingness, announced by my noble Friend the Earl of Caithness, to narrow the circumstances in which the Crown prosecution could use its right to stand by jurors. The hon. and learned Member for Montgomery said that this would hamper the prosecution, and he gave what seemed to be a rather dubious example from his experience as a prosecutor. I shall say no more about that.

However, my noble Friend the Earl of Caithness, then Minister of State, Home Office, gave his undertaking in response to pressure by the noble Lord Wigoder experience in the criminal law is widely respected warmly received the undertaking. Perhaps it is to to look to the alliance for unanimity, but that is striking contradiction in alliance policy. On the the issue, it seems that it is right to confine the righ prosecution to stand by to the minimum consist justice, and that is what we have done.

On extradition, one thing that has been forgotten during the debate is that different legal use different procedures to filter out cases which not be brought to trial. This includes Scotland, whe are no committal proceedings similiar to those sout border. So even within the kingdom we have systems. That point might have been taken by the h learned Member for Montgomery.

The reform of extradition law has been comme by many hon. and right hon. Members and h welcomed by many people. The prima facie requ in extradition works against us, not for us. The rec principle means that we must often establish a prin case in civil law jurisdictions which are unfamiliar concept. That could lead to us failing to c criminals, and that has been overlooked by those wh criticised the prima facie requirement, which is propose to disapply that requirement.

I cannot understand why the Labour Front Ben changed their tune since the passage through Co of the Criminal Justice Bill 1987, because du passage the hon. Member for Islington, Sou Finsbury (Mr. Smith), speaking with the full mig authority of someone on the Labour Front Benc that he was satisfied with the undertakings of my h learned Friend the Member for Putney (Mr. Mell withdrew the amendments, which were never retu by the Labour Front Bench during Committee extremely hard to understand why in 1987 th Member for Islington, South and Finsbury withdr amendments and there has now been a major cha tune.

The Bill must be seen in the context of the un commitment of the Government to strengthening c justice over the past eight years. My right hon. Fri Home Secretary and I have outlined the ways in wh Criminal Justice Bill will further strengthen our n defences against crime. It will make important im ments to court procedures, it will toughen our resp international crime, it will increase the protection to children and it will improve the position of vict crime, amongst the many other issues it deals with

Mr. Robin Maxwell-Hyslop (Tiverton): Will m hon. Friend pause to remind the House of the pressure for the reforms in the Bill whereby the C Appeal can repair the damage done by eccentric ju first instance?

Mr. Patten: I would not want to comment c member of the judiciary, but I entirely agree that the been considerable pressure from many people to co the possibility of referring allegedly lenient sentences Court of Appeal.

I have three things to say to the right hon. Mem Sparkbrook. First, he has not given us much o thinking about alternatives to custody. He has about the need to have fewer people in prison, but

[Mr. Patten]

not come forward with any positive ways of dealing with it—the sorts of ways that might be considered when we look at the long term, such as the right hon. and learned Member for Warley, West looked at. We could say that offenders do not have to go to prison, but can go to work and must pay a certain amount of their wages each week directly to the victim, or do not have to go to prison but at the weekend must do tough demanding work that is socially useful. Yes, offenders would not go to prison but, to use the Home Secretary's solicitous phrase, would be punished in the community by having to observe a curfew in their home each evening. All those elements begin to stack up to a positive alternative to custody for non-violent criminals. Electronic tagging may have an important role in that.

Mr. Fraser *rose*——

Mr. Patten: I hope that we shall have constructive debates in Committee. One of the chief contributions which the Labour party can make to law and order and the fight against crime is to use its influence with Labour-controlled local authorities to get them to work with, rather than to snipe at, the police. *[Interruption.]* Manchester and Ealing, where the Leader of the Opposition lives, are but two. The hon. Member for Kingston upon Hull, West (Mr. Randall) is rather over-excitable this evening.

The role of the right hon. Member for Sparkbrook has been rather inglorious. What did he do when he was a member of the Labour Government? That is a long time ago — 10 or 11 years — but he was a member of a Government who nearly brought about a police strike in 1977, with officers leaving the police force in large numbers.

What does the right hon. Gentleman do now about those local authorities which do so much to undermine law and order? Does he invite them for a quiet chat over a bite to eat at the Gay Hussar and haul them over the coals later? Not at all. He wants to give greater power to people to determine the policies, priorities and methods of the police.

In a recent speech—I bet I am the only hon. Member who has read it—in Odsal in Bradford last September, of which I have, I believe the phrase is, for greater accuracy secured a copy, the right hon. Gentleman said:

"I cannot see how a genuine partnership can exist without the election of a police authority responsible both for finance and the policy guidelines within which the police operate."

In other words, the right hon. Gentleman is suggesting the political control of the police. He goes on to reminisce about his time on a police authority 30 years previously and boasts:

"we first suspended and then dismissed a Chief Constable".

That is what he is really concerned with.

Mr. Hattersley: As the Minister has read the Odsal speech with such careful attention, I hope that he will point out to the House that the "we" to whom I referred was not the royal plural as used by the Prime Minister, but the chairman of the watch committee in Sheffield and the Conservative Home Secretary, Mr. Henry Brooke.

Mr. Patten: The right hon. Gentleman was happy to be part of that decision-making process.

My last point—*[Interruption.]*

Mr. Speaker: Order. Let us have the last point.

Mr. Patten: My last point is just a junior Ministers, about which the rig had something to say earlier. underprivileged class — *[Interruption* hon. Gentleman has a good record as

Mr. Speaker: Order. There is one ask the House to listen in silence.

Mr. Patten: The best quotation fro diaries is:

"Roy Hattersley has been bluntly frank desire for promotion and also flattering By comparison, we are acting.

The Government have come strengthening the protection of law and takes it a significant stage further.

Question put, That the amendment

The House divided: Ayes 226, Noes

Division No. 141]

AYES

Abbott, Ms Diane
Adams, Allen *(Paisley N)*
Allen, Graham
Archer, Rt Hon Peter
Armstrong, Ms Hilary
Ashdown, Paddy
Ashley, Rt Hon Jack
Banks, Tony *(Newham NW)*
Barnes, Harry *(Derbyshire NE)*
Barron, Kevin
Battle, John
Beckett, Margaret
Beith, A. J.
Bell, Stuart
Benn, Rt Hon Tony
Bennett, A. F. *(D'nt'n & R'dish)*
Bermingham, Gerald
Bidwell, Sydney
Blair, Tony
Blunkett, David
Boyes, Roland
Bradley, Keith
Bray, Dr Jeremy
Brown, Gordon *(D'mline E)*
Brown, Nicholas *(Newcastle E)*
Brown, Ron *(Edinburgh Leith)*
Bruce, Malcolm *(Gordon)*
Buchan, Norman
Buckley, George
Caborn, Richard
Callaghan, Jim
Campbell, Menzies *(Fife NE)*
Campbell, Ron *(Blyth Valley)*
Campbell-Savours, D. N.
Canavan, Dennis
Carlile, Alex *(Mont'g)*
Clark, Dr David *(S Shields)*
Clarke, Tom *(Monklands W)*
Clay, Bob
Clelland, David
Clwyd, Mrs Ann
Cohen, Harry
Coleman, Donald
Cook, Robin *(Livingston)*
Corbett, Robin
Corbyn, Jeremy
Cousins, Jim
Cox, Tom
Crowther, Stan
Cryer, Bob
Cummings, J.
Cunliffe, Lawrence
Dalyell, Tam
Darling, Alastair
Davies, Ron *(Caerphilly)*
Davis, Ter
Dixon, Don
Dobson, F
Doran, Fra
Douglas, D
Dunnachie
Dunwoody
Eadie, Ale
Eastham,
Evans, Joh
Ewing, Har
Ewing, Mrs
Fatchett, D
Faulds, An
Fearn, Ron
Field, Fran
Fields, Ter
Fisher, Ma
Flannery,
Flynn, Paul
Foot, Rt Ho
Foster, Der
Foulkes, G
Fraser, Joh
Fyfe, Mrs
Galbraith,
Galloway,
Garrett, Jo
Garrett, Te
George, Br
Gilbert, Rt
Godman, D
Golding, M
Gordon, Mr
Grant, Ben
Griffiths, Ni
Griffiths, W
Grocott, Br
Hardy, Pete
Harman, M
Hattersley,
Healey, Rt
Heffer, Eric
Hinchliffe, D
Hogg, N. (C
Holland, St
Home Robe
Hood, Jame
Howarth, G
Howell, Rt
Howells, Ge
Hoyle, Doug
Hughes, Jo
Hughes, Ro
Hughes, Ro

Hughes, Sean *(Knowsley S)*
Illsley, Eric
Ingram, Adam
Janner, Greville
John, Brynmor
Johnston, Sir Russell
Jones, Barry *(Alyn & Deeside)*
Jones, Ieuan *(Ynys Môn)*
Jones, Martyn *(Clwyd S W)*
Kaufman, Rt Hon Gerald
Kinnock, Rt Hon Neil
Kirkwood, Archy
Lambie, David
Lamond, James
Leadbitter, Ted
Leighton, Ron
Lestor, Miss Joan *(Eccles)*
Lewis, Terry
Litherland, Robert
Livingstone, Ken
Livsey, Richard
Lloyd, Tony *(Stretford)*
Lofthouse, Geoffrey
Loyden, Eddie
McAllion, John
McAvoy, Tom
McCartney, Ian
Macdonald, Calum
McKay, Allen *(Penistone)*
McKelvey, William
McLeish, Henry
McNamara, Kevin
McTaggart, Bob
McWilliam, John
Madden, Max
Mahon, Mrs Alice
Marshall, David *(Shettleston)*
Marshall, Jim *(Leicester S)*
Martin, Michael *(Springburn)*
Martlew, Eric
Maxton, John
Meacher, Michael
Meale, Alan
Michael, Alun
Michie, Bill *(Sheffield Heeley)*
Millan, Rt Hon Bruce
Mitchell, Austin *(G't Grimsby)*
Molyneaux, Rt Hon James
Moonie, Dr Lewis
Morgan, Rhodri
Morley, Elliott
Morris, Rt Hon A *(W'shawe)*
Morris, Rt Hon J *(Aberavon)*
Mowlam, Marjorie
Mullin, Chris
O'Brien, William
O'Neill, Martin
Orme, Rt Hon Stanley
Patchett, Terry
Pendry, Tom
Pike, Peter
Powell, Ray *(Ogmore)*
Prescott, John
Primarolo, Ms Dawn
Quin, Ms Joyce
Randall, Stuart
Redmond, Martin
Rees, Rt Hon Merlyn
Reid, John
Richardson, Ms Jo
Roberts, Allan *(Bootle)*
Robertson, George
Robinson, Geoffrey
Rogers, Allan
Rooker, Jeff
Ross, Ernie *(Dundee W)*
Rowlands, Ted
Ruddock, Ms Joan
Sedgemore, Brian
Sheerman, Barry
Sheldon, Rt Hon Robert
Shore, Rt Hon Peter
Short, Clare
Skinner, Dennis
Smith, Andrew *(Oxford E)*
Smith, C. *(Isl'ton & F'bury)*
Smith, Rt Hon J. *(Monk'ds E)*
Smyth, Rev Martin *(Belfast S)*
Snape, Peter
Soley, Clive
Spearing, Nigel
Steinberg, Gerald
Stott, Roger
Strang, Gavin
Straw, Jack
Taylor, Mrs Ann *(Dewsbury)*
Taylor, Matthew *(Truro)*
Thomas, Dafydd Elis
Thompson, Jack *(Wansbeck)*
Turner, Dennis
Vaz, Keith
Wall, Pat
Wallace, James
Walley, Ms Joan
Wardell, Gareth *(Gower)*
Wareing, Robert N.
Welsh, Andrew *(Angus E)*
Welsh, Michael *(Doncaster N)*
Wigley, Dafydd
Williams, Rt Hon A. J.
Williams, Alan W. *(Carm'then)*
Wilson, Brian
Winnick, David
Wise, Mrs Audrey
Worthington, Anthony
Young, David *(Bolton SE)*

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. Frank Haynes and
Mr. Frank Cook.

NOES

Adley, Robert
Aitken, Jonathan
Alexander, Richard
Alison, Rt Hon Michael
Allason, Rupert
Amess, David
Amos, Alan
Arbuthnot, James
Arnold, Tom *(Hazel Grove)*
Ashby, David
Aspinwall, Jack
Atkins, Robert
Atkinson, David
Baker, Rt Hon K. *(Mole Valley)*
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Baldry, Tony
Batiste, Spencer
Beaumont-Dark, Anthony
Bellingham, Henry
Bendall, Vivian
Bennett, Nicholas *(Pembroke)*
Benyon, W.
Bevan, David Gilroy
Biffen, Rt Hon John
Biggs-Davison, Sir John
Blackburn, Dr John G.
Blaker, Rt Hon Sir Peter
Body, Sir Richard
Bonsor, Sir Nicholas
Boscawen, Hon Robert
Boswell, Tim
Bottomley, Peter
Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Bowden, Gerald *(Dulwich)*
Bowis, John
Boyson, Rt Hon Dr Sir Rhodes
Braine, Rt Hon Sir Bernard
Brandon-Bravo, Martin
Brazier, Julian
Bright, Graham
Brittan, Rt Hon Leon
Brooke, Rt Hon Peter
Brown, Michael *(Brigg & Cl't's)*
Browne, John *(Winchester)*
Bruce, Ian *(Dorset South)*
Buchanan-Smith, Rt Hon Alick
Buck, Sir Antony
Budgen, Nicholas
Burns, Simon
Butcher, John
Butler, Chris
Butterfill, John
Carlisle, John, *(Luton N)*
Carrington, Matthew
Cash, William
Channon, Rt Hon Paul
Chapman, Sydney
Churchill, Mr
Clark, Sir W. *(Croydon S)*
Conway, Derek
Coombs, Anthony *(Wyre F'rest)*
Coombs, Simon *(Swindon)*
Cope, John
Cormack, Patrick
Couchman, James
Cran, James
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Curry, David
Davies, Q. *(Stamf'd & Spald'g)*
Davis, David *(Boothferry)*
Day, Stephen
Devlin, Tim
Dickens, Geoffrey
Dicks, Terry
Dorrell, Stephen
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James
Dover, Den
Dunn, Bob
Durant, Tony
Eggar, Tim
Evans, David *(Welwyn Hatf'd)*
Evennett, David
Fenner, Dame Peggy
Field, Barry *(Isle of Wight)*
Finsberg, Sir Geoffrey
Fookes, Miss Janet
Forman, Nigel
Forth, Eric
Fowler, Rt Hon Norman
Fox, Sir Marcus
Franks, Cecil
Freeman, Roger
French, Douglas
Fry, Peter
Gale, Roger
Gardiner, George
Garel-Jones, Tristan
Gill, Christopher
Glyn, Dr Alan
Goodhart, Sir Philip
Goodlad, Alastair
Goodson-Wickes, Dr Charles
Gorman, Mrs Teresa
Gow, Ian
Gower, Sir Raymond
Grant, Sir Anthony *(CambaSW)*
Greenway, Harry *(Ealing N)*
Greenway, John *(Rydale)*
Gregory, Conal
Griffiths, Sir Eldon *(Bury St E')*
Griffiths, Peter *(Portsmouth N)*
Grist, Ian
Ground, Patrick
Grylls, Michael
Hamilton, Hon A. *(Epsom)*
Hamilton, Neil *(Tatton)*
Hampson, Dr Keit
Hanley, Jeremy
Hannam, John
Hargreaves, A. *(B*
Hargreaves, Ken
Harris, David
Haselhurst, Alan
Hawkins, Christop
Hayes, Jerry
Hayhoe, Rt Hon S
Hayward, Robert
Heathcoat-Amory,
Heddle, John
Hicks, Mrs Maure
Hicks, Robert *(Co*
Higgins, Rt Hon T
Hill, James
Hind, Kenneth
Hogg, Hon Dougla
Holt, Richard
Hordern, Sir Peter
Howard, Michael
Howarth, Alan *(St*
Howarth, G. *(Cann*
Howell, Ralph *(No*
Hughes, Robert G.
Hunt, David *(Wirra*
Hunt, John *(Raven*
Hunter, Andrew
Hurd, Rt Hon Doug
Irvine, Michael
Irving, Charles
Jack, Michael
Jackson, Robert
Janman, Timothy
Jessel, Toby
Johnson Smith, Si
Jones, Gwilym *(Ca*
Jones, Robert B *(H*
Kellett-Bowman, M
Key, Robert
King, Roger *(B'ha*
Kirkhope, Timothy
Knapman, Roger
Knight, Greg *(Derb*
Knight, Dame Jill
Knowles, Michael
Knox, David
Lamont, Rt Hon No
Lang, Ian
Latham, Michael
Lawrence, Ivan
Lee, John *(Pendle)*
Leigh, Edward *(Ga*
Lennox-Boyd, Hon
Lilley, Peter
Lloyd, Sir Ian *(Hav*
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareh*
Lord, Michael
Luce, Rt Hon Richa
Lyell, Sir Nicholas
McCrindle, Robert
Macfarlane, Sir Ne
MacKay, Andrew *(E*
Maclean, David
McLoughlin, Patrick
McNair-Wilson, M.
McNair-Wilson, P.
Madel, David
Malins, Humfrey
Mans, Keith
Maples, John
Marshall, John *(Ha*
Martin, David *(Port*
Mates, Michael
Maude, Hon Francis
Maxwell-Hyslop, Ro
Mayhew, Rt Hon Si
Mellor, David
Miller, Hal

Mills, Iain
Miscampbell, Norman
Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)*
Mitchell, David *(Hants NW)*
Moate, Roger
Monro, Sir Hector
Montgomery, Sir Fergus
Morris, M *(N'hampton S)*
Morrison, Sir Charles *(Devizes)*
Morrison, Hon P *(Chester)*
Moss, Malcolm
Moynihan, Hon C.
Mudd, David
Neale, Gerrard
Needham, Richard
Neubert, Michael
Newton, Rt Hon Tony
Nicholls, Patrick
Onslow, Rt Hon Cranley
Paice, James
Patnick, Irvine
Patten, John *(Oxford W)*
Pattie, Rt Hon Sir Geoffrey
Porter, Barry *(Wirral S)*
Rathbone, Tim
Renton, Tim
Rhodes James, Robert
Rhys Williams, Sir Brandon
Rifkind, Rt Hon Malcolm
Roesi, Sir Hugh
Rumbold, Mrs Angela
Ryder, Richard
Sainsbury, Hon Tim
Scott, Nicholas
Shaw, David *(Dover)*
Shaw, Sir Giles *(Pudsey)*
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Shephard, Mrs G. *(Norfolk SW)*
Shepherd, Richard *(Aldridge)*
Shersby, Michael
Sims, Roger
Skeet, Sir Trevor
Squire, Robin
Stanbrook, Ivor
Steen, Anthony
Stern, Michael
Stevens, Lewis
Stewart, Allan *(Eastwood)*
Stewart, Andrew *(Sherwood)*
Stradling Thomas, Sir John
Sumberg, David
Summerson, Hugo
Tapsell, Sir Peter
Taylor, Ian *(Esher)*
Taylor, John M *(Solihull)*
Taylor, Teddy *(S'end E)*
Tebbit, Rt Hon Norman
Temple-Morris, Peter
Thompson, D. *(Calder Valley)*
Thompson, Patrick *(Norwich N)*
Thornton, Malcolm
Thurnham, Peter
Townend, John *(Bridlington)*
Tracey, Richard
Tredinnick, David
Trippier, David
Twinn, Dr Ian
Vaughan, Sir Gerard
Waddington, Rt Hon David
Waldegrave, Hon William
Walden, George
Walker, Bill *(T'side North)*
Waller, Gary
Ward, John
Wardle, C. *(Bexhill)*
Warren, Kenneth
Watts, John
Wells, Bowen
Wheeler, John
Whitney, Ray
Widdecombe, Miss Ann
Wiggin, Jerry
Wilkinson, John
Wilshire, David
Winterton, Mrs Ann
Winterton, Nicholas
Wolfson, Mark
Wood, Timothy
Woodcock, Mike
Yeo, Tim
Young, Sir George *(Acton)*

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. David Lightbown and
Mr. Kenneth Carlisle.

Question accordingly negatived.

Main Question put forthwith, pursuant to Standing Order No. 60 (Amendment on Second or Third Reading):-

The House divided: Ayes 285, Noes 225.

Division No. 142] **[10.14 pm**

AYES

Adley, Robert
Aitken, Jonathan
Alexander, Richard
Alison, Rt Hon Michael
Allason, Rupert
Amess, David
Amos, Alan
Arbuthnot, James
Arnold, Tom *(Hazel Grove)*
Ashby, David
Aspinwall, Jack
Atkins, Robert
Atkinson, David
Baker, Rt Hon K. *(Mole Valley)*
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Baldry, Tony
Batiste, Spencer
Beaumont-Dark, Anthony
Bellingham, Henry
Bendall, Vivian
Bennett, Nicholas *(Pembroke)*
Benyon, W.
Bevan, David Gilroy
Biffen, Rt Hon John
Biggs-Davison, Sir John
Blackburn, Dr John G.
Blaker, Rt Hon Sir Peter
Body, Sir Richard
Bonsor, Sir Nicholas
Boscawen, Hon Robert
Boswell, Tim
Bottomley, Peter
Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Bowden, Gerald *(Dulwich)*
Bowis, John
Boyson, Rt Hon Dr Sir Rhodes
Braine, Rt Hon Sir Bernard
Brandon-Bravo, Martin
Brazier, Julian
Bright, Graham
Brittan, Rt Hon Leon
Brooke, Rt Hon Peter
Brown, Michael *(Brigg & Cl'th's)*
Browne, John *(Winchester)*
Bruce, Ian *(Dorset South)*
Buchanan-Smith, Rt Hon Alick
Buck, Sir Antony
Budgen, Nicholas
Burns, Simon
Butcher, John
Butler, Chris
Butterfill, John
Carlisle, John, *(Luton N)*
Carrington, Matthew
Cash, William
Channon, Rt Hon Paul
Chapman, Sydney
Churchill, Mr
Clark, Sir W. *(Croydon S)*
Conway, Derek
Coombs, Anthony *(Wyre F'rest)*
Coombs, Simon *(Swindon)*
Cope, John
Cormack, Patrick
Couchman, James
Cran, James
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Curry, David
Davies, Q. *(Stamf'd & Spald'g)*
Davis, David *(Boothferry)*
Day, Stephen
Devlin, Tim
Dickens, Geoffrey
Dicks, Terry
Dorrell, Stephen
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James
Dover, Den
Dunn, Bob
Durant, Tony
Eggar, Tim
Evans, David *(Welwyn Hatf'd)*
Evennett, David
Fenner, Dame Peggy
Field, Barry *(Isle of Wight)*
Finsberg, Sir Geoffrey
Fookes, Miss Janet
Forman, Nigel
Forth, Eric
Fowler, Rt Hon Norman
Fox, Sir Marcus
Franks, Cecil
Freeman, Roger
French, Douglas
Fry, Peter
Gale, Roger
Gardiner, George
Garel-Jones, Tristan
Gill, Christopher
Glyn, Dr Alan
Goodhart, Sir Philip
Goodlad, Alastair
Goodson-Wickes, Dr Charles
Gorman, Mrs Teresa
Gow, Ian
Gower, Sir Raymond
Grant, Sir Anthony *(CambsSW)*
Greenway, Harry *(Ealing N)*
Greenway, John *(Rydale)*
Gregory, Conal
Griffiths, Sir Eldon *(Bury St E')*
Griffiths, Peter *(Portsmouth N)*
Grist, Ian
Ground, Patrick
Grylls, Michael
Hamilton, Hon A. *(Epsom)*
Hamilton, Neil *(Tatton)*
Hampson, Dr Keith
Hanley, Jeremy
Hannam, John
Hargreaves, A. *(B'ham H'll Gr')*
Hargreaves, Ken *(Hyndburn)*
Harris, David
Haselhurst, Alan
Hawkins, Christopher
Hayhoe, Rt Hon Sir Barney
Hayward, Robert
Heathcoat-Amory, David
Heddle, John
Hicks, Mrs Maureen *(Wolv' NE)*
Hicks, Robert *(Cornwall SE)*
Higgins, Rt Hon Terence L.
Hill, James
Hind, Kenneth
Hogg, Hon Douglas *(Gr'th'm)*
Holt, Richard
Hordern, Sir Peter
Howard, Michael
Howarth, Alan *(Strat'd-on-A)*
Howarth, G. *(Cannock & B'wd)*
Howell, Ralph *(North Norfolk)*
Hughes, Robert G. *(Harrow W)*
Hunt, David *(Wirral W)*
Hunt, John *(Ravensbourne)*
Hunter, Andrew
Hurd, Rt Hon Douglas
Irvine, Michael
Irving, Charles
Jack, Michael
Jackson, Robert
Janman, Timothy
Jessel, Toby
Johnson Smith, Sir Geoffrey
Jones, Gwilym *(Cardiff N)*
Jones, Robert B *(Herts W)*
Kellett-Bowman, Mrs Elaine
Key, Robert
King, Roger *(B'ham N'thfield)*
Kirkhope, Timothy
Knapman, Roger
Knight, Greg *(Derby North)*
Knight, Dame Jill *(Edgbaston)*
Knowles, Michael
Knox, David
Lamont, Rt Hon Norman
Lang, Ian
Latham, Michael
Lawrence, Ivan
Lee, John *(Pendle)*
Leigh, Edward *(Gainsbor'gh)*
Lennox-Boyd, Hon Mark
Lilley, Peter
Lloyd, Sir Ian *(Havant)*
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
Lord, Michael
Luce, Rt Hon Richard
Lyell, Sir Nicholas
McCrindle, Robert
Macfarlane, Sir Neil
MacKay, Andrew *(E Berkshire)*
Maclean, David
McLoughlin, Patrick
McNair-Wilson, M. *(Newbury)*
McNair-Wilson, P. *(New Forest)*
Madel, David
Malins, Humfrey
Mans, Keith
Maples, John
Marshall, John *(Hendon S)*
Martin, David *(Portsmouth S)*
Mates, Michael
Maude, Hon Francis
Maxwell-Hyslop, Robin
Mayhew, Rt Hon Sir Patrick
Mellor, David
Miller, Hal
Mills, Iain
Miscampbell, Norman
Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)*
Mitchell, David *(Hants NW)*
Monro, Sir Hector
Montgomery, Sir Fergus
Morris, M *(N'hampton S)*
Morrison, Sir Charles *(Devizes)*
Morrison, Hon P *(Chester)*
Moss, Malcolm
Moynihan, Hon C.

Mudd, David
Neale, Gerrard
Needham, Richard
Nelson, Anthony
Neubert, Michael
Newton, Rt Hon Tony
Nicholls, Patrick
Paice, James
Patnick, Irvine
Patten, John *(Oxford W)*
Pattie, Rt Hon Sir Geoffrey
Porter, Barry *(Wirral S)*
Rathbone, Tim
Renton, Tim
Rhodes James, Robert
Rhys Williams, Sir Brandon
Rifkind, Rt Hon Malcolm
Rossi, Sir Hugh
Rumbold, Mrs Angela
Ryder, Richard
Sainsbury, Hon Tim
Scott, Nicholas
Shaw, David *(Dover)*
Shaw, Sir Giles *(Pudsey)*
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Shephard, Mrs G. *(Norfolk SW)*
Shepherd, Richard *(Aldridge)*
Shersby, Michael
Sims, Roger
Skeet, Sir Trevor
Squire, Robin
Stanbrook, Ivor
Steen, Anthony
Stern, Michael
Stevens, Lewis
Stewart, Allan *(Eastwood)*
Stewart, Andrew *(Sherwood)*
Stradling Thomas, Sir John
Sumberg, David
Summerson, Hugo
Tapsell, Sir Peter
Taylor, Ian *(Esher)*
Taylor, John M *(Solihull)*
Taylor, Teddy *(S'end E)*
Tebbit, Rt Hon Norman
Temple-Morris, Peter
Thompson, D. *(Calder Valley)*
Thompson, Patrick *(Norwich N)*
Thornton, Malcolm
Thurnham, Peter
Townend, John *(Bridlington)*
Tracey, Richard
Tredinnick, David
Trippier, David
Twinn, Dr Ian
Vaughan, Sir Gerard
Waddington, Rt Hon David
Waldegrave, Hon William
Walden, George
Walker, Bill *(T'side North)*
Waller, Gary
Ward, John
Wardle, C. *(Bexhill)*
Watts, John
Wells, Bowen
Wheeler, John
Whitney, Ray
Widdecombe, Miss Ann
Wiggin, Jerry
Wilkinson, John
Wilshire, David
Winterton, Mrs Ann
Winterton, Nicholas
Wolfson, Mark
Wood, Timothy
Woodcock, Mike
Yeo, Tim
Young, Sir George *(Acton)*

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. David Lightbown and
Mr. Kenneth Carlisle.

NOES

Abbott, Ms Diane
Adams, Allen *(Paisley N)*
Allen, Graham
Archer, Rt Hon Peter
Armstrong, Ms Hilary
Ashdown, Paddy
Ashley, Rt Hon Jack
Banks, Tony *(Newham NW)*
Barnes, Harry *(Derbyshire NE)*
Barron, Kevin
Battle, John
Beckett, Margaret
Beith, A. J.
Bell, Stuart
Benn, Rt Hon Tony
Bennett, A. F. *(D'nt'n & R'dish)*
Bermingham, Gerald
Bidwell, Sydney
Blair, Tony
Blunkett, David
Boyes, Roland
Bradley, Keith
Bray, Dr Jeremy
Brown, Gordon *(D'mline E)*
Brown, Nicholas *(Newcastle E)*
Brown, Ron *(Edinburgh Leith)*
Bruce, Malcolm *(Gordon)*
Buchan, Norman
Buckley, George
Caborn, Richard
Callaghan, Jim
Campbell, Menzies *(Fife NE)*
Campbell, Ron *(Blyth Valley)*
Campbell-Savours, D. N.
Canavan, Dennis
Carlile, Alex *(Mont'g)*
Clark, Dr David *(S Shields)*
Clarke, Tom *(Monklands W)*
Clay, Bob
Clelland, David
Clwyd, Mrs Ann
Cohen, Harry
Coleman, Donald
Cook, Robin *(Livingston)*
Corbett, Robin
Corbyn, Jeremy
Cousins, Jim
Cox, Tom
Crowther, Stan
Cryer, Bob
Cummings, J.
Cunliffe, Lawrence
Dalyell, Tam
Darling, Alastair
Davies, Ron *(Caerphilly)*
Davis, Terry *(B'ham Hodge H'l)*
Dixon, Don
Dobson, Frank
Doran, Frank
Douglas, Dick
Dunnachie, James
Dunwoody, Hon Mrs Gwyneth
Eadie, Alexander
Eastham, Ken
Evans, John *(St Helens N)*
Ewing, Harry *(Falkirk E)*
Ewing, Mrs Margaret *(Moray)*
Fatchett, Derek
Faulds, Andrew
Fearn, Ronald
Field, Frank *(Birkenhead)*
Fields, Terry *(L'pool B G'n)*
Fisher, Mark
Flannery, Martin
Flynn, Paul
Foot, Rt Hon Michael
Foster, Derek
Foulkes, George
Fraser, John
Galbraith, Samuel
Galloway, George
Garrett, John *(Norwich South)*
Garrett, Ted *(Wallsend)*
George, Bruce
Gilbert, Rt Hon Dr John
Godman, Dr Norman A.
Golding, Mrs Llin
Gordon, Ms Mildred
Grant, Bernie *(Tottenham)*
Griffiths, Nigel *(Edinburgh S)*
Griffiths, Win *(Bridgend)*
Grocott, Bruce
Hardy, Peter
Harman, Ms Harriet
Hattersley, Rt Hon Roy
Healey, Rt Hon Denis
Heffer, Eric S.
Hinchliffe, David
Hogg, N. *(C'nauld & Kilsyth)*
Holland, Stuart
Home Robertson, John
Hood, James
Howarth, George *(Knowsley N)*
Howell, Rt Hon D. *(S'heath)*
Howells, Geraint
Hoyle, Doug
Hughes, John *(Coventry NE)*
Hughes, Robert *(Aberdeen N)*
Hughes, Roy *(Newport E)*
Hughes, Sean *(Knowsley S)*
Illsley, Eric
Ingram, Adam
Janner, Greville
John, Brynmor
Johnston, Sir Russell
Jones, Barry *(Alyn & Deeside)*
Jones, Ieuan *(Ynys Môn)*
Jones, Martyn *(Clwyd S W)*
Kaufman, Rt Hon Gerald
Kinnock, Rt Hon Neil
Kirkwood, Archy
Lambie, David
Lamond, James
Leadbitter, Ted
Leighton, Ron
Lestor, Miss Joan *(Eccles)*
Lewis, Terry
Litherland, Robert
Livingstone, Ken
Livsey, Richard
Lloyd, Tony *(Stretford)*
Lofthouse, Geoffrey
Loyden, Eddie
McAllion, John
McAvoy, Tom
McCartney, Ian
Macdonald, Calum
McKay, Allen *(Penistone)*
McKelvey, William
McLeish, Henry
McNamara, Kevin
McTaggart, Bob
McWilliam, John
Madden, Max
Mahon, Mrs Alice
Marshall, David *(Shettleston)*
Marshall, Jim *(Leicester S)*
Martin, Michael *(Springburn)*
Martlew, Eric
Maxton, John
Meacher, Michael
Meale, Alan
Michael, Alun
Michie, Bill *(Sheffield Heeley)*
Millan, Rt Hon Bruce
Mitchell, Austin *(G't Grimsby)*
Molyneaux, Rt Hon James
Moonie, Dr Lewis
Morgan, Rhodri
Morley, Elliott
Morris, Rt Hon A *(W'shawe)*
Morris, Rt Hon J *(Aberavon)*
Mowlam, Marjorie
Mullin, Chris
O'Brien, William
O'Neill, Martin
Orme, Rt Hon Stanley
Patchett, Terry
Pendry, Tom
Pike, Peter
Powell, Ray *(Ogmore)*
Prescott, John
Primarolo, Ms Dawn
Quin, Ms Joyce
Randall, Stuart
Redmond, Martin
Rees, Rt Hon Merlyn
Reid, John
Richardson, Ms Jo
Roberts, Allan *(Bootle)*
Robertson, George
Robinson, Geoffrey
Rogers, Allan
Rooker, Jeff
Ross, Ernie *(Dundee W)*
Rowlands, Ted
Ruddock, Ms Joan
Sedgemore, Brian
Sheerman, Barry
Sheldon, Rt Hon Robert
Shore, Rt Hon Peter
Short, Clare
Skinner, Dennis
Smith, Andrew *(Oxford E)*
Smith, C. *(Isl'ton & F'bury)*
Smith, Rt Hon J. *(Monk'ds E)*
Smyth, Rev Martin *(Belfast S)*
Snape, Peter
Soley, Clive
Spearing, Nigel
Steinberg, Gerald
Stott, Roger
Strang, Gavin
Straw, Jack
Taylor, Mrs Ann *(Dewsbury)*
Taylor, Matthew *(Truro)*
Thomas, Dafydd Elis
Thompson, Jack *(Wansbeck)*
Turner, Dennis
Vaz, Keith
Wall, Pat
Wallace, James
Walley, Ms Joan
Wardell, Gareth *(Gower)*
Wareing, Robert N.
Welsh, Andrew *(Angus E)*
Welsh, Michael *(Doncaster N)*
Wigley, Dafydd
Williams, Rt Hon A. J.
Williams, Alan W. *(Carm'then)*
Wilson, Brian
Winnick, David
Wise, Mrs Audrey
Worthington, Anthony
Young, David *(Bolton SE)*

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. Frank Haynes and
Mr. Frank Cook.

Question accordingly agreed to.

Bill read a Second time, and committed to a Standing Committee pursuant to Standing Order No. 61 (Committal of Bills).

CRIMINAL JUSTICE BILL *[LORDS]* [MONEY]

Queen's Recommendation having been signified—

Resolved.

That, for the purpose of any Act resulting from Criminal Justice Bill *[Lords]*, it is expedient to authorise—

(1) the payment out of money provided by Parliament—

(a) of any expenses incurred under that Act by a Minister of the Crown; and

(b) of any increase attributable to the provisions of that Act in the sums payable out of such money under any other Act; and

(2) any increase attributable to the provisions of that Act in the sums falling to be paid into the Consolidated Fund under section 61 of the Justices of the Peace Act 1979.—*[Mr. Dorrell.]*

Local Government (Scotland)

10.26 pm

The Minister of State, Scottish Office (Mr. Ian Lang): I beg to move,

That the Rate Support Grant (Scotland) (No. 3) Order 1987, a copy of which was laid before this House on 11th December, be approved.

Mr. Speaker: Perhaps it would be for the convenience of the House if we were to debate at the same time the second motion on the Order Paper:

That the Revaluation Rate Rebates (Scotland) Order 1987, a copy of which was laid before this House on 11th December, be approved.

Mr. Lang: The main purpose of the rate support grant order is to fix the amount of rate support grants for Scottish local authorities in 1988-89, and to prescribe the allocation of the needs element to individual authorities. The order also makes adjustments, in the normal way, to rate support grants for earlier years to take account of more up-to-date information on matters such as interest rates, rateable values and provisional outturns of expenditure.

The Revaluation Rate Rebates (Scotland) Order 1987 continues revaluation rate rebates to give a fourth and final year of relief to those most affected by the 1985 revaluation.

At this time last year my predecessor was welcoming the fact that in the financial year then ending Scottish local authorities had, for the first time, planned for a lower volume of expenditure than they had incurred in 1979. It was a welcome sign of realism and the Government responded with a rate support grant settlement for the present year based on local authorities' own budgets for 1986-87, uprated for inflation, and with rate support grant sufficient to maintain the previous grant percentage. I think it is fair to say that the House generally, on that occasion, regarded the settlement as reasonable. Unfortunately, the Government's reasonableness found no ready response from local authorities that budgeted to overspend in 1987-88 by no less than £122 million—among the worst budgeted overspends that we have ever experienced. The result was large rate rises, heavy grant penalties and selective action to reduce the rates of two authorities, following approval of the House given last July.

This is not the occasion to go over that ground again, but it has posed an obvious dilemma for the Government in deciding what to do for 1988-89. The crude, if obvious, conclusion is that local authorities respond better to force majeure than to reasonableness. We have, however, decided—1988-89 being in Scotland the last year before the introduction of the community charge and correspondingly revised grant arrangements—that we shall try a further year of reasonableness, and the rate support grant settlement for 1988-89 that my right hon. and learned Friend announced to the House on 23 July last year is once again based on local authorities' actual budgets for 1987-88, with additional provision of 4 per cent. for inflation, an allowance for pay increases for teachers and other categories, and a further £12 million related to the costs of introduction of the community charge.

Aggregate Exchequer grant has been set so as once again to maintain the grant percentage. As hon. Members will be aware, decisions on those matters are taken only following exhaustive consultation with the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities, and I think that it is fair to record that the general terms of this settlement met almost entirely COSLA's wishes. There was a difference of view about the appropriate allowance for inflation, but the total level of provision was very close to the level that COSLA itself was seeking. I make that point now because I want to return to it in what I shall say later about local authority budgeting for 1988-89.

The order's main provisions, as I have said, concern 1988-89. Aggregate Exchequer grant has been set at £2,370·53 million. That differs slightly from the figure of £2,372 million announced by my right hon. and learned Friend on 23 July. The change arises, first, from a reduction of £3·5 million as a result of our decision to transfer some provision for urban programme spending from current to capital, to achieve a better balance on that programme, and, secondly, by the addition of £1·03 million in respect of the transfer of responsibility to local authorities for children committed to residential care by the courts. That transfer of responsibility, and the amount of provision, have been agreed with COSLA. Overall, those figures represent an increase of £178 million or 8 per cent. over the equivalent figure of aggregate Exchequer grant for 1987-88.

On grant distribution, our proposals follow the usual detailed consultation with COSLA, and indeed implement in very large measure what COSLA itself wanted. Overall, it was concerned that for this last year of the present grant arrangements, the main consideration should be stability in grant entitlements. The Government agree with that.

We estimate that £332·6 million of aggregate Exchequer grant will be paid as grants for specific services, leaving £2,037·93 million for payment as rate support grants. We propose to maintain the domestic rate relief at 7p. That is expected to cost £91·9 million in domestic element of rate support grant. Resources element compensates authorities with low rating resources. The ratio of resources element to needs element has, for the past two years, been 1:8, and we propose to maintain that ratio for 1988-89. That calls for a resources element of £215·8 million.

The remainder of the grant forms the needs element. An innovation this year is that, as a first call on the needs element, a sum has been earmarked to finance rating relief to sports clubs. That follows my right hon. and learned Friend's commitment during our consideration of the Abolition of Domestic Rates Etc. (Scotland) Act to remove any disincentives for local authorities to give rating relief to sports clubs. The order provides that, on the basis of estimates received from authorities, £3·2 million will be available for that purpose in 1988-89. That is, incidentally, four times the amount of relief being given to sports clubs in the present financial year and will, I hope, be regarded as a welcome follow-up to the commitment that my right hon. and learned Friend gave.

Mr. John Maxton (Glasgow, Cathcart): Will the Minister explain whether that is new money over and above what would have been allocated to local authorities anyway, or is it coming out of the general needs budgets that local authorities would have had anyway, so that they could spend the money on something else?

Mr. Lang: It is a transfer of the arrangements. Instead of being taken out of the resources element, which would

[Mr. Lang]

not have applied evenly throughout all local authorities, the provision is being earmarked out of the needs element before the needs element is attributed. It will come out of the £178 million increase in needs element. Whether the hon. Member for Glasgow, Cathcart (Mr. Maxton) chooses to call it new or old money, it was not there in the past. It has met its purpose, because it will give four times as much relief as is being given to sports clubs in the present year, and I hope that it will be regarded as a successful solution to this problem.

Mr. Tam Dalyell (Linlithgow): This subject has been raised before in relation to the Linlithgow cricket ground. How will the allocations be made between various sports and who will make them? It is not a hostile question; I am asking only for clarification.

Mr. Lang: It is not for me to allocate it between different sports, if that is the hon. Gentleman's point. If he refers to the report on the rate support grant order, he will find a table in one of the annexes that gives the allocations to all local authorities. The allocation is based on local authorities' estimates of what they need to resolve this problem.

Mr. Harry Ewing (Falkirk, East): If local authorities decide to give rate relief to sports clubs, who will make up the shortfall—the Government or the ratepayer?

Mr. Lang: The shortfall — if that is the correct expression—comes out of the increase of £178 million, which is 8 per cent. extra over the equivalent figure of aggregate Exchequer grant for last year. That is a figure of more than twice the rate of inflation, and it allows for a substantial freedom of manoeuvre within that overall figure.

The rest of the needs element has been distributed using the client group method of needs assessment. However, implementing the client group method in full would have led to grant losses, or very small grant increases for some authorities and very large gains for others. In line with the generally expressed desire for stability in grant distribution, and in response to a specific suggestion from COSLA, we have therefore decided that every authority should receive an increase in needs element of at least 4 per cent. This gives rise for a need to limit gains, and at the top end it would be 10 per cent. Details of the calculation for individual authorities are given in annex E to the report on page 19.

The order also contains adjustments to grant for back years to take account of the latest information on interest rates, rating resources and outturn expenditure. Many of these figures stand to be varied further when final audited returns are received from the local authorities. All of these adjustments are on a basis that is well understood by authorities, and I do not want to detain the House with any more detailed comments on them.

The Revaluation Rate Rebates (Scotland) Order 1987 provides for rebates in 1988-89. Up to and including the current financial year, there have been three such orders. The first, for 1985-86, provided for rebate of all rates payable on rateable value in excess of three times the 1984-85 rateable value, subject to a maximum rebate of £10,000. The orders for 1986-87 and for the current year respectively provided for 75 per cent. and 50 per cent. rebates and for maxima of £7,500 and £5,000. The Act orders together have ensured that the 1985 revaluation been gradually brought into effect for those ratepa with the greatest valuation increases. The order marks completion of these transitional arrangements, provic in 1988-89 for rebates of 25 per cent. of the rates pay on rateable values increased by more than three time 1985, subject to a maximum rebate of £2,500.

I estimate that about 130,000 domestic and ab 60,000 non-domestic ratepayers have received rebates, that the total rates rebated over the four years of scheme will amount to about £57 million. About million of this relief will have been given up to including the current financial year, and I expect t under the order, about £6 million will be rebated 1988-89.

I should like to address one or two general points. first is why we should experience such persis overspending by local authorities. Labour Members have their usual pat answers, but it is a point that dese serious consideration. It cannot be simply that Government make inadequate provision in their pu expenditure plans, or at least that cannot explain the budgeted overspend this year when provision was ba on local authorities' own plans for the previous year an inflation allowance. Nor does it appear to inadequate grant distribution arrangements. COSL fully consulted about these arrangements and, while can admittedly be rough and ready at the margins, I kn of no serious suggestion that they are fundament flawed.

The answer must be that there is an endemic capa in local government to increase its expenditure constan regardless of the consequences for its ratepayers. In so cases that is a result of simple ideology, and I do suppose I can offer any rational argument that will m any difference to that. But I have also become consci since I took on this responsibility in June 1987, that th are many authorities which consider themselves prud and moderate and which still overspend substantially guidelines despite what they regard as their best effort economy.

I invite these authorities to look again carefully at t budgeting process, and particularly at the extent to wh existing expenditure simply becomes uncritically baseline for the next planning exercise, without any seri review of whether all existing spending needs to contin or of whether policy objectives are being met in the m efficient and cost-effective way. Proposals are now be considered in another place to give the Commission Local Authority Accounts in Scotland a formal statut duty to undertake value-for-money studies in l government. The first of such studies, undertaken with the benefit of the statutory duty, has now been publis and points to possible economies among Scottish l authorities of up to £10 million a year through m effective energy management. Such studies will help c conscious local authorities in future.

There is one other aspect to this. It is frequently poin out that the actual level of inflation experienced by l authorities can be higher than that experienced in economy as a whole, and I recognise that there may something in this. But it is too ready an excuse, as many of their purchases local authorities are in a buy market. They can, if they have the will, influence the l of inflation in their own costs. They have direct cont

for example, over their own wage negotiations. Having heard last July that the inflation assumption in the settlement for 1988-89 was 4 per cent., they have no one to blame but themselves if in September they conclude an agreement to increase their manual workers' pay by over 10 per cent. Every other employer in the country, including in other parts of the public sector, has to conduct pay negotiations against a predetermined background of what resources are available. There is no reason why local authorities should behave differently.

It is suggested—it is a point of view that I have heard several times in recent months—that, in line with our new national economic success, the restraints should be taken off public expenditure. But that is part of the kind of thinking that got the economy into trouble in the first place. The public sector, and public sector trade unions, have no natural right to a prescribed share of the national wealth. As a Government, we are committed to containing public expenditure, but we are committed also to ensuring that the resources are available to maintain adequate standards of public services. I believe that our record on local authority expenditure provision is a good one. But we have also to ensure that the circumstances are created and maintained in which business and commerce can operate profitably and create and maintain jobs. It is the private sector that generates the resources from which the public sector is funded. We must ensure that local government does not take a disproportionate share of public expenditure at the expense of other public services. In effect, this is what has happened in Scotland for 1988-89. I hope that it will not have to happen again.

Finally, I want to say something about reports that are now beginning to appear of local authorities' budget plans for 1988-89. Disappointingly, but no doubt unsurprisingly, we hear stories yet again of substantial expected overspends by some of the larger authorities. I would only say that there is no excuse or justification for this and that authorities which seek to justify their overspending next year by reference to their low guideline increases delude themselves and mislead the public, who will recognise that these low guideline increases arise only for authorities whose spending is historically already very high, and well in excess of their assessed needs. I warn these authorities tonight that my right hon. and learned Friend will be prepared to impose severe grant penalties again next year in response to high budgeted overspending, and will once again consider the use of his power to secure rate reductions where planned expenditure is in his view "excessive and unreasonable". But there is still time for authorities to consider their budget plans carefully, and I hope that as many as possible of them will do so and budget within guidelines, in the national interest and in the interests of their own ratepayers.

10.44 pm

Mr. John Maxton (Glasgow, Cathcart): The Minister's speech livened up a little towards the end, even though it was incredibly funny to hear his analysis of Scotland's economy and local government expenditure and his normal tirade against overspending local authorities. This time last year we were listening to Michael Ancram make such speeches, supported by nine other Conservative Members who are no longer in the House. It is not local authorities that have learnt nothing from last June's general election. It is the Minister who appears to have learnt nothing.

The people of Scotland elect the local authorities in Scotland to take decisions on expenditure and services. The only people who elected the Minister are the electors in his constituency — *[Interruption.]* Yes, just. The people of Scotland rejected the Conservative party and the Government and wanted nothing to do with them. It is time that the Government stopped coming to the House with the arrogant prating that we heard from the Minister.

The Minister said several times that this was the last time that we would debate rate support grant orders. I suppose that most of us would breathe a great sigh of relief if that were true, but I make a guess — perhaps a reasoned guess—that this time next year we will be back debating a similar order. An administrative nightmare has been created in Scotland by the poll tax legislation. The Government are delaying the orders which are needed to implement the poll tax if the local authorities are to have it in place by 1 April 1989. The Secretary of State for Scotland will be forced to use English legislation. The fact that the rebate scheme is to be a United Kingdom scheme is an excuse to delay implementation until 1 April 1990 at the earliest. Therefore, we will need a rate support grant order next year.

I expect that there will also be orders on penalties and variation orders. I look forward to hearing the Minister yet again putting forward a rate support grant order. [HON. MEMBERS: "No."] I look forward to it because at least it will mean that the poll tax will be one year further away. I should be grateful if the allocation of local government finance were handed over from this House to a democratically elected Scottish assembly in Edinburgh, but if our having to debate one more rate support grant order means one more year without the poll tax, I am prepared to put up with it. If we ever have the poll tax, the Minister will still be complaining, weeping crocodile tears about the poor taxpayers in Scotland and bringing orders to reduce the level of poll tax in what he claims are high-spending local authorities.

The Minister has tried to pretend that this settlement is generous. I confess that it is. There has at least been a standstill compared with previous settlements. It would be perverse not to admit that. But it is another of the Government's con tricks to pretend that they are generous and that the local authorities and the people of Scotland should go down on their knees and thank the Government. The idea that the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities agreed to this sort of settlement beggars belief. Of course, there is consultation. Of course, COSLA says, "If you can do nothing more, at least keep us at the same point we were at last year." But that is not what the local authorities or COSLA want. They want a much more generous settlement.

Let us look at what has happened since 1979.

Mr. Tristan Garel-Jones (Vice-Chamberlain of Her Majesty's Household): Labour has lost three elections.

Mr. Maxton: The hon. Gentleman from an English constituency says that the Government won three elections. They have lost three elections in succession in Scotland and every local government election in Scotland since 1979. They are now hanging on by no more than their fingernails to what little support they have. The Government have Englishmen sitting in the Whips' positions—the hon. Members for Watford (Mr. Garel-Jones) and for Penrith and The Border (Mr. Maclean)—

[Mr. Maxton]

because they cannot find a Scottish Whip from among their remnant of 10 hon. Members representing Scottish seats. The hon. Member for Tayside, North (Mr. Walker) is the only Scottish Member on the Government Benches who has been neither a Minister nor a Whip. I know that he takes great pleasure in that.

In 1979, the level of rate support grant was 68·5 per cent. This year, even at a standstill, it will be 55·4 per cent. of expenditure. That does not take account of any clawbacks that may reduce it to an even lower figure. If the Government, with the generosity that they claim for themselves, were giving Scotland a 68·5 per cent. rate support grant this year, local authorities would receive another £557 million. What could local authorities provide in services for the unemployed, the single parents, the old and the children in our schools if they had that money to spend?

It is not good enough for Ministers to say that this is a generous settlement. Even in the Government's own terms, it is not as generous as the Minister would have us believe. He has claimed that the relevant current expenditure is an increase of 8·6 per cent. on the provision for this year, which is true. But it is only 4 per cent. above the level of current local authority budgets, plus the cost that he has identified to take into account the implementation of the poll tax and the new rebate scheme for housing benefit that is coming into force in April this year. Merely to stand still and maintain services as they now are, therefore, local authorities——

Mr. Bill Walker (Tayside, North) *rose*——

Mr. Maxton: I shall finish the point. Local authorities will have to keep current levels of expenditure on services within that 4 per cent. increase. So if the RPI increases by more than 4 per cent., authorities will find that they have to cut back on services, or increase their rates. If, as is even more likely, local government services' costs rise by more than 4 per cent.—that has been normal in the past few years—local authorities will have to cut back on what they are doing.

Mr. Bill Walker: The hon. Gentleman mentioned that an allowance had been made for the administration of changes in housing benefit. Nothing in what he has said thus far—or, indeed, ever before—draws attention to the fact that, with the increased rents of the past few years, the huge increase in housing benefit has all gone directly into the housing coffers, which is really public money going into local government. So how have there been cuts?

Mr. Maxton: The reason why a massive increase in housing benefit has gone to local authorities is that more people are in need — more unemployed and elderly people need the help that the state should provide. On 1 April this year, thousands of people in Scotland will lose the housing benefit of which the hon. Member for Tayside, North is so proud.

Included in the 4 per cent. increase is £12 million which is allocated to implement the poll tax. No one in Scottish local authorities believes that that money will be adequate; much more will be required. Strathclyde alone is talking about having to take on 700 extra people just to draw up the register and collect the money. So the £12 million will be wholly inadequate. Because the Government will do nothing about that, services for Scottish people w to be cut, or their rates increased, to pay for the imp of a tax which the vast majority do not want an they clearly rejected last year in June. So that this can be imposed on them, the people of Scotland w to have cuts in local authority services. That obscenity.

I find it interesting that the budgets that attrac wrath of the Secretary of State in July and led withholding of £202 million of grant by the Treas now acceptable to the Government. If it is now see Government that £202 million is the amount th authorities ought to spend over and above what the last year, surely it would be logical in this year's bu restore that £202 million to local authorities.

I do not intend to go much further along this li even under this settlement some local authorities w as a result of the rate support grant. Local aut representing over half the people of Scotland will only a 3 per cent. increase in real terms in their b That has to take account of inflation and pay increa meet the last stage of the teachers' pay increase. N in Scotland believes that local authorities can m their services without increasing their rates.

Conservative Members complain about authorities increasing their rates. Those are the auth that are faced with an increase of only 3 per cent. in That means that they will have to increase their r more than the Minister wants simply to maintain s at their present level. Of course, if they increase rat Minister will claw back some of the money. authorities include Lothian, Strathclyde, Gl Edinburgh, Cumbernauld, Kilsyth and Cumnoc Doon Valley among others. I am sure that many hon. Friends who represent at least some of authorities would wish to speak in the debate t details of the effects on services.

I have already made the point about relief for clubs. It became quite clear to my hon. Friends tha is no new money for that. It is a con trick from beg to end and we warned local authorities about that. is no new money and local authorities will have t from other proposed expenditure the money that to sports clubs.

I shall now deal with the second order. When th revaluation took place there was an outcry in Sc about it, especially from the supporters of the Member for Tayside, North. The then Secretary of for Scotland, the right hon. Member for Ayr Younger), here at the whim of only 182 people in boasted about how he was being enormously gener giving rebates. He allocated £50 million in 1985-8 accept that that was new money for people whos increase was more than threefold. The amoun following year was £37·5 million and this year it million. After doing my sums, I find that it will be million next year.

The total to be spent is £57 million over four yea of a total budget of well over £100 million. That generosity of the Secretary of State. He was nev generous as he tried to make out. He should have w out a more generous scheme so that more people who hit got the money or he should have given to authorities the extra money to spend as they wishe

The Government have been rejected by the peo Scotland time and again. In every election, both loca

national, since 1979 the Tory vote has gone down, the number of Tory Members of Parliament has gone down and the number of Tory councillors has gone down. Yet the Government continue arrogantly to claim that they have a right to say what is right for the people of Scotland.

The people of Scotland will have many more chances to reject the Government, and their next chance will be in May this year in the district council elections. All the evidence points to the fact that the Tory party will be kicked in the teeth yet again by the people of Scotland. Perhaps on that occasion, at long last, the Secretary of State and his "Hobson's Choice" Ministers will listen to the people of Scotland. Perhaps the Secretary of State will go to the Prime Minister and say, "I am a democrat; I believe in the will of the people of Scotland and I can no longer therefore govern Scotland and I urge you to establish a Scottish assembly that rules Scotland for the people of Scotland." That is what the Opposition want and that is what the people of Scotland want.

11 pm

Mr. Allan Stewart (Eastwood): The House has heard before most of the speech of the hon. Member for Glasgow, Cathcart (Mr. Maxton) and we shall no doubt hear it again and again, but it will be interesting to compare precisely what he said at the end of his speech with the apparant sudden U-turn by the Scottish Labour party in the Scottish Affairs Committee debate last Thursday. It sounded to me as if the Scottish Labour party still believes in the mandate argument, and that the hon. Member for Cathcart was rejecting the concept of a unitary Parliament.

Mr. Maxton: In return, Mr. Deputy Speaker, may I ask the hon. Member for Eastwood (Mr. Stewart)—or the ex-Minister—whether he believes that there ought to be a Scottish Office? While he believes that there should be separate legislation and separate administration for Scotland, he has no right to say that the Scottish people have no right to say what happens in such a Scottish Office.

Mr. Stewart: The hon. Gentleman is in the wrong party if he pursues that line of argument, and the sooner he joins the Scottish National party the better, because that is precisely the logic of his position. Whether the hon. Member for Moray (Mrs. Ewing) and her colleagues would wish to accept a subscription from the hon. Member for Cathcart is another matter.

I welcome both orders, although I should like to speak solely about the rate support grant order because of limitation of time. My hon. Friend the Minister of State described the settlement as reasonable, and he was able to say that despite the valiant efforts of the hon. Member for Cathcart to find something to criticise. The settlement is fairly generous by any reasonable standards. There is an increase of provision of just under 9 per cent. which is paralleled by an increase in the aggregate Exchequer grant of 8 per cent.

Within the individual figures, my understanding is that there is a real increase in the guideline figures for every authority in Scotland and an increase of at least 3 per cent. in cash terms for all authorities' guidelines, compared with their 1987-88 budget. That settlement is very generous indeed.

I welcome what the Government are doing for sports clubs and the increase of 9 per cent. for education. However, my right hon. and hon. Friends will have to k a watchful eye on local government expenditure. question that the House must always ask is whether al this money will be spent wisely and sensibly. I do not th that the current behaviour of the Convention of Scott Local Authorities is very encouraging in that regard. take just one example, I believe that this week member the Socialist COSLA are coming down in droves to into Westminster to a mass lobby at the ratepay expense.

There is some doubt, I understand, about the lega of their expenditure. It is not my purpose to pursue t issue tonight, but I put it to the House that expenditure £40,000 or more of ratepayers' money on what is fran a jolly is outrageous. Although it is a small sum in relat to the total of local authority expenditure, it is unfortunate indication of COSLA's priorities.

Mr. Dick Douglas (Dunfermline, West): Is the h Member speaking for himself or, as a former Minister he reflecting the weight of Conservative opinion Scotland? Is it the intention of Scottish Conservat Members not to meet any of the COSLA delegation Wednesday?

Mr. Stewart: I am speaking for myself, and I answer that in two ways. First, the members of Convention of Scottish Local Authorities have made absolutely clear that they regard this as an outrage waste of ratepayers' and taxpayers' money. They will meeting in Edinburgh, but, as a ratepayer in Glasgow believe that this is a outrageous waste of ratepay money. It is certainly not my intention to meet members of the convention. If they wish to come to House to lobby Members of Parliament, they should br a small and expert delegation, not everybody they can f in Scotland to come down at the ratepayers' expense.

I hope that my right hon. and learned Friend Secretary of State and my hon. Friend the Minister State will keep a watchful eye on local author expenditure as a result of the settlement. This year th is concern that authorities may increase their rates m than is necessary in order to raise the base for n domestic rates when the provisions of the Abolition Domestic Rates Etc. (Scotland) Act come into force.

Mr. John Home Robertson (East Lothian): They ne will.

Mr. Stewart: They will, fear not. It is clear that th is the potential for local authorities to do that. I appreci that my hon. Friend the Minister may not be able comment on that possibility tonight, but I hope that he keep it under constant review.

11.6 pm

Mr. Archy Kirkwood (Roxburgh and Berwickshire) would like to make a brief contribution to the deba *[Interruption.]* Some rather extravagant claims are be made about the length of the future of our great allia in British politics. They are vastly exaggerated and und pessimistic; every new day brings a new dawn.

Dealing with the revaluation rebate order, I remem moving a ten-minute Bill on the need for some relief rating revaluation in 1985 and being roundly abused everybody because I was doing a fag-packet calculati as is my wont, based on my constituency and I was r enough to suggest that £15 million might make a

[Mr. Archy Kirkwood]

difference if it were applied properly. I was ridiculed by Conservative Members who said that that amount of money could not be found from the Treasury. Then, before the Tory party conference in 1985, when the then Secretary of State for Scotland realised that he was on a loser, he came back with £50 million a year from the Treasury over four years. Even with my O-level arithmetic, I know that that comes to £200 million. This is the last of the four years, and we have managed to spend and allocate £57 million of that money.

I say to the Secretary of State that there is disappointment that the Government, having won the battle—I applauded the Secretary of State for having waged and won the battle for £50 million a year—did not apply that money over a wider range of subjects in order to give the relief that was then necessary and is still necessary. The Secretary of State has missed an opportunity. If he had been more generous, he would have been given credit for that.

Looking ahead, there is another revaluation waiting in the wings over five years. If we are not careful, the commercial subjects left in rating will be subject to all sorts of horrors and may well require that the precedent established in 1985, which I welcomed and continue to welcome, will have to be wheeled out again in 1990. I hope that the Secretary of State will be more generous then and learn some of the lessons which he should have learned over the four years of operation of this rebate relief scheme. He should have brought more commercial subjects into relief, and I hope that he will give that some thought between now and 1990.

I am not an expert on the rate support grant order, but I cannot understand what the Government complaint is. From the figures which the Library and COSLA have given me and the pattern of expenditure in volume terms over the past nine years, am I not right in thinking that there has been not a significant increase but a marginal one, if there has been an increase at all? If so, what is the point of rubbing the collective and individual noses of COSLA and individual authorities in this propaganda battle between central and local government in terms of the extravagant degrees of overspend and other emotive phrases such as those we have become accustomed to hearing? It does the whole political process no good when the breach in confidence and the breakdown in communications between central and local government comes to such a sorry pass.

My experience in this place is not great and I have no direct experience of local government, but it seems to me that over that period the Government have paid a high price, whatever success they may have had and however necessary the steps to constrain individual local authorities. I accept that the Government must do that, and certainly when we are the Government in the near future we shall have to face up to these problems responsibly. The Secretary of State must recognise that over the past nine years and against a background of no great increase in volume terms that I can identify, the price he has paid is generally too high. That is a political fact of life which over the past nine years we have experienced in Scotland.

It is a salutary fact that the grant percentage has been reduced from 68·5 per cent. in 1979 to 55·4 per cent. now, which is a difference of some £557 million. Therefore, if there is an argument about where the rate inc come from, it is impossible for the Government they have not, at least in large part, been resp some of these rate increases.

The Minister said, and I should like to pr this, that he thought that the incidence of retail increases as they affected local government than the average RPI figures. Have the G undertaken any detailed analysis of what that it is true, and I believe that it is, more informat be provided so that we can make more objectiv about what cost increases local authorities are they are facing increases.

There has been an element included in element of the rate support grant to meet the tea award and to deal with the rebate legislation. know whether they have been adequately cov suspect that they have not. However, I am certain, as one does not need to look far beyond the House has been showering a plethora of ot and obligations on local authorities in recent m years, for example, data protection legislation, I am partially responsible with my private Mem last year, and disabled persons legislation. There series of individual incremental increases whi together, produce real new burdens on local au

I know something about social security becau many a long hour in the 1986 Social Sec Committee. The housing benefit regulations Secretary of State is introducing in April tremendous difficulties and inexorably increase of local authority administration. I cite the exp 1983 with the administrative shift from DHSS authority payment of housing payment. T regarded as a minor tidying-up operation which supported, but it caused great difficulty. In my extra demands on housing departments and the information and expertise required to admin system efficiently have not been properly ta account in the orders before us.

In all honesty, I also do not think that provision has been made for the on-costs and a expenditure required for implementation of the ity charge. I do not believe that £12 million ne enough. COSLA believes that the Governm underestimated the cost by about 50 per cent proves to be true, will adjustments be made in t of the financial year? I believe that there is a rea that the Government are rushing this fence. It complicated piece of legislation. Much work rema done and many regulations have not yet been pu consultation. I fear that there will be a good administrative chaos anyway, but my question simply this. If, as the Government monitor the s it becomes clear that the £12 million is a su underestimate, is there any machinery for taking of that in the course of the year and, if so, will the use it?

Considering the orders against the backgroun financial situation of local government, I believe Government could have done better. I agree with Member for Glasgow, Cathcart (Mr. Maxton) figures are a marginal improvement on what h before. My local authority in south-east Scotlan great complaint other than those that I have ment passing today. Nevertheless, I believe that the Gov

have paid a very high price and I am pleased that these are to be the last orders. I hope that in the future the Government will organise the system better, although I suspect that that is a vain hope, and at least improve the relationship between central and local government when the community charge system is introduced.

11.17 pm

Mr. Bill Walker (Tayside, North): I am — [HON. MEMBERS: "Hear, hear."] I am delighted that I still have my fans on the Opposition Benches.

The hon. Member for Roxburgh and Berwickshire (Mr. Kirkwood), who spoke on behalf of the Liberals, must be one of the world's supreme optimists as his chances of ever occupying the Treasury Bench must be as slender as those of the hon. Member for Glasgow, Cathcart (Mr. Maxton). I was surprised that he should make such comments today when the nice people of politics have been seen for what they are. Like the rest of us, they fall out and have disagreements. It must also have been discouraging for the hon. Gentleman to discover that his friends the Social Democrats have not even come along to hear what he has to say, although there were two Liberals here to support him.

The hon. Member for Cathcart made a fascinating comment towards the end of his speech. He will no doubt correct me if I am wrong, but he seemed to be saying in effect that, so long as there is a Scottish Office and the votes of the Scottish people do not support the party in power in the unitary Parliament of the time, there is a requirement for a Scottish assembly. What does the hon. Member for Cathcart think would happen if a Labour Government came to power? Does he mean that there is no need for a Department of the Environment substantially for England and Wales?

Mr. Maxton: Substantially, not entirely.

Mr. Walker: I said "substantially". The hon. Gentleman is going down the road that I had hoped that he would follow.

Mr. George Foulkes (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley): Order.

Mr. Walker: This relates to the rate support grant order. I did not raise the matter; it was raised by the hon. Member for Cathcart. This is a debate and I am trying to deal with the points raised by the hon. Member for Cathcart.

I trust that the hon. Member for Cathcart will realise that the Scottish Office looks after forestry, which covers substantial areas in England. If I looked at these matters in more detail, I could find other examples. As always, the hon. Member for Cathcart has not done his homework carefully or thoroughly enough.

I now want to consider the comments made by my hon. Friend the Minister. I agree that we must achieve value for money when we consider what happens in local government. In the examinations into value for money, has any attempt been made to consider the method of organising and collecting the community charge? As I understand it, at least two computer firms are offering suitable packages to local government. Has any attempt been made to evaluate those packages? A British company, ICL, is offering a package that has been accepted by a number of Scottish local authorities. I also understand that Tayside region has opted for a package from National Cash Register. Which of those packages provides t value for money and has any attempt been made t them? If so——

Mr. Maxton *rose*——

Mr. Walker: I will give way to the hon. Gentle a minute.

If we are to have a cost-effective system of col the most cost-effective package should be implem

Mr. Maxton: Do the packages offered by t companies include, as they obviously must if they a packages for computerisation, any information rebate schemes and if so on what basis do they wo Government have failed to offer us any rebate sch

Mr. Walker: I am sure that the hon. Gentlema expert at writing software for computer companies will know that if the software structure is or correctly in the first place, the level of rebate can b fed in at a different level. I am not an expert i matters, but I know a little about running co systems. Department store groups led this country use of computer systems and stock control was t thing to be computerised. If the hon. Member for C was suggesting that the packages on offer are in so defective, I cannot reply to that. I do not know, as not tried to study them. I am asking the questio giving the answers. However, I would like to whether they will be cost-effective.

I welcome the provisions covering the sports clu any standards, anyone considering the orders would agree with my hon. Friend the Minister th are reasonable settlements in the circumstances, an my hon. Friend the Minister, I hope that this is t time that we will ever debate such orders.

11.23 pm

Mr. Nigel Griffiths (Edinburgh, South): The Mi speech shows that the Government are turning thei on local services, cleaner streets, and better libraries are restricting improvements in leisure service heralding more council cuts and soaring rates.

The Minister's comments mean that the new p will be even higher than the figures already given Government. The settlement goes nowhere near m the recent pay increases of local government worke the Government are thwarting all attempts to impr cleaning services on our streets which involve sta equipment.

We know that the money is available. The Gover have just spent £130,000-plus. Was it on cleaning streets? No. It was spent on making litter for the It was spent on a leaflet on the poll tax which con so many mistakes that it should have been pulped money should have been spent on local gover services rather than Conservative party propagand

The Government are also turning their bac improvements in our library services. This settleme not fund even current services. The Government brought chaos to local government services. They h home owners with savage cuts in repairs grants month, they cut Edinburgh's 90 per cent. grant from £26 million to £14·5 million. They cut Gla from £32 million to under £15 million. The cut inflic home owners in Scotland in the grant queue was

[Mr. Nigel Griffiths]

than £29 million, and it was made when local councillors wanted to help to reverse the disrepair experienced by private tenants.

The settlement continues the Government's attack on local government. In 1984, the Conservatives lost control of Edinburgh—and Edinburgh lost £5 million in rate support grant as part of the Government's retribution on the ratepayers and voters of the city for voting in a Labour administration after years of Tory complacency and neglect, which had reduced many of the services in the city to a shambles.

New councillors such as me and other colleagues on these Benches who were elected in Edinburgh and Lothian region were deluged with letters. They were not all from constituents and other ratepayers. They came from Ministers and the Secretary of State himself. He had occasion to write more than once to the committee that I chaired, complaining about the low level of services after he had inflicted cuts.

The same is true of the hon. Member for Edinburgh, West (Lord James Douglas-Hamilton), who wrote to me and my hon. Friend the Member for Edinburgh, Central (Mr. Darling) complaining about the effect of deregulation of the buses—a measure for which he had voted and which inflicted considerable suffering and hardship on his constituents. That, I am afraid, is hypocrisy of the worst order.

Lothian region suffered Government cuts of £80 million between 1980 and 1987, but it was ruled by so-called prudent Tories for four of those seven years. For every year of Conservative rule between 1982 and 1986, the administration of Councillor Brian Meeks could not meet the Government guidelines because they were so draconian.

The Minister invited moderate authorities to look at their budgets again. When Councillor Meeks' Conservative administration looked at its budget again when it was over the guidelines in 1983, 1984, 1985 and 1986, it cut services again and again. It robbed senior citizens of their concessionary bus passes. It slashed meals on wheels services to the elderly and disabled. It removed teaching posts, depriving schools of specialist teachers. When Conservative Members represented Edinburgh, they wrote to Councillor Meeks complaining of the cuts of which they were the authors. Those were the effects of rate grant settlements such as this.

We firmly believe that spending on local government is spending wisely. The biggest money-wasters that we have seen in the time of the present Government, and of Governments after 1979, have been Government Departments. Their excesses have been criticised, year in year out, by the Public Accounts Committee; and the officers whom they have appointed to quangos—there are many within the patronage of the Secretary of State and his Ministers—have, in many cases, discharged their duties appallingly.

Why does not the Secretary of State turn his attention to those Departments? *[Interruption.]* I am asked to name them. I shall name one of many: Lothian health board, which has reduced the Health Service in Edinburgh to a state of chaos and a shambles. For the first time in Scotland, we have seen strikes not just by ancillary workers, but by nurses—who are members of royal colleges, brought out on the streets by the mishandling of the situation by the current Minister of should resign forthwith, and by appoi Secretary of State, who in many instances good members of the health board. *[Inter* hon. Member for Eastwood (Mr. Stewart) c he challenged me to name some of th concerned. The hon. Gentleman has had wasted the time of the House when he challenged me to name some of the abuses Government and some of the waste for w responsible, and I have given one example.

I want to draw my remarks to a conclu many of my colleagues want to give exampl authorities. I have revealed the hypoc Government, whose Ministers have first infli government cuts of the worst order, and th the councillors complaining about the effect I hope that the Secretary of State wil explanation.

Mr. Brian Wilson (Cunninghame, North hon. Friend is going through the litany of t deals in which the Government are involved does he recognise that the former leader regional council—the man who boasted afte election of having brought the Secretary Scotland into politics as his protege—was re quite a few pieces of silver when he was chairman of Livingston development corpor

Mr. Griffiths: My hon. Friend is right. I that it is a part-time post which carries a mu pound salary, and that he had been neither c vice-chairman before.

Mr. Allan Stewart: On a point of order, Speaker. May I seek your guidance? Is it i Opposition Members to make specific allega individuals which have nothing to do with r grant?

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Sir Paul Dean): The a fairly wide debate, but we must stick to local expenditure.

Mr. Griffiths: Thank you, Mr. Deputy Spe

The problem with Conservative Members like to dish it out to the weak in society, but c it. The reason that I am not still in the council the privilege to represent for seven years is th government Minister made such a shambles local government that the constituents whom the honour to represent threw him out. C Members like to pick on the weak. We saw wh in Lothian region and in Edinburgh, which Tory rule for decades. They picked on the poor and on pensioners who rely on sheltered hous transport and meals on wheels. When w Conservative Members of that they do not like

The rate support grant order will pen government, which will have to take the blame of the decisions for which the Secretary of Sta hon. Friends are responsible. Local councils i have had enough. I predict that more Labour c than ever before will be returned for Edinbur and that that result will be reflected throughout It will be due to the caring policies of Labour c in Edinburgh and elsewhere. They have defend

against the onslaught of the Secretary of State, who knows that this settlement is not enough to fund adequate local spending. He is not prepared to allow local councillors to decide for themselves, in consultation with the ratepayers.

The artificial limits that have been imposed on the rate support grant settlement will rebound on the Secretary of State in May when the Conservatives will lose even more seats than they lost at the general election.

11.36 pm

Sir Hector Monro (Dumfries): The hon. Member for Edinburgh, South (Mr. Griffiths) must be a very worried man if he has to start his election campaign so soon in an effort to try to win a few seats in Edinburgh. The trouble is that he has the misfortune to belong to a party that has no idea about local government finance.

The hon. Gentleman has shouted the odds tonight about cuts in local government expenditure and cuts in the National Health Service. That shows how far he is removed from reality. Everybody knows that far more money is being spent on local government and the National Health Service than ever before. The cuts to which the hon. Gentleman referred are fanciful cuts in mythical budgets put forward by authorities that are prepared to spend unlimited amounts of other people's money on satisfying their own egos.

The hon. Gentleman knows that an immense amount of money is being spent on the National Health Service in Scotland and that there are far more nurses, doctors, dentists and specialists than ever before, but he has had the cheek to say that the National Health Service is in a state of chaos. That is not so. When he replies to the debate, I know that my hon. Friend the Minister of State will take the opportunity to support what I have said. Not for the first time, the hon. Member for Edinburgh, South is completely out of his depth.

I welcome the orders. They mean an increase of £338 million in rate support grant, or 9 per cent. That figure includes £170 million of additional money over and above what was provided for in the public expenditure White Paper. That is good news for Scotland. Opposition Members should be welcoming it rather than girning away in their usual fashion whenever we debate Scottish affairs. That substantial increase in the amount of money that is being provided for local government will allow current expenditure to increase. It will also allow resources to be made available for pay increases to the police, the firemen and the teachers. There is no question of cuts being made. After a long haul, there has been success in regard to support for sports clubs. In a Labour Government Finance Bill in 1968 I first proposed that rate relief should be mandatory rather than discretionary for sports clubs. That was opposed by the Labour Government. I am glad that my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State has now introduced the measure and has allowed for new money in this rate support grant to help sports clubs, as I am sure is the unanimous view of everybody in the House tonight.

When we considered the Rating and Valuation (Amendment) (Scotland) Bill, we looked in depth at the amazing anomalies between major stadia and more humble sports facilities. The anomaly on valuation between Scotland and England is still quite excessive. I hope that this is not the end of the matter. The procedures laid down under that Act have worked to an extent for some of our major football grounds, such as Ibrox and Tynecastle, and so on, but are not as successful as those who drafted that Bill hoped in the original the legislation.

I am pleased, too, that in the Dumfries and region, with the two district councils within represent—Annandale and Eskdale, and Nithsd guidelines now meet assessed needs. That ha request by those local authorities for many years, glad that my right hon. and learned Friend has able to meet it. The region has had an increase cent., or £9·5 million, and a needs element incre per cent., or £2 million, yet having achie satisfactory result, it wishes to put up the rates 20 per cent. That is incomprehensible. There is to blame the Government or for the region to sa achieved what it wants, that it must now raise ex because of the increased availability of resources Government.

The districts have been well looked after by hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State. into account not only the rate support grant housing support through the housing revenue acc non-HRA orders, they have been favourably tre year, as they were last year. Their criticisms o resources have been removed. As Opposition would say, all local authorities are keen to h resources, but there are limits in the world of housekeeping because of the priority of keepi inflation. If we were to let local authorities h blanche to spend what they liked, we should be i of rising inflation and unemployment, two i things that we do not want.

Opposition Members tend to forget some statements about local government finance last s the time of the general election. They said that keen to return to the old discredited system of their manifesto, they said that a property tax advantages" and that they wanted a "wide exp resources". So Opposition Members want mo ployment, more inflation and more taxation. Th begin to understand the repercussions of some policies—

Dr. John Reid (Motherwell, North): Will Gentleman give way?

Sir Hector Monro: I shall give way if I wish The hon. Gentleman must sit down and wait.

The Opposition also said that they wished agricultural land and buildings, which would be farmers who are going through a difficult transiti under the common agricultural policy.

Dr. Reid: As the hon. Gentleman is so op increases in taxation, does he agree with the fig have been produced by the Library that show tha figures, far from being £250 per head, the poll t the Government continue the cuts of the past few funding local authorities and hold the business ra as they have said they will, be £450 for every man and adult over 18 years of age? Is an average fami to pay a poll tax of £2,000 per annum Gentleman's idea of a cut in taxation?

Sir Hector Monro: I do not accept t Gentleman's figures. I have looked carefully at th and at answers to parliamentary questions,

[Sir Hector Monro]

combined community charge and water rate will be £190. For the average couple, and particularly for the widow or single person, living in reasonable accommodation, it will be a great advantage. I do not want to start an argument on the community charge at this time of night, but the hon. Member for Motherwell, North (Dr. Reid) will find that it is a much fairer tax than any of the proposals that I have quoted from the Labour party manifesto, which were a rating disaster in terms of political advancement.

Labour Members should be grateful to my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for the rate support grant that he has put forward. It should be warmly welcomed by all local authorities.

11.46 pm

Mrs. Maria Fyfe (Glasgow, Maryhill): It has been claimed this year, and many a year before, that COSLA and Scottish local authorities are grateful for and pleased with the year's rate support grant. That has always sounded like a battered wife being pleased because her husband is battering her no more this year than he did last year.

The accusation about overspending is particularly unjust, and it carries no evidence with regard to Scottish local authorities. It is particularly amusing because it has been made at a time when we have been reading about Westminster city council, which has sold three cemeteries —one for a mere £1 to a developer, who promptly sold it to another developer for millions of pounds. Relatives who have been visiting the graves of their families for more than 50 years have complained that those well-kept cemeteries have now become wastelands. There is not one Scottish local authority that would dream of conducting itself in such a manner. With such activities going on, it is amazing that Conservative Members dare to talk about the wastefulness of Scottish local authorities.

The Government show no sign of answering the points that have been made during the debate by Labour Members. The hon. Member for Dumfries (Sir H. Monro) claimed that new money was being made available for sports clubs. The COSLA document has pointed out—I am sure that Ministers must have read it — that the overall grant percentage has been maintained in line with this year's figure, so the compensation to authorities for grant relief is not new money. It has been earmarked and transferred from sums that would otherwise have been available for general needs grant.

The hon. Member for Dumfries claims to understand local government finance. He had a go at Labour Members and said that they know nothing about it. I imagine that the hon. Gentleman realies on the forelock-tugging peasantry in his locality putting faith in his understanding of local government finance. The reality is that very few people do understand it. The Government hope that, because of the widespread lack of understanding of it, they will get away with their schemes.

It has been said that for about half the population of Scotland the increase will be only 3 per cent. on this year's budgeted level. As my hon. Friend the Member for Glasgow, Cathcart (Mr. Maxton) observed, pay and price increases have been about twice as much as that. The Minister's response was to argue that wages are within the direct control of local authorities. That makes me wonder whether the Minister knows anything about wage bargaining in the local authority sect including manual workers, those in the professionals. Surely the Minister know takes place at an all-Britain level with re all the local authorities in the ma Following the bargaining there is all-Bri that which has been negotiated. There decisions on what pay levels will be. suggesting that there should be a mov national negotiating machinery? If he take that view, they should say so plainly to the people that that is what they are of Ministers came out with the suggesti I am sure that Scottish local authorities whether the same suggestion is being ma Office.

In addition to the pay and price incr final stage of the teachers' pay award and benefit arrangements that will come int There are many pressures on local gover that just for once my colleagues and I wi to our questions.

The majority do not have a grasp of of local government finance. That being the Government Benches hope to get chicanery. However, the public know w being cut. They know when streets are when bins are being emptied less often cannot have home helps. They know wh and they know who they will be voting f general election.

11.52 pm

Mr. Andrew Welsh (Angus, East): I s because there is a shortage of things to I realise that the debate will shortly be br

There has been a clear difference betw of Opposition Members, such as the ho Glasgow, Maryhill (Mrs. Fyfe) and for E (Mr. Griffiths), and those of Conservativ speeches of Conservative Members have unreality and we have heard reality f Members who have served in local govern reality of several rate support grant order local government. I know that local basically underfunded for the task Government place upon it. Central G stantly place more tasks on local gove providing it with adequate finance. They that by hedging in local government by m guidelines.

Needs allowances are unrelated to t people of Scotland, and that is allied to support grant settlements. There is a deli shifting the funding of local government, i support grant, from central Government the shoulders of ratepayers. All lo throughout Scotland, even Conservative- that are supposedly prudent, have beer complaints to the Government about the they have received while attempting to pro those who elected them.

I wish to dispel the myth of high authorities. I should be interested to contradict the COSLA critique, which de local government tries to give value for

in a professional way throughout Scotland to provide high-quality services at reasonable costs. If the Government want local authorities to provide services, they must realise that that cannot be done on the cheap. Angus district council, for example, had its needs allowance halved in one year. Such violent swings in the supply of central Government finance are obviously harmful and make it difficult for local authorities to operate. It is only central Government's estimates of local needs that change, not the needs themselves.

Paragraph 4 of appendix F of the order shows that the so-called overspend of £122 million resulted in a clawback of £202 million. That cannot be regarded as anything but a punishment, and that it unfair to those who use local government services.

I ask the Government to explain the £12 million allocation for the collection of poll tax payments. Angus district council estimates that there will be £300,000 in capital costs and £360,000 in revenue costs. That is one district — what about the other 52? Tayside region estimates that £4 million will be required for accommodation for people working on the poll tax. How can that equate with the £12 million offered? If the sum is inadequate, will the Government give extra cash to meet these needs and consult COSLA?

11.55 pm

Mr. Lang: It would be overstating it to say that this has been a productive debate. It has at least been interesting and somewhat predictable. There was a good deal of indignation, most of it plainly synthetic in view of the generous settlement.

The hon. Member for Glasgow, Cathcart (Mr. Maxton) referred to cuts in the rate support grant percentage. If he really wants to look at cuts in the RSG percentage, he should look back to the period of the last Labour Government, who reduced the RSG percentage from 75 per cent. to 68·5 per cent., which in one fell swoop reduced it by 4 per cent. more than this Government have ever reduced it by. As for the argument that by keeping the RSG percentage constant it might somehow lead to more stable local government expenditure, over the four-year period when we left it at 68·5 per cent. local government expenditure rose by no less than 60 per cent.

The hon. Member for Cathcart suggested that consultation with COSLA was a sham and that it wants a much more generous settlement. COSLA wanted £3,679 million and got £3,637·53 million. Indeed, the only difference between ourselves and COSLA was over the estimate of the local government inflation rate. All the details of the grant distribution—the domestic element, the ratio of needs to resources, the use of the client group method, the minimum grant increase, the grant percentage —were precisely what COSLA asked for.

The hon. Member for Cathcart said that some authorities would get only a 3 per cent. increase in their guideline, and COSLA pointed out that that was about half the population. As the total increase is 5·2 per cent. over budget, it is therefore demonstrable that the other half of the population would get a considerably larger increase. Authorities such as Strathclyde and Lothian have a 3 per cent. increase in their guideline. Spending levels were some £15 million over assessed need in Strathclyde and £16 million over assessed need in Lothian. As for the 4 per cent. increase in provision for 1988-89 including some £12 million for the community charge introduction, the hon. Member for Cathcart is plain wron listened to me, he would have been aware million is in addition to the 4 per cent. incre

It being one and a half hours after the comm proceedings on the motion, MR. DEPUTY SPE *Question, pursuant to Standing Order No. 14 business):—*

The House divided: Ayes 204, Noes 159.

Division No. 143]

AYES

Alexander, Richard	Franks, Cecil
Alison, Rt Hon Michael	Freeman, Roger
Allason, Rupert	French, Douglas
Amess, David	Gale, Roger
Amos, Alan	Garel-Jones, Trist
Arbuthnot, James	Gill, Christopher
Arnold, Tom *(Hazel Grove)*	Goodhart, Sir Phil
Ashby, David	Goodlad, Alastair
Aspinwall, Jack	Goodson-Wickes,
Atkins, Robert	Gorman, Mrs Tere
Atkinson, David	Gow, Ian
Baker, Rt Hon K. *(Mole Valley)*	Greenway, John (R
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*	Gregory, Conal
Baldry, Tony	Griffiths, Sir Eldon
Batiste, Spencer	Griffiths, Peter (Po
Bennett, Nicholas *(Pembroke)*	Grist, Ian
Bevan, David Gilroy	Ground, Patrick
Blackburn, Dr John G.	Hamilton, Hon A. (
Blaker, Rt Hon Sir Peter	Hamilton, Neil (Ta
Body, Sir Richard	Hampson, Dr Keith
Bonsor, Sir Nicholas	Hannam, John
Boscawen, Hon Robert	Hargreaves, Ken (H
Boswell, Tim	Harris, David
Bottomley, Peter	Haselhurst, Alan
Bowden, Gerald *(Dulwich)*	Hawkins, Christoph
Bowis, John	Hayes, Jerry
Brandon-Bravo, Martin	Hayhoe, Rt Hon Sir
Brazier, Julian	Hayward, Robert
Brittan, Rt Hon Leon	Heathcoat-Amory,
Brooke, Rt Hon Peter	Heddle, John
Brown, Michael *(Brigg & Cl'ts)*	Hicks, Mrs Maures
Bruce, Ian *(Dorset South)*	Hind, Kenneth
Buchanan-Smith, Rt Hon Alick	Hogg, Hon Douglas
Buck, Sir Antony	Holt, Richard
Budgen, Nicholas	Howard, Michael
Burns, Simon	Howarth, Alan (Str
Butler, Chris	Howarth, G. (Cann
Butterfill, John	Howell, Ralph (Nor
Carlisle, John, *(Luton N)*	Hughes, Robert G.
Carrington, Matthew	Hunt, David (Wirral
Cash, William	Hunt, John (Raven
Channon, Rt Hon Paul	Irvine, Michael
Chapman, Sydney	Jack, Michael
Chope, Christopher	Jackson, Robert
Conway, Derek	Janman, Timothy
Coombs, Anthony *(Wyre F'rest)*	Jessel, Toby
Coombs, Simon *(Swindon)*	Johnson Smith, Sir
Cope, John	Jones, Gwilym (Ca
Couchman, James	King, Roger (B'ham
Cran, James	Kirkhope, Timothy
Currie, Mrs Edwina	Knapman, Roger
Curry, David	Knight, Greg (Derby
Davies, Q. *(Stamf'd & Spald'g)*	Knight, Dame Jill (
Davis, David *(Boothferry)*	Knowles, Michael
Day, Stephen	Knox, David
Devlin, Tim	Lang, Ian
Dorrell, Stephen	Latham, Michael
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James	Lawrence, Ivan
Dover, Den	Leigh, Edward (Ga
Durant, Tony	Lennox-Boyd, Hon
Evennett, David	Lightbown, David
Fallon, Michael	Lilley, Peter
Favell, Tony	Lloyd, Peter (Fareh
Fenner, Dame Peggy	Lord, Michael
Field, Barry *(Isle of Wight)*	Lyell, Sir Nicholas
Forman, Nigel	Macfarlane, Sir Neil
Forth, Eric	MacKay, Andrew (E

McLoughlin, Patrick
McNair-Wilson, P. *(New Forest)*
Malins, Humfrey
Mans, Keith
Maples, John
Marshall, John *(Hendon S)*
Martin, David *(Portsmouth S)*
Maude, Hon Francis
Mayhew, Rt Hon Sir Patrick
Mellor, David
Miller, Hal
Mills, Iain
Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)*
Monro, Sir Hector
Morris, M *(N'hampton S)*
Morrison, Sir Charles *(Devizes)*
Morrison, Hon P *(Chester)*
Moss, Malcolm
Moynihan, Hon C.
Neubert, Michael
Nicholls, Patrick
Paice, James
Patnick, Irvine
Rathbone, Tim
Rifkind, Rt Hon Malcolm
Ryder, Richard
Shaw, Sir Giles *(Pudsey)*
Squire, Robin
Stanbrook, Ivor
Stern, Michael
Stevens, Lewis
Stewart, Allan *(Eastwood)*
Stewart, Andrew *(Sherwood)*
Stradling Thomas, Sir John
Sumberg, David
Summerson, Hugo
Taylor, Ian *(Esher)*
Taylor, John M *(Solihull)*
Taylor, Teddy *(S'end E)*
Temple-Morris, Peter
Thompson, D. *(Calder Valley)*
Thompson, Patrick *(Norwich N)*
Thorne, Neil
Thornton, Malcolm
Thurnham, Peter
Townend, John *(Bridlington)*
Tracey, Richard
Tredinnick, David
Trippier, David
Twinn, Dr Ian
Waddington, Rt Hon David
Walden, George
Walker, Bill *(T'side North)*
Waller, Gary
Ward, John
Wardle, C. *(Bexhill)*
Warren, Kenneth
Watts, John
Wells, Bowen
Wheeler, John
Whitney, Ray
Widdecombe, Miss Ann
Wilkinson, John
Wilshire, David
Winterton, Mrs Ann
Winterton, Nicholas
Wood, Timothy
Woodcock, Mike
Yeo, Tim
Young, Sir George *(Acton)*

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. David Maclean and
Mr. Kenneth Calisle.

NOES

Abbott, Ms Diane
Allen, Graham
Archer, Rt Hon Peter
Armstrong, Ms Hilary
Ashdown, Paddy
Barnes, Harry *(Derbyshire NE)*
Barron, Kevin
Battle, John
Beckett, Margaret
Beith, A. J.
Benn, Rt Hon Tony
Bermingham, Gerald
Blair, Tony
Boyes, Roland
Bradley, Keith
Bray, Dr Jeremy
Brown, Gordon *(D'mline E)*
Brown, Nicholas *(Newcastle E)*
Brown, Ron *(Edinburgh Leith)*
Bruce, Malcolm *(Gordon)*
Buchan, Norman
Buckley, George
Caborn, Richard
Callaghan, Jim
Campbell, Ron *(Blyth Valley)*
Campbell-Savours, D. N.
Canavan, Dennis
Carlile, Alex *(Mont'g)*
Clark, Dr David *(S Shields)*
Clarke, Tom *(Monklands W)*
Clay, Bob
Clelland, David
Clwyd, Mrs Ann
Cohen, Harry
Cook, Frank *(Stockton N)*
Cook, Robin *(Livingston)*
Cousins, Jim
Crowther, Stan
Cryer, Bob
Cummings, J.
Cunliffe, Lawrence
Dalyell, Tam
Darling, Alastair
Davies, Ron *(Caerphilly)*
Davis, Terry *(B'ham Hodge H'l)*
Dixon, Don
Dobson, Frank
Doran, Frank
Douglas, Dick
Dunnachie, James
Dunwoody, Hon Mrs Gwyneth
Eadie, Alexander
Eastham, Ken
Evans, John *(St Helens N)*
Ewing, Harry *(Falkirk E)*
Ewing, Mrs Margaret *(Moray)*
Field, Frank *(Birkenhead)*
Fields, Terry *(L'pool B G'n)*
Fisher, Mark
Foster, Derek
Foulkes, George
Fyfe, Mrs Maria
Galbraith, Samuel
George, Bruce
Godman, Dr Norman A.
Golding, Mrs Llin
Griffiths, Nigel *(Edinburgh S)*
Griffiths, Win *(Bridgend)*
Hardy, Peter
Harman, Ms Harriet
Haynes, Frank
Hinchliffe, David
Hogg, N. *(C'nauld & Kilsyth)*
Home Robertson, John
Hood, James
Howarth, George *(Knowsley N)*
Hughes, John *(Coventry NE)*
Hughes, Robert *(Aberdeen N)*
Hughes, Sean *(Knowsley S)*
Illsley, Eric
Ingram, Adam
Johnston, Sir Russell
Jones, Barry *(Alyn & Deeside)*
Jones, Martyn *(Clwyd S W)*
Kirkwood, Archy
Lambie, David
Lamond, James
Leadbitter, Ted
Lestor, Miss Joan *(Eccles)*
Lewis, Terry
Litherland, Robert
Livsey, Richard
Lloyd, Tony *(Stretford)*
Lofthouse, Geoffrey
McAllion, John
McAvoy, Tom
McCartney, Ian
Macdonald, Calum
McKay, Allen *(Penistone)*
McKelvey, William
McLeish, Henry
McTaggart, Bob
McWilliam, John
Mahon, Mrs Alice
Marshall, Jim *(Leicester S)*
Martin, Michael *(Springburn)*
Martlew, Eric
Maxton, John
Meale, Alan
Michael, Alun
Michie, Bill *(Sheffield Heeley)*
Millan, Rt Hon Bruce
Mitchell, Austin *(G't Grimsby)*
Moonie, Dr Lewis
Morgan, Rhodri
Morley, Elliott
Morris, Rt Hon A *(W'shawe)*
Mowlam, Marjorie
Mullin, Chris
O'Brien, William
O'Neill, Martin
Patchett, Terry
Pendry, Tom
Pike, Peter
Powell, Ray *(Ogmore)*
Prescott, John
Primarolo, Ms Dawn
Quin, Ms Joyce
Redmond, Martin
Reid, John
Robertson, George
Rogers, Allan
Ross, Ernie *(Dundee W)*
Rowlands, Ted
Ruddock, Ms Joan
Skinner, Dennis
Smith, Andrew *(Oxford E)*
Soley, Clive
Spearing, Nigel
Steel, Rt Hon David
Steinberg, Gerald
Strang, Gavin
Taylor, Mrs Ann *(Dewsbury)*
Taylor, Matthew *(Truro)*
Thompson, Jack *(Wansbeck)*
Turner, Dennis
Vaz, Keith
Wall, Pat
Wallace, James
Walley, Ms Joan
Wardell, Gareth *(Gower)*
Wareing, Robert N.
Welsh, Andrew *(Angus E)*
Welsh, Michael *(Doncaster N)*
Williams, Alan W. *(Carm'then)*
Wilson, Brian
Wise, Mrs Audrey
Worthington, Anthony
Young, David *(Bolton SE)*

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. Allen Adams and
Mr. David Marshall.

Question accordingly agreed to.

Resolved,

That the Rate Support Grant (Scotland) (No. 3) Order 1987, a copy of which was laid before this House on 11th December, be approved.

RATING AND VALUATION

Resolved,

That the Revaluation Rate Rebates (Scotland) Order 1987, a copy of which was laid before this House on 11th December, be approved.—*[Mr. Peter Lloyd.]*

PETITIONS

Abortion (Amendment) Bill

12.8 am

Mr. Robert G. Hughes (Harrow, West): I beg to ask leave to present a petition to the House. It is signed by 420 of my constituents and says that the Abortion (Amendment) Bill, which proposes to reduce the upper limit for abortions, will, if enacted, restrict women's choices, endanger their health and open the door to further attacks on the Abortion Act 1967.

I present this petition to the House as an expression of a small minority view in my constituency, but the people who express it are entitled to have me present their petition.

I have a second petition which I present on behalf of 480 people in the constituency of Harrow, East, and I do so on behalf of my hon. Friend the Member for Harrow, East (Mr. Dykes). It is in the same words and to the same effect as the petition from the people of Harrow, West.

To lie upon the Table.

Ozone Layer

Motion made, and Question proposed, That this House do now adjourn.—*[Mr. Peter Lloyd.]*

12.10 am

Mr. Hugo Summerson (Walthamstow): Without the sun there would be no life on earth, but the sun is an enemy as well as a friend. It emits ultra-violet radiation which would be very dangerous to all life. Fortunately, we have a defence in the ozone layer.

What is ozone? To give it its technical description, it is a blue gaseous allotrope of oxygen derived or formed naturally from diatomic oxygen by electric discharge or exposure to ultra-violet radiation. The ozone layer occurs in a region of atmosphere between 15 and 30 km high. There is not a great deal of it; if it were all gathered in one layer at ground level it would be about the thickness of a £1 coin.

How is the ozone layer formed, and what does it do? Ultra-violet light, which has a very short wave length and is emitted from the sun, splits the oxygen molecules into two atoms and forms ozone by reaction. Thus, in a beautiful natural interaction the sun provides the earth with a defence against its own ultra-violet radiation as the ozone layer absorbs that radiation, stopping it reaching the ground. Now this crucial defence is being eroded and dissolved. Over Antarctica it is shattered. What on earth is happening?

The British Antarctic Survey has studied the ozone layer since 1957. In 1982 it noticed strange depletions in the layer over Antarctica. Before then, observed and predicted changes were less than 1 per cent. per decade. Now the ozone content has more than halved in a period of 30 to 40 days each year. It is down to the thickness of a penny.

This is happening particularly over Antarctica because of a phenomenon called the polar vortex. The combined effects of extreme cold at −80 deg C and strong westerly winds ensure that the air over Antarctica remains isolated from the mid-latitude air, which is relatively rich in ozone. In spring, with the dying down of the vortex, the level of ozone should recover. It has done in the past, but now it does not, and ozone is most depleted where there should be most of it.

Why is the ozone disappearing? Theories based on the solar cycle and on a mechanism of upwelling air are no longer tenable. An enormous experiment, the airborne Antarctic ozone experiment, was carried out last year between 19 August and 30 September by the National Aeronautical and Space Administration in conjunction with the United States National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the National Science Foundation and the Chemical Manufacturers Association, joined by the British Meteorological Office.

The powerful experiment showed that the abundance of chlorine monoxide—I shall come to its sources—at 18 km was sufficient to account for the observed rate of decrease of ozone. Within the polar vortex the amount of hydrochloric acid was very low, which led the scientists to believe that the release of chlorine from hydrochloric acid must play a major part in the story of the ozone hole. The scientists also obtained some evidence to support the view that the release of chlorine occurs from particles in the polar stratosphere.

[Mr. Hugo Summerson]

What is causing the destruction of the ozone layer? There are natural causes, but there has always been a balance between the rate of destruction and the rate of renewal. The ozone layer cannot cope with the man-made gases, chlorofluorocarbons, or CFCs, which were invented in 1928 and have proved extremely useful. They are relatively non-toxic, non-flammable and stable. They are used as propellants in aerosols, in refrigerators and air-conditioning systems, in the dry cleaning industry, foam-blowing processes, for such things as fast food packaging, fire-fighting, home insulation and as solvents in the micro-electronics industry.

The CFCs, after use, escape into the stratosphere, where they are decomposed by sunlight to free chlorine, which destroys ozone. Unfortunately, CFCs have a very long life; they can last for more than 100 years. This means that an 85 per cent. cut in CFCs is needed immediately just to stabilise concentrations at today's levels. In 1986 global production of CFCs was about 750,000 tonnes.

What would be the consequences if the ozone layer were destroyed? The Fat Boy in "Pickwick Papers" said:

"I wants to make your flesh creep."

No, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I do not want to make your flesh creep, nor do I want to make your flesh ulcerate. Malignant melanoma skin cancers, corneal tumours on the eyes and acute photokeratitis are just some of the effects of undiluted solar ultra-violet radiation.

Beautiful bronzed bodies lying on the beach will be a thing of the past. We need not think that because we do not get as much sun as, for example, Australia and New Zealand, where skin cancers are already on the increase, we will not suffer as badly. Clouds do not stop ultra-violet radiation. Ozone depletion also has appalling consequences for plants and, therefore, agriculture. Effects include decreased photosynthesis and yield and changes in flowering patterns. Field research on soya beans, for instance, shows a 25 per cent. decrease in yield as a result of exposure to a comparable increase in ultra-violet radiation.

Concern about damage to the ozone layer is relatively new. It first arose in 1974, following publication of a paper on the subject by two American academics, Rowland and Molina. That concern led to increased international research into the effects of CFCs on the ozone layer and to precautionary action in many countries. In 1977 the United Nations environment programme set up the co-ordinating committee on the ozone layer. This was followed by the Vienna convention on the protection of the ozone layer, adopted in 1985. The United Kingdom signed it in May 1985 and ratified it in May 1987. Before then, different measures were taken in different countries. The United States banned all non-essential uses of CFCs in aerosols, but did not control other uses of CFCs, which continued to grow, particularly in foam, plastics and solvent cleaning. Canada and the Nordic countries did much the same, but the EEC, in decisions in 1980 and 1982, sought to limit CFC production while reducing CFC uses, particularly in aerosols, with a reduction of 30 per cent. by the end of 1981.

However, it was clear that international measures were the best way forward. Negotiations on a protocol to the Vienna convention began in December 1986 and were concluded on 16 September 1987, with the adoption of the Montreal protocol on substances that deplete the ozone layer. This was signed by the United Kingdom, the EEC, the United States of America, Japan and 23 other countries and should come into force on 1 January 1989. It provides for control of emissions of the five most dangerous types of CFCs in three stages: first, a freeze on consumption, calculated at 1986 levels, 18 months after the protocol comes into force; secondly, a 20 per cent. reduction by the year ending 30 June 1994; and, thirdly, a further 30 per cent. reduction by the year ending 30 June 1999. Thus there will be a total reduction of 50 per cent. by the year 2000. However, the protocol allows for the corresponding production figures to be 10 per cent. higher in the first two stages and 15 per cent. at the third to give industry the room to rationalise and to ensure continuing supplies for developing countries which are party to the protocol to meet their basic domestic needs.

These measures are subject to review at least every four years, beginning in 1990 in the light of new information. There are special provisions to help countries which produce small amounts of CFCs to rationalise and to allow countries with extra production already planned to take that into account, subject to limitations on their base year figures. EEC countries can fulfil their obligations jointly. There are provisions limiting trade with countries which are not party to the protocol and giving developing countries more time to comply. But these provisions are designed to encourage more countries to join the protocol.

Whether or not these provisions are satisfactory, it is at least a sign that many countries are concerned, to a large or small extent, about the damage to the ozone layer. Views differed about what was necessary as at that time there were scientific uncertainties about the extent of the damage and the speed with which alternatives to CFCs could be developed and brought into use.

Since the NASA experiment which, unfortunately, finished after the Montreal protocol had been signed, scientific opinion is now much clearer on the damage that has been done and is being done. A hole the size of the United States in the ozone layer over the Antarctic is the clearest possible warning that we are overburdening the atmosphere. I believe that the measures taken in the protocol—and I pay tribute to those responsible for it—are not sufficient to protect the ozone layer. The parties to the protocol can agree to amend it, if there is new evidence pointing to the need for more stringent measures. We now have that new evidence and we need those more stringent measures with great urgency.

It is no good procrastinating and saying "Oh dear, the ozone layer has gone. Now we had better do something." If we lock the stable door after the horse has bolted, we can always get another horse, but to replace part of the atmosphere is a different matter altogether. It will be most interesting to see what results come from the joint French, West German and American expedition to the Arctic to check the position there.

What is to be done? I should like to set out a six-point programme. First, in the light of new knowledge, the parties to the Montreal protocol should meet as soon as possible to reconsider and toughen its provisions. Secondly, as there is still an enormous amount to be learnt about the atmosphere and the ozone layer, we need more and urgent research, more theory, more modelling and more use of super-computers. The Stratospheric Ozone Review Group set up by the Department of the Environment which published its first report in August 1987 is due to report again later this year, but there must

be better co-ordination between the various groups studying the atmosphere and I call for a national institute for atmospheric studies to be established.

Thirdly, all aerosol cans must be labelled. This is already happening with those cans which do not produce CFCs as propellants being labelled "Ozone Friendly", but the labelling should be mandatory. Meantime, one can get from Friends of the Earth a list of products which do not use CFCs as propellants.

Fourthly, all non-essential uses of CFCs must be eliminated as soon as possible. I am glad to see that ICI and ISC Chemicals have recently announced their participation, with 11 other companies, in a programme to develop suitable alternatives to CFCs. This work must be pushed on. Meantime, essential and non-essential uses should be strictly defined. We cannot risk the future of the earth for the sake of deodorants and fast food cartons. Having said that, I congratulate those companies which have stopped using CFCs in their packaging and aerosols.

Fifthly, we need a rigorous British standard for mobile air-conditioning plants in vehicles. These plants use CFCs as coolants and tend to leak.

Finally, there is a substance even more devastating than chlorine in the damage that it causes to ozone. Bromine is being used more and more in fire extinguishers which, at the urging of insurance companies, are tested at frequent intervals. A substitute for bromine must be found urgently, and it would help if some other means of testing fire extinguishers were used.

We have our warning and our opportunity and we must not miss it because it may be the last we have.

12.24 am

Mr. Michael Stern (Bristol, North-West): I am grateful to my hon. Friend the Member for Walthamstow (Mr. Summerson) for allowing me to intervene briefly in his Adjournment debate. I wonder whether he and my hon. Friend the Minister would agree that recent moves by manufacturers of chlorofluorocarbons, not least ISC in my constituency, should be encouraged.

Manufacturers have pressed for the recent protocols, including the Montreal protocol to which my hon. Friend the Member for Walthamstow referred, as a breathing space to enable them to develop other chemicals — principally the halogenated chlorofluorocarbons—which in the long term will replace the chlorofluorocarbons currently used in the world market. This will enable ISC and ICI, the two principal United Kingdom companies in this market, to provide the same benefits to the consumer while avoiding the potential detriment to the environment represented by chlorofluorocarbons.

I hope that my hon. Friend the Minister will encourage those companies to continue that necessary work to fill a gap in the market.

12.26 am

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Environment (Mr. Colin Moynihan): I will reply first to the points raised by my hon. Friend the Member for Bristol, North-West (Mr. Stern). I fully recognise and support the important work being undertaken not only by the company in his constituency but by ICI and other international companies in researching and developing alternatives. That initiative is critical to the success of the work initiated in international forums.

I thank my hon. Friend for intervening at this late hour to place on record his well-known and deeply appreciated concern about this important issue. Perhaps I may, through him, also thank the company to which he has referred and the 10 other companies involved for their support, which is essential in identifying alternatives and in persuading consumers to change their pattern of consumption of goods containing not just halons but chlorofluorocarbons. The work being undertaken is well worthy of praise and a first step along a road that we wish to encourage further.

My hon. Friend the Member for Walthamstow (Mr. Summerson) raised this important subject in a powerful maiden Adjournment speech and I congratulate him on his extremely useful contribution. It is not an easy subject and to have mastered it so early in a parliamentary career which I know will include great progress in the future is worthy of congratulation from both sides of the House. I am grateful to him.

The potential threat to the ozone layer is a major environmental issue of concern not just to the people of this country but to everyone on the planet, and rightly so. The ozone layer screens us all from harmful ultra-violet radiation from the sun and the consequences of significant global depletion would be very serious for human life as well as for animals and plants.

My hon. Friend the Member for Walthamstow drew particular attention to the so-called Antarctic hole. The discovery of large depletions in the ozone layer over the Antarctic has focused attention even more sharply and has led to a great deal of international activity in which United Kingdom scientists have participated. Indeed the hole was discovered by Dr. Farman and colleagues at the British Antarctic Survey. The hole appears for some two months during the Antarctic spring and then recovers, but during 1987, as my hon. Friend the Member for Walthamstow said, it was clearly deeper and lasted longer than in previous years, and that must be a matter of concern for scientists throughout the world and to politicians.

There are many theories about the causes of the phenomenon. The initial findings of the major international scientific study of last autumn, in which the Meteorological Office collaborated closely, strongly suggest the involvement of chlorofluorocarbons, or CFCs as they are generally known. However, it is not quite as simple as that. The hole appears to be the result of a complex interaction of both chemical and meteorological processes. The key question is whether it is a localised phenomenon, unique to Antarctica, or whether there are global implications. In their initial findings the scientists leading the study have refused to rush into print. They emphasise that it is premature to speculate on the global implications until the causes of the hole are better understood. The results of the study are now being analysed, with the aim of publishing them after peer-reviewing in May.

Far from ignoring the problems, as some ill-informed critics have suggested, the British Government very much share the concern about the ozone layer. We have been closely involved in the measures that have already been taken to protect it. As long ago as 1980 the United Kingdom and other European Community member states took precautionary action when they agreed measures to control emissions of the two most widely used CFCs. Those are chemicals with the potential to destroy the ozone layer. They are widely used as propellants in aerosol

[Mr. Colin Moynihan]

cans, in the manufacture of foam plastics, in refrigeration, air-conditioning and as solvents. The Community decided to limit overall production of CFCs 11 and 12 by placing a ceiling on production capacity. That was supplemented by a reduction in their use in aerosols by 30 per cent. and co-operation in reducing emissions from other uses. In the United Kingdom those requirements have been achieved by voluntary agreements with industry.

While Economic Community action concentrated mainly on overall production, a different approach was adopted by the United States. Far from banning CFCs outright, as is often claimed, the United States simply banned non-essential use of CFCs in aerosols. That left growth in other uses quite unconstrained. As the Americans have acknowledged, growth in other sectors, in particular rigid foam, has completely offset the effect of reductions in aerosol use. As a result, per capita consumption of CFCs in the United States remains as high as it is in the Economic Community.

Because the threat to the ozone layer is a global problem, I emphasise that it needs a global solution. The United Kingdom has been fully involved in wider international action. First, in 1985 the United Kingdom signed the Vienna convention for the protection of the ozone layer. We were the first Economic Community country to ratify it in May last year. That framework convention, which will come into force later this year, covers such important matters as co-operation in monitoring research and information exchange.

Secondly, as my hon. Friend the Member for Walthamstow rightly stated, on 16 September last year in Montreal the United Kingdom and the European Community signed a protocol to the Vienna convention, along with the United States, Japan and 21 other countries. The protocol represents international commitment to control global emissions of not only CFCs but halons, which are chemicals used in fire extinguishers.

Although it may be unconventional and not customary in the House, it would be right of me to pay tribute to the work carried out by Fiona McConnell and her team at the Department of the Environment who did so much excellent work to ensure that the protocol was successful with a major British input and a major British lead. When I describe their work as having "commitment" and "sensitivity", that is no understatement. Those words are accurate and I use them to pay tribute to the work that the team undertook. If it is possible to distance myself for a minute from officials, it is a pleasure for me to state that if I was not at the Dispatch Box now, but sitting on the Back Benches, I would have equal commitment to the strength of the dedication and excellent work of the team to ensure that my hon. Friends the Members for Walthamstow and for Bristol, North-West were so well informed.

It does not matter to the ozone layer where chemicals such as CFCs come from. The Montreal protocol focuses on controlling overall emissions, not specific uses. That is clear endorsement by the international community of the need to tackle the totality of emissions rather than banning particular uses, which has been shown to be inefficient and ineffective.

The protocol provides for CFC consumption to be halved in three stages by the end of the century. First, it will be frozen in 1990 at 1986 levels. Secondly, it will be cut by 20 per cent. in 1994. Thirdly, there will be a fur 30 per cent. reduction in 1999. In addition, consumption of the halons will be frozen at 1986 level 1992. The protocol also allows the possibility of indivic parties' production to run at a slightly higher level t their consumption. The purpose of that provision has b misunderstood. It is solely for the purpose of giv industry the flexibility to rationalise and to ens continuing supplies for developing countries which parties to meet their basic domestic needs.

We are anxious that participation in the proto should be as wide as possible. It was to encourage this negotiators in Montreal agreed generous treatment low-consuming developing countries by allowing th extra time before they impose controls. For the sa reason, imports from countries not party to the proto will be banned.

I pay tribute to the important role played by European Commission, which was mandated to negot on behalf of the Community. The United Kingdom also actively involved in the negotiations in strong supp of the Commission. I believe that the Montreal proto is a major environmental achievement. It is the international measure designed to prevent rather than c a global environmental problem. Everyone agreed that could not afford to wait for positive proof of global oz depletion.

Inevitably, there were differences on how far and h fast it was necessary and reasonable to go, given scientific uncertainties about the extent to which the oz layer might be depleted, the availability of alternatives CFCs and the speed with which new substances technologies could be developed. I have no doubt that 50 per cent. cut in consumption is the highest on whic would have been possible to reach consensus, and country sought a higher figure in the final round negotiations in Montreal.

In my view, we have achieved a good environmen balance for taking prudent, anticipatory action wh gives both producers and users of these extremely use chemicals time to adjust. Industry has been given a cl signal of the need to develop alternatives to meet timetable agreed by the international community. I mi add that the United States sought a 20 per cent. incre in production at the first stage to benefit the industry, the European Community resisted that move environmental grounds and it was reduced to 10 per ce

The crucial question, of course, is whether the proto will do the job. Are the measures sufficient to safegu the health and welfare of future generations? Clearly, th are uncertainties. How many countries will join protocol? Will the Soviet Union sign up? How mu growth will there be in developing countries' consum tion? What can be done to prevent non-parties fr producing CFCs and halons? Nevertheless, Government's view is that on the basis of current scient understanding, the prudential measures in the protocol adequate to prevent significant depletion in the glo ozone layer. However—this is most important—if n evidence points to the need for more stringent glo measures, the protocol can be amended.

It is important that the evidence suggested by my h Friend the Member for Walthamstow should be given significant review. I am sure that that will be the ca

There are clear provisions for the measures to be reviewed every four years, but that does not negate the possibility of new scientific data being reviewed at any stage.

I hope that what I have said assists my hon. Friend and convinces him that the Government take the threat to the ozone layer seriously. We have played an active part in measures that have been taken to protect it, and we continue to keep the situation closely under review. If there are major new developments, further global action must and will be taken. I give that commitment. The agreement is remarkable for allowing enough flexibility for such a commitment to be given when there is a major development in the international scientific community concerning the impact on the ozone layer of a variety of chemicals on the market.

I hope that I have helped my hon. Friends. I am grateful to them for raising this matter and I am sure that the House is indebted to them for the time that they have spent researching it and offering their wise counsel.

The motion having been made after Ten o'clock on Monday evening, and the debate having continued for half an hour, MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER *adjourned the House without Question put, pursuant to the Standing Order.*

Adjourned at twenty minutes to One o'clock.

House of Commons

Tuesday 19 January 1988

The House met at half-past Two o'clock

PRAYERS

[MR. SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

PRIVATE BUSINESS

GREATER MANCHESTER (LIGHT RAPID TRANSIT SYSTEM) BILL *[Lords] (By Order)*

GREATER MANCHESTER (LIGHT RAPID TRANSIT SYSTEM) (NO. 2) BILL *[Lords] (By Order)*

Orders for consideration, as amended, read.
To be considered upon Thursday 21 January.

Oral Answers to Questions

EDUCATION AND SCIENCE

Education Reform

1. **Mr. Wallace:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what recent representations he has received concerning clauses 82 to 113 of the Education Reform Bill, relating to further and higher education, as they affect Scotland.

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Education and Science (Mr. Robert Jackson): Of those mentioned, only clauses 92 and 94, which deal with the new Universities Funding Council, extend to Scotland. We have received a number of representations about these provisions, though none specifically on their effect in Scotland.

Mr. Wallace: I am sure that the Minister is well aware of the distinctive and historic traditions of Scottish universities, not least their diverse courses and four-year honours degree courses. What assurances can he give Scottish universities that the Scottish committee of the UFC will have scope and independence to allow that diversity and historic tradition to continue and that they will not be brought into the role of English universities?

Mr. Jackson: It is good to hear the hon. Gentleman marching towards the sound of gunfire with his colleagues. Let us hope that he does not end up as red meat.

The hon. Gentleman is well aware that the relationship between the Government and the universities is conducted on an arm's length principle through the University Grants Committee, and will be, in future, through the UFC. It will be for those institutions to determine their policy in the organisation of universities in Scotland, as it is throughout the rest of the country.

Mr. Bill Walker: Will my hon. Friend bear in mind that Scots do not take lightly the differences between our universities and those south of the border? We are proud of the four-year courses that we run in Scotland. All the evidence shows that they have been beneficial to those who have undergone the courses. More important, we should like to retain the independence that has existed in the past.

Mr. Jackson: My hon. Friend is perfectly right about the value of Scottish universities. Indeed, three out of eight were rated above average by the UGC during recent research exercises. The Government recognise the special position of Scottish universities and their four-year courses by virtue of the fact that in Scotland one third more is spent per student than in England and Wales.

Mr. Ernie Ross: The Education Reform Bill will have an effect on Scotland. What guarantee can the Minister give with regard to the discussions involving Stirling, Dundee and St. Andrew's? If one of those parties fails to agree on proposals about sharing courses, what will be the effect of the clause on funding and the taking back of funds by the UFC, and will it apply in the new circumstances?

Mr. Jackson: The present position will continue after the Bill is enacted, assuming that it is. There will be an arm's length relationship between the Government and the universities. It is up to the UGC—in future, the UFC—to organise provision, in agreement with the universities.

Mr. Andrew F. Bennett: Will the Minister explain why Scottish universities have done particularly badly under this Conservative Administration? Why have Scottish universities had a cut in resources of 20 per cent. between 1983 and 1987, while the rest of United Kingdom universities have had an average cut of 12 per cent.? Under the proposed legislation, how will he ensure that Scotland is adequately represented on the university body, and how will he get co-ordination between the UFC and central institutions to ensure that higher education right across Scotland is co-ordinated?

Mr. Jackson: The Government have agreed that there should be a Scottish committee of the UFC, and one of its tasks will be to consider co-ordination with the central institutions. I have always understood that the Labour party was a national party—or at least that it intended to continue to be so. We are pursuing a national policy, as did the Labour party when in government. The UGC applies national criteria evenly and fairly to all university institutions throughout the country.

Mrs. Margaret Ewing: How can the Minister reconcile the UGC's statement that universities should recruit 900 new members of staff per year when financial stringencies are forcing them to draw up plans for 2,500 redundancies? What is his response to Sir Alwyn Williams, the principal of Glasgow university, who last weekend spoke about the disinherited generations of the next two decades, the scholars and researchers who, under this Government, and I quote——

Mr. Speaker: Order. No quotations at Question Time.

Mrs. Ewing: Sir Alwyn Williams said that we were heading down the road to mediocrity.

Mr. Jackson: In the past two years the Government have increased expenditure on universities by 18 per cent. We have specifically responded to redundancies by providing £155 million to be spent on restructuring over the next three years.

Nursery Education

2. **Mr. Steinberg:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what plans he has to increase the level of nursery provision; and if he will make a statement.

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Education and Science (Mr. Bob Dunn): None. My right hon. Friend has very recently restated the Government's policy on the education of under-fives in his memorandum on the report of the Education, Science and Arts Committee in the previous Session, which the House will remember was entitled "Achievement in Primary Schools".

Mr. Steinberg: I am sure that the majority of hon. Members appreciate the importance of nursery provision to future education and social development. Is it not deplorable that only 23 per cent. of our children get nursery provision? Will the Minister explain what provision he intends to make, bearing in mind that in 1972 the Prime Minister promised that by 1982 there would be nursery provision for 90 per cent. of our children? Is it not deplorable also that the Government hide behind the record of Labour local authorities that provide nursery provision—[HON. MEMBERS: "Too long".]—Not long enough. The 10 best performers are Labour-controlled local authorities and the worst 10 are Tory-controlled.

Mr. Speaker: I ask for brief questions.

Mr. Dunn: I remind the hon. Gentleman that provision and demand in the nursery sector are discretionary. Nevertheless, most education authorities are gradually increasing provision. At present there are 272,000 children in nursery schools or classes, and that is the highest number ever reached.

University of Wales

3. **Mr. Ieuan Wyn Jones:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what recent representations he has received concerning the funding of the University of Wales colleges; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Jackson: About 500 letters have been received since the middle of last year, concerning principally the rationalisation of provision at Bangor and Cardiff. Apart from additional special allowances made for Welsh medium teaching and for the University Registry, the Welsh colleges are funded on precisely the same basis as all other university institutions in Great Britain.

Mr. Jones: Although there is a general welcome for the establishment of a Welsh committee of the University Funding Council, there is concern that the University of Wales is suffering worse cuts than universities in other parts of the United Kingdom. Will the Minister assure the House that that funding imbalance will be borne in mind when the allocation of resources is made to the University of Wales, bearing in mind the special needs arising from, first, the teaching through the medium of the Welsh language, secondly, the federal nature of universities in Wales and, thirdly, that departments tend to be smaller because of the nature of the colleges?

Mr. Jackson: I have already mentioned the special factors that are taken into account by the UGC in its allocation to Wales. It is the policy of the Government, and indeed of most parties in the House—I know it is not the policy of Plaid Cymru, of which Gentleman is a member—that there should b Kingdom national policy for our univers University of Wales and its constituent colleges in exactly the same way by the UGC as all university institutions in the country. The hon. does no service to the University of Wales by special pleading, especially when the University Institute of Service and Technology, Lampete College of Medicine are rated above the avera

Mr. Win Griffiths: The proposal to close the department at University college, Cardiff has nothing to do with education, but rather with Go cost cutting. Indeed, a report from the Department gave it an extremely good rating.

Mr. Jackson: The hon. Gentlema must u that the Secretary of State fixes the number o required for initial teacher training, but the di among the universities is determined by the UG the paradoxes of the situation is that the Gover accused of taking centralising powers by the ve who constantly press us to intervene to d universities.

School Pupils (Literacy)

4. **Mr. Stern:** To ask the Secretary of Education and Science if he will list in the *Offici* information available to him on those developed that do not test school pupils for literacy at so before the completion of compulsory schooling.

The Secretary of State for Education and Sci Kenneth Baker): All developed countries hav leaving examinations which reflect literacy sk assessment and testing arrangements to be es within the national curriculum will monito language attainments at the key educational sta

Mr. Stern: Does my right hon. Friend agree combination of that answer and the recent publi the report of the Task Group on Assessment an —the TGAT report—shows the spurious natu campaign that is being carried on by the Op parties and the teachers' unions in attacking the of testing, which is recognised throughout the re world as an essential part of the educational pro

Mr. Baker: I am grateful to my hon. Friend support of the TGAT report—Professor Black' — published last week. That report recom assessment and testing at the key ages of 7, 11, 14 Our proposals on testing and assessment were su in that report, and I wish to emphasise the impor tests to determine a child's ability at those ages cannot determine whether a child has literacy sk can decipher a page of writing when he is seven, he to suffer throughout his education.

Mr. Rees: Is it not the case that in other de countries pupils at independent schools are also

Mr. Baker: The right hon. Gentleman will kn the independent schools' courses are very close national curriculum and that those schools usual tests and examinations on a much wider scale envisage for state-maintained schools.

Mr. Dickens: Is it not right that all parents should be able to expect their children at least to be able to read, write and do basic mathematics when they leave school? How can we be sure that teachers are on their toes and that children are making progress towards that end unless we test?

Mr. Baker: My hon. Friend is right in saying that we want children to be able to do all those things. Let me say a bit more about the subject. Those are the basic skills which represent the core subjects in our national curriculum. It is true that children have to be assessed and tested, which is exactly what the TGAT report says.

Mr. Bernie Grant: Will the Secretary of State tell us what measures he will take to guard against cultural bias in the tests?

Mr. Baker: The Black report refers to these matters. I am sure that the hon. Gentleman has seen the ILEA report of research undertaken before Christmas relating to the achievements of black Afro-Caribbean children in London. One thing that was discovered—and this comes as no surprise — is that many of the black Afro-Caribbean children were much more motivated to do well at school than many of the white children. They got lower grades because they lacked basic skills, and that is one of the reasons why we have put basic skills right at the heart of the national curriculum.

Mr. Sackville: Does my right hon. Friend agree that if a child is not achieving basic standards of literacy his parents have a right and a duty to find that out? Politicians and others who would stand in the way of that process do a grave disservice to children, parents and, indeed, the future of the country.

Mr. Baker: The report makes it clear that information about the assessments and tests should be made available to the child concerned—although the results should not be published so as to identify the child—to the teachers and to the child's parents, so that the necessary action can be taken. The right of a parent to know precisely how his or her child is doing is a fundamental necessity of education.

Mr. Fatchett: Given that TGAT, under the chairmanship of Professor Black, casts doubts on the validity of publishing assessment results of children aged seven, will the Secretary of State give a categorical assurance that the Government will not enact legislation to force schools to publish the results of such assessments, or are we to have a totally divisive and competitive system?

Mr. Baker: The hon. Gentleman will know from our debates in Committee that we broadly welcome the report, whose proposals are out to consultation. Professor Black's team made the point that there should be assessment and testing at the age of seven. It also said that to publish results as a judgment upon the school would not be entirely fair, and I acknowledge that there is some strength in that argument. However, it is important that the results of the tests and assessments at the age of seven should be made available to parents so that they may know how their child is doing in relation to national standards.

Education Reform

5. **Mr. Yeo:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what recent representations he has received regarding the national curriculum.

The Minister of State, Department of Educa Science (Mrs. Angela Rumbold): When the Ed Reform Bill received its Second Reading, we had a total of 9,300 letters on our national cur proposals. Since then we have received about 66 from individuals and organisations on the same s

Mr. Yeo: Will my hon. Friend inform the Hous number of representations that have been in favou national curriculum?

Mrs. Rumbold: It is difficult to say how many ha in favour. However, our statistics can point out in which some of the responses were oppose example, we analysed the 1,312 responses organisations on a simple basis and, in principle, were opposed. My hon. Friend will be happy to kn of the 11,790 individual responses, only 1,53 opposed in principle.

Mr. Fisher: Has the Minister had an opportu read the new clause that has been tabled to the Ed Reform Bill, which asks the Government to set up Education Council to promote the arts in educa part of the national curriculum? Is she aware of th concern felt by parents, educationists and artists ab position of the arts in the national curriculum? W look again at the new clause and see it as a const way forward for promoting the arts in the curricu

Mrs. Rumbold: We have not yet had time to co the proposed new clause to which the hon. Gen referred. However, he will know that art and musi part of the foundation curriculum that we are prop

Mr. Pawsey: Does my hon. Friend accept th proposals for the national curriculum will be wel widely by parents, who will see them as having par relevance to the world of work? Does she further that many employers will welcome them becau national curriculum will help to bridge some of th that have shown up in education and caused probl industry when young people have entered busines commerce?

Mrs. Rumbold: I am grateful to my hon. Friend fo question. Many parents are anxious to know how children are doing. The national curriculum will them in that process throughout a child's school ca

Many employers have complained that some young people who have left school at the age of 1 gone straight to work have not covered sufficient su during their education as it stands at present. The na curriculum will go a long way towards remedying situation.

Mr. Hardy: Having grossly underfunded the intr tion of the new general certificate of secondary educ will there be a similar denial of resources to scho accompany the introduction of the national curricu

Mrs. Rumbold: I must advise the hon. Gentlema the GCSE is one of the best resourced examination to be introduced in this country. It was supported continuous basis through its pilot schemes, and wh was first introduced by several millions of pounds, s hon. Gentleman's accusation is unacceptable. national curriculum proposals are being looked at pilot programme.

Sir John Biggs-Davison: Are Ministers succeeding in removing the anxieties of religious bodies and individuals, who fear that religious instruction may be squeezed and suffer when the core curriculum is introduced?

Mrs. Rumbold: My hon. Friend knows that we are taking great care to respond to the concern of many people about the place of religious instruction in schools. Therefore, we have taken steps in our national curriculum proposals to strengthen the place of religious education in the school curriculum by strengthening the methods by which parents may have redress if they feel that religious instruction is not taking place as it was intended it should in the Education Act 1944.

6. **Mr. Rowe:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science how many representations he has now received on his proposals for schools to opt out of local education authority control.

Mr. Kenneth Baker: I have received well over 900 written responses to my consultation paper from a wide range of sources, together with a variety of less formal representations.

Mr. Rowe: Does my right hon. Friend agree that a balance must be struck between providing parents with the type of school that they want for their children and the creation of establishments, the outcome of which may well be further fragmentation of society — for example, a Scientology school? Will my right hon. Friend assure the House that he will take account of such dangers in reviewing opted-out schools?

Mr. Baker: My hon. Friend will know that grant-maintained schools will not initially be allowed to change their character. We intend to table amendments to the Bill to ensure that any proposal to change the religious ethos of a school is equivalent to a significant change in character, and such a change would be subject to full public procedures.

Mr. Flannery: Is the Secretary of State aware that there is deep worry throughout the education community, and well beyond it—among parents—about the opting-out process? Is it not seen by many to be a blow struck at the local education authorities, which have been built up by a process of democracy over 100 years? Is it not an attempt by the Government to introduce private education by the back door?

Mr. Baker: The hon. Gentleman knows, because he is a member of the Standing Committee on the Bill and we are just reaching the relevant clauses, that the proposal for grant-maintained schools is designed to increase the choice available to parents. Many parents, I believe, will want to exercise that choice. There is nothing compulsory about it, and if parents and governors wish to come together and persuade the Secretary of State that a school should be grant-maintained, I see no reason why that should not be allowed.

Mr. Harry Greenway: Does my right hon. Friend agree that it was a tragic day for education when Mrs. Shirley Williams, then a member of the Labour Government, got rid of direct-grant schools? Will not the opt-out system restore that principle, not only for bright children, but for a wide educational and social range?

Mr. Baker: I think that many issues will be laid at the door of the right hon. Lady, who was one of my predecessors when a member of the Labour Not only did she destroy the direct-grant sch tried to legislate to destroy the grammar stopped that in 1980.

Grant-maintained schools will not analogous to direct-grant schools, but they wider variety and choice for parents. That that we want—for comprehensive, gramma modern, Church and independent schools, city technology colleges and grant-maintain well.

Mr. Ashdown: The Secretary of State wi there is deep concern that, while the decision t be made by a majority of parents voting nevertheless represent a very small minority the school. Will he say how many represent received from his own Back Benches, and wh to do about it?

Mr. Baker: I know that the whole House is bated breath to know exactly what the new L is on these matters. Until the last week or Member for Caithness and Sutherland (Mr. was putting forward a policy in favour of sc in, and he has also said that he wants them to should like to know the answer.

When it comes to the proportion of paren per cent. is indeed a high hurdle. No Governm war have been elected with such a high vote.

Mr. Madel: Is not one of the causes for consider opting out the proposal by a loc authority to close a popular school whose nu been artificially restricted and which has been underfunded by that authority? Although m Friend cannot comment on such proposals unt his desk, can he confirm that he is naturally to such schools?

Mr. Baker: I know what is behind my h question, and I certainly cannot commen However, if popular schools have been underfu measures in the Bill will improve that as well. to have empty desks in popular schools, an enrolment clauses will put paid to that practice many different types of school in man circumstances will want to consider grant status, and my hon. Friend may well have id such circumstance.

Mr. Straw: Will the Secretary of State conf overwhelming majority of the 900 responses received have been opposed to the opting-o and anything like it? Is the weight of oppos proposal the reason why the Secretary of Sta the balloting arrangements, so that a very sm of parents can determine the long-term future

Mr. Baker: A figure of 51 per cent. of tho indeed a very high hurdle in any ballot. Gentleman is saying that our proposals are n he should recall that a Gallup poll last Octob that 1 in 5 parents are interested in opting out. to the most recent poll, that has risen to 1 in

Mr. Haselhurst: Can my right hon. Friend there will be established criteria for opting out, each case will be looked at entirely on its meri a section 12 notice?

Mr. Baker: I envisage each one being looked at on its merits.

Academic Research

8. **Dr. Thomas:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will make a statement on the state of academic research in United Kingdom universities.

Mr. Kenneth Baker: The volume and influence of Britain's academic research is second only to that of the United States of America with its vastly larger resources. We are currently reviewing our policies for the science base so as to ensure that this national strength is maintained and enhanced into the 1990s and beyond.

Dr. Thomas: Does the Secretary of State agree that this is unacceptable in view of the role of the University of Wales in the Welsh economy, with Wales getting only 1·8 per cent. of research council spending, although it has 5 per cent. of the population of the United Kingdom? Will he accept that already, to make up for the deficit in research spending in Wales, additional expenditure of at least £20 million is required? Will he address the subject as the Minister responsible for higher education and for the research councils?

Mr. Baker: The hon. Gentleman should not be so disparaging about the quality of research in Welsh universities. In the UGC's survey Cardiff was considered to be outstanding in research in mathematics and mechanical engineering. The university nearest to his constituency, Bangor, was above average in oceanography and biomolecular electronics. The amount of research money that is devoted to individual departments depends upon their excellence. The excellent ones will attract more. That is really the whole thrust of the recent change in research funding.

Mr. Summerson: Will my right hon. Friend ensure that there is proper co-ordination between the universities that are doing research into the atmosphere and the ozone layer?

Mr. Baker: Yes. Important work is being done in individual university departments on these matters. The National Environmental Research Council also has programmes in these matters and has to some extent a co-ordinating role in them.

Mr. Andrew F. Bennett: Can the Secretary of State explain why the morale of so many academics who are doing such excellent research is so low? Why do the Government seem only to approve of research only if it confirms their economic and political prejudices? Is it not essential that the Government pay full tribute to all our academics and build up their morale, because successful research is essential for the intellectual development of the nation.

Mr. Baker: I have tried to show my support for British science by securing an increase above the rate of inflation for next year of 6·2 per cent., from £658 million to £699 million. There were three reports on the brain drain last year which all showed that the brain drain had not worsened in 1987. I was glad to see that. By concentrating research in greater centres of excellence, which is a generally agreed policy, I think that we will get better research and more satisfied researchers. *[Interruption.]*

Mr. Speaker: I ask hon. Members to list questions and the answers. Please let us have questions and answers.

Higher Education

9. **Mr. Watts:** To ask the Secretary of Education and Science whether he proposes to changes in the funding of places for part-time s colleges of higher education.

Mr. Jackson: The allocations of recurrent f polytechnics and colleges in 1988-89, announc right hon. Friend on 18 December, provided funding for students enrolled on certain evenin If the Education Reform Bill becomes law in th Session, decisions about the funding of part-tim in polytechnics and colleges in 1989-90 and beyo a matter for the new Polytechnics and Colleges Council.

Mr. Watts: In view of what my hon. Friend about the freedom of the new funding body to appropriate multipliers, why have the existing in multipliers been enshrined in schedule 7 to the E Reform Bill? Does that represent the Gov assessment of an appropriate level of funding?

Mr. Jackson: There has been some misunde of the point. This is a welcome opportunity to clear. The Bill sets up the Polytechnics and Funding Council. It is required, therefore, to s for the entry into the new sector of institutions those are criteria relating to student number computing numbers, the question is how to co time numbers. That is the simple function of sc and it has no other function.

Ms. Armstrong: I had looked for a more hopef from the Minister. Encouraging more people, pa women, back into education demands a fundin that enables them to afford to do it. Will the commit himself to working out ways in which mo adults, particularly women, will be able to ent education?

Mr. Jackson: There was a review last year of students by the National Advisory Body. It is li the new Polytechnics and Colleges Funding Co wish to review the matter. Meanwhile, may I s hon. Lady that the proportion of women in university or higher education rose from 1979 to 1 38 to 42 per cent.

Rev. Martin Smyth: Will the Minister re-exam to part-time students, bearing in mind that over year some people have used their time profitably but that under the new social security regulations likely that they will get grants for study?

Mr. Jackson: The Government attach great im to part-time study, and I shall certainly look at t made by the hon. Gentleman.

Scientific Research

10. **Mr. Dalyell:** To ask the Secretary of S Education and Science what are the implicatio policy for scientific research of the concept of c motivated research, adumbrated by Dr. Max Peru and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Jackson: We are reviewing our policies for the science base in the light of the Advisory Board for the Research Council's recommendations on strategy and our wide-ranging consultations on those. This includes consideration of what the ABRC, Dr. Perutz and others have said about the need to support curiosity-motivated research.

Mr. Dalyell: Whose side of the argument are Ministers on at this stage; that of Sir David Philips, or that of Dr. Perutz?

Mr. Jackson: The Government are still listening to the various voices speaking on the matter. We are considering proposals made by the ABRC, and extensive representations made by numbers of other people. We have not yet reached any conclusions in the matter.

Mr. Rhodes James: Is my hon. Friend aware that what principally concerns my eminent constituent Dr. Perutz is the ludicrous concept put forward by the ABRC of three tiers of universities, the last of which would have no research at all? Is my hon. Friend aware that a university without research is a contradiction in terms, and can he categorically state that Her Majesty's Government will have nothing whatever to do with this nonsense and will reject this advice?

Mr. Jackson: There is no doubt about the importance of the ABRC's advice that there is a need for continuing selectivity and concentration in our research effort. On the particular way of approaching that, for example by way of a multi-tier structure of universities, that is a question of the means of approaching the objective of selectivity. The Government are of course considering the proposal, but it does not necessarily follow that that is the appropriate way of doing it.

Dr. Michael Clark: Does my hon. Friend agree that all good scientific research is based on curiosity and that the vast majority of scientists are motivated? Therefore, if he continues to support the science base, as he has indicated he will, will he concede that he will, therefore, by definition, be supporting curiosity-motivated research?

Mr. Jackson: There is a requirement for curiosity-based research. Fundamental research is, as it were, the header tank that feeds applied research. That is why the Government support basic research, for example by a 6·2 per cent. increase in research council funding this year.

Mr. Fatchett: While the Minister argues for selectivity in research, has he concluded that there will be universities without research activities and functions, and if he has come to that conclusion, does he find that acceptable for any of our universities?

Mr. Jackson: The Government have reached no conclusions in the matter. The principle of the necessary presence of research in university institutions is one that the Government understand, although I must point out to the hon. Gentleman that more than half the students in higher education in this country are educated in institutions whose mission does not embrace basic research.

Education Reform

11. **Mr. Janner:** To ask the Secreta Education and Science what represen received from Leicestershire concerning Reform Bill.

Mrs. Rumbold: The Department has re representations from organisations Leicestershire, and many others from in pondents. All representations, except individuals, have been placed in the Libra

Mr. Janner: Is it not right that the representations made from the county o including the representation of the controlled Leicestershire county council, and vigorously against most of the reco the Bill? Is the Bill not regarded by mo county as divisive, removing or reducing l doing nothing whatever to assist the educa and other groups to meet the growing need cuts that the Government have imposed

Mrs. Rumbold: The hon. and learned be disappointed to know that the represe have had have been nothing like as categ insisted they are. Indeed, the majority of tions that we have had may have objecte of our reform Bill, but they have accepted such categorical statement on the whole o Reform Bill as he suggests has been Department.

Mr. Ashby: Is my hon. Friend awa Leicester county council is controlled by th and the alliance together, not by the Cons hon. and learned Member for Leicester, W said? Is she also aware that that council parents to send their children to l authorities in other areas, across the bor Has she had any representations from pa that there are schools just 100 yards do which they cannot send their children, but send them sometimes seven miles or more she had any representations requesting i Education Reform Bill of freedom of borders?

Mrs. Rumbold: Our proposals within Reform Bill on the matter of open enrolme mean that parents will have an opportun that they get the school of first choice for This is an extremely important principle choice for parents. I am a little surprised to hon. Friend that the authority is not allow cross boundaries, because it is my understa is the ability for children to cross boundarie legislation.

O-Level Examination Resul

12. **Ms. Ruddock:** To ask the Secreta Education and Science whether he will give for each year since 1979 of *(a)* girls and O-level mathematics, craft, design and te physics, who obtained grades A and B.

Mr. Dunn: Over the period 1978-79 t percentage of school leavers in England w

grades A-C in GCE O-level and grade 1 CSE has shown an increase in mathematics, craft design and technology and other science, and physics. Since 1978-79 more boys than girls have gained a higher grade in each of these subjects, but the proportion of those doing so has increased at a faster rate for girls than for boys. I shall publish the information asked for in the *Official Report*.

Ms. Ruddock: I thank the Minister for that answer. I hope very much that he shares my concern that boys are still achieving more highly than girls in science and mathematics subjects. Given that there is evidence, in mixed schools particularly, that there is an apparent lack of interest in and aptitude for science in girls as compared with boys, and given that the national curriculum will make those subjects compulsory for all, what specific plans does the Minister have to ensure that interest in those subjects by girls is encouraged and to help teachers avoid the presentation of science as a masculine pursuit?

Mr. Dunn: We have specifically asked the mathematics and science working groups that are advising on attainment targets and programmes of stud mind that the curriculum should pr opportunities for boys and girls and to con work the expectations and aptitudes of girls to those subjects.

Mr. Nicholas Bennett: Does my hon. Frie what is important about children's examinat not the gender of the children but the autho schools they go? Some of the highest spendin in this country have the worst examination r

Mr. Dunn: My hon. Friend is entirely proposals in the Education Reform Bill will, o on all education authorities, irrespective of t nature.

Following is the information:

Information is not available in the form re proportion of school leavers in England who higher grade at O-level or CSE in mathematic CDT and other science is shown in the followi

School leavers, England

	Percentage of leavers with a higher[1] grade at O-level or CSE in					
	Mathematics		*Physics*		*CDT and other science[2]*	
Academic year	*Boys*	*Girls*	*Boys*	*Girls*	*Boys*	*Girls*
1978-79	29·2	22·3	18·9	5·8	18·1	3·0
1979-80	29·2	23·2	19·4	6·3	18·2	3·1
1980-81	30·0	24·3	20·0	7·4	18·2	3·0
1981-82	31·3	25·7	21·0	8·1	18·6	3·1
1982-83	31·9	26·9	21·5	8·4	18·2	3·2
1983-84	32·6	27·7	21·8	8·8	18·6	3·3
1984-85	33·2	27·9	21·9	9·5	17·9	3·4
1985-86	33·3	27·8	21·9	9·4	17·7	3·8

Source:
School Leavers Survey. Data subject to sampling error. The data exclude CSE-GCE achievements of young people at tertiary colleges.

[1] Higher grades are O-level grades A-C and CSE grade 1.

[2] CDT and "other science" comprises: craft, design and technology; agriculture, horticulture or rural studies; technical dra engineering plumbing; metalwork; woodwork; general science.

Student Grants

14. **Mrs. Mahon:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science whether he will amend the student awards regulations so that married women are no longer dependent on their husband's income for grant purposes; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Jackson: No. The Government consider that, where the husband or wife of a student has the means to contribute to the student's maintenance costs, it would be wrong to increase the share of those costs which is borne by the taxpayer.

Mrs. Mahon: Does the Minister realise that the discriminatory nature of the present system prevents many mature women from returning to higher education? Does he not think that it is time for a change in the present system?

Mr. Jackson: I must point out to the hon. Lady that there has been a substantial increase in the number of women university students between 1979 and 1986, from 38 to 42 per cent. It is a basic principle of the system of student support, which is of course being re committee that I am chairing, that the fa support the student, whether it is the parents o

PRIME MINISTER

Engagements

Q1. **Mr. Rowe:** To ask the Prime Minister if her official engagements for Tuesday 19 Janu

The Prime Minister (Mrs. Margaret That morning I had meetings with ministerial col others. In addition to my duties in the Hous having further meetings later this afternoon. T I am speaking at the Britain-Australi bicentennial celebration at the Guildhall.

Mr. Rowe: Will my right hon. Friend find to consider the many opportunities that coul which are not being made available to volun ages, to assist the public services? Will s Ministers to reconsider the work of their Dep make available more opportunities to the many who would like to contribute on an organised

The Prime Minister: I agree with my hon. Friend that voluntary work has a great deal to contribute to our community life, and I think that the number of voluntary organisations is one of the characteristics of life in this country. I know how much voluntary work contributed to the clearance after the recent hurricane in my hon. Friend's part of the world. I shall, of course, ask Ministers to consider the matter again to see if they can do more.

Mr. Kinnock: If, as we are told, the Government have the money to cut taxes, why do they not the money to cut the waiting time for those children now in urgent need of vital operations?

The Prime Minister: The number of children being treated now, particularly for cardiac surgery, has increased enormously. Indeed — *[Interruption.]* — for every five cardiac operations that were carried out up to 1979, about eight or nine are carried out now.

Mr. Kinnock: May I say to the Prime Minister, in the words of Mr. Steve McCallum, a member of the west midlands "Young at Heart Campaign" yesterday that

"We are not political."—

[Interruption.] The parents of children needing cardiac operations will have heard Conservative Members laughing at those words. They continue:

"We are fighting for the lives of children. Children's lives are more important than party politics. We don't want to hear figures and statistics quoted for this year and that year. What we want is a National Health Service, a Birmingham Children's Hospital and the best service they can get."

Did the Prime Minister refuse to see Mr. McCallum and other parents and their children yesterday because she knew that if she did she would hear home truths like that?

The Prime Minister: I shall give the right hon. Gentleman the figures that he does not want to hear. He does not want to hear them because they are so good. Cardiac operations at the Birmingham children's hospital are up by 86 per cent. since 1978. In 1978 there were 155. In 1987 there were 288. The right hon. Gentleman says that he does not wish to use these matters party politically. That is the record. May I point out that one of the cases that were prominent in the House last week — that of Matthew Mulhall—was also mentioned again on Friday and it was pointed out that Matthew had a leaking heart valve and that his consultant advised his parents that it would be

"best to allow him to grow so that the largest possible replacement heart valve can be used."

It was envisaged that his operation would take place in four to six months' time. Finding the facts did not stop people falsely raising that case in the House.

Mrs. Ann Winterton: Does my right hon. Friend agree that the £10·5 million of taxpayers' money being spent on the Commission for Racial Equality, the £3·4 million being spent on the Equal Opportunities Commission and the £2 million being spent on courses for trade unionists at our colleges would be better spent on the nation's health?

The Prime Minister: It has been our policy to do as much as we can to see that there is equality of opportunity in Britain, but I am sure that my right hon. Friend the Chief Secretary will have heard my hon. Friend's very effective question.

Q2. **Mr. Fearn:** To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 19 January.

The Prime Minister: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the reply that I gave some moments ago.

Mr. Fearn: As tourism is the fastest growing industry in the world, will the Prime Minister confirm that funds will be available for the British tourist industry, and, indeed for the north-west of England, which is the most beautiful part of Britain? When the Prime Minister replies, will she smile? I have been here seven months and I have never seen her smile yet.

The Prime Minister: I agree with the hon. Gentleman that tourism is an important and growing industry. Last year it helped to create 44,000 new jobs. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Employment has announced that support for tourism will increase next year by 9 per cent., bringing the total up to nearly £50 million. Allocations to the regional boards, including the north-west, are now being considered.

Mr. Cash: Has my right hon. Friend noticed the report in *The Times* today about an unemployed man who started out with the enterprise allowance with a zero turnover, but who, in the space of nine months, has increased that to £560,000 a year? Does that not prove that under her Government enterprise is thriving in Britain and will continue to do so?

The Prime Minister: I am aware of that case. The enterprise allowance has been an enormous success and has enabled many young people to start up in business on their own, creating not only jobs for themselves but for many others, showing that enterprise and vitality are still very much present in Britain's young people.

Q3. **Mr. Boyes:** To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 19 January.

The Prime Minister: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the reply that I gave some moments ago.

Mr. Boyes: Exactly why would the Prime Minister not meet the parents of children who came to see her yesterday about their children's urgent and desperate need for heart surgery?

The Prime Minister: We do not normally receive petitions. There are quite a large number. As the hon. Gentleman is aware, we usually carry out between eight to 11 engagements in one day. There was a most excellent debate late on Friday afternoon on the Birmingham children's hospital, which met most of the points that were raised by the parents.

Mr. Dickens: If I were to—*[Interruption.]*

Mr. Speaker: Order. Mr. Dickens.

Mr. Dickens: If I were to ask my right hon. Friend to give the House the recipe for the splendid performance of the British economy, what main essential ingredient would she list?

The Prime Minister: If my hon. Friend will allow me two, not one, I would say—*[Interruption.]*

Mr. Speaker: Order. It is a perfectly legitimate question.

The Prime Minister: If he will allow me three and not one, I suggest: sound financial policies each and every year, the right legal framework, and incentives to enterprise.

Q4. **Dr. Thomas:** To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 19 January.

The Prime Minister: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the reply that I gave some moments ago.

Dr. Thomas: Will the Prime Minister take time today to study the representations made to the Government by the Irish Government and the European Commission about a proposal by the CEGB to undertake a test in Trawsfynydd power station in my constituency on 12 February, which will include operating the reactor without the normal cooling procedures? Will she respond to those representations and clearly tell the Secretary of State for Energy and the CEGB that such a test does not pass the test of community acceptability in the community that surrounds the power station? If she or the Government allow that test to go ahead, would she, because of her great commitment to nuclear power, like to attend the test and supervise it in person?

The Prime Minister: Much better than that, as I am sure the hon. Gentleman will agree, the test will take place only with the full approval of the independent Nuclear Installations Inspectorate, and will be monitored by it. It will be carried out only after the reactor has been fully shut down for its statutory inspection. All automatic safety systems will be operating normally. No safety systems will be cut off. I understand that there have been two similar tests in the past.

Mr. Hayes: Will my right hon. Friend cause strong representations to be made to the American Government for allowing Seamus Twomey, a former chief of staff of the IRA, to be fêted at a banquet in New York for raising funds for Noraid?

The Prime Minister: I am aware of my hon. Friend's strong views. I think we all feel strongly about this, but the American Administration and President have been forthright in condemning anyone who pursues violence as a way of achieving a political objective. The President has done everything possible to make it clear that that is wholly unacceptable.

Mr. Steel: It is—*[Interruption.]* It is always good to see enthusiasm. Is the Prime Minister aware that tomorrow a delegation of Scottish local authorities is coming to the House to protest at the sheer cost of introducing the poll tax north of the border? Is she aware that the £12 million that the Government have given in no way meets the £25 million of the cost of the administration? Would not that money be better spent on the Health Service in Scotland?

The Prime Minister: The community charge is a way of paying for local government which properly distributes the payment over a wider number of people. In fact, it meets only about a quarter of local expenditure. As the right hon. Gentleman is aware, the other three quarters is met by industry and the taxpayer.

The enthusiasm that the right hon. Gentleman heard expressed was because we thought he might be asking, or telling us, about his policy.

Mr. Allason: When my right hon. Friend considers the Government's much-awaited reform of section 2 of the Official Secrets Act, will she give serious consideration to formalising the role of the D-Notice committee and, in particular, consider introducing a publications review board along the lines of the one that has worked so well in America?

The Prime Minister: My hon. Friend had best wait until the White Paper comes out. We expect it to be out in about June.

Q5. **Mr. Bill Michie:** To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 19 January.

The Prime Minister: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the reply that I gave some moments ago.

Mr. Michie: Is the Prime Minister aware of early-day motion 310, bearing 142 signatures, in which it is claimed that 25,000 signatures have been collected to fight to keep open the Nether Edge maternity unit in Sheffield? How can she justify her statement that the Health Service is safe in her hands when, in spite of all the pressures and arguments, the unit will still be closed? Will she personally meet a delegation from Sheffield and deal with the situation?

The Prime Minister: This is a matter for my right hon. Friend the Minister for Health and for my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Social Services, who deal with such matters. However, the hon. Gentleman will be pleased because I understand that a new children's hospital will be opening in Sheffield next year.

Mr. Marlow: Unlike the leader of the Labour party, Conservative Members are not worried about elections, but supposing that at the next general election the electorate should make a slight mistake and not give us a overall majority, what lessons would my right hon. Friend learn from last week about trying to form a coalition with the Social and Liberal Democrats?

The Prime Minister: That is a mistake that the Conservative party will not make.

Q6. **Mr. Wall:** To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 19 January.

The Prime Minister: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the reply that I gave some moments ago.

Mr. Wall: Is the Prime Minister aware that only six out of 12 intensive care beds are in use for heart operations in the Yorkshire regional cardiothoracic centre at Killingbeck hospital in Leeds? Will she join the vast majority of senior medical staff at that hospital in requesting from the regional health authority three extra intensive care units, or will she tell the staff at that hospital who, in the vast and lengthening queue of patients, young and old, will have to wait for surgery?

The Prime Minister: The number of cardiac operations, the amount of resources and the number of doctors and nurses have greatly increased. We are looking carefully at why some regional and district health authorities are able to manage much better than others on their allocations of money, and why in some surgery wards in some hospitals the beds are left empty between patient treatment for one day while in others they are left for up to three days. We are now getting a great deal of interesting information, trying to make the best use of the facilities available and taking lessons from those who have been most successful in that.

Points of Order

3.32 pm

Mr. Tony Banks (Newham, North-West): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. There is a report in today's *Financial Times* saying:

"the Home Secretary is expected to outline his plans for the expansion of UK radio in Parliament today."

It is a matter of great discourtesy that those proposals will be outlined in Parliament by way of a parliamentary question that was tabled yesterday, the answer to which will be available between 4 o'clock and 4.30 this afternoon. This is part of the consultation process.

The Government have issued a Green Paper about the future of radio broadcasting in Britain. It would be normal procedure to expect a White Paper and certainly a statement from the Home Secretary at the Dispatch Box to enable us to discuss matters of great significance and importance for broadcasting in Britain. I have not seen the planted reply, but I understand that we are to hear about three new national stations which will be auctioned off. There will be major changes.

Mr. Speaker: Order. I know nothing about this matter. If we had had a statement today on this issue it would have delayed the start of the debate, in which I have the names of no fewer than 58 right hon. and hon. Members wishing to speak. There is nothing I can do about the hon. Member's comments.

Mr. Bob Cryer (Bradford, South): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. The Register of Members' Interests is important for the operation of certain Standing Orders. The Select Committee on the Register of Members' Interests announced on 8 December that it had agreed on its publication. That document has not yet appeared. It is important that it is published so that we can see whether Tory MPs who accuse nurses of moonlighting are themselves moonlighting by an extensive range of directorships and parliamentary adviserships, like the right hon. Member for Chingford (Mr. Tebbit).

Mr. Speaker: I understand that the Register is available for inspection in the Library, but I will look into the matter that the hon. Gentleman has raised.

Mr. Bill Walker (Tayside, North): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. I seek your guidance as a member of the First Scottish Standing Committee. This morning we were unable to conduct our business——

Mr. Speaker: Order. I cannot give any guidance to the hon. Gentleman on that. As I stated last week, in answer to a broadly similar point of order, what goes on in a Standing Committee cannot be raised with me on the Floor of the House.

Mr. Tony Banks: Further to that point of order, Mr. Speaker——

Mr. Speaker: Order. There is nothing further to it at all. I say to the hon. Gentleman that he has made his point. I can do nothing about it. It is not a matter for me. It is not a matter of order. Ten-minute Bill——

Mr. Banks *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: No. I say again to the hon. Gentleman that I cannot hear any more on that matter.

Underground Fires (Research and Control) and Land Protection

3.36 pm

Mr. Harry Barnes (Derbyshire, North-East): I beg to move,

That leave be given to bring in a Bill to improve research into and services directed towards the prevention, combat, control and extinction of underground fires; and to protect land affected by such fires from consequential damage from subsidence.

Before referring specifically to the modest scope of the Bill I am seeking leave to introduce, I wish to place into a wider context the problems the Bill will seek to tackle, which I hope will illustrate the importance and significance of the measures I propose. There are two main reasons for seeking to extend and co-ordinate expertise in handling natural disasters or acts of God; the types of incidents associated with floods, gales and certain fires. First, complexities arise from the rapid technological changes which are taking place around us, or at least apart from in the Chamber.

Centralised aid and back-up facilities are required to monitor, prevent and, if things go wrong, handle local disasters such as the floods affecting Strabane in Northern Ireland, which could arise in complex new harbour developments such as the Felixstowe dock. The gales which recently hit the south could hit high-rise, man-made structures or complex chemical and nuclear plants. Fires can hit complex underground workings and facilities.

The coal mining industry has had 80 cases of heating in the past year and has a long tradition of fires that require stoppings to be placed within pits. The new technology of Selby-type developments means that the problems associated with such fires are extended. The recent King's Cross disaster revealed massive problems in handling underground fires where passages act as wind tunnels, producing unmanageable fires. Bodies such as the Fire Brigades Union have produced well-documented figures on potential accidents and fire incidents in the proposed Channel tunnel.

Apart from these many technological factors, a second set of problems is faced in handling such disasters—the cuts in local government funding. There have been cuts via the rate support grant, and rate capping and grant capping in Derbyshire. Now we are to have the poll tax and the unified business rate, all pushing down the provisions and facilities for local government services, unless the House can prevent the latter development.

Emergency services dealing with nuclear waste, chemical explosions, extensive floods, sweeping gales or fire hazards could be sustained, even in a less than adequate form, if the Department of the Environment established units to provide research and back-up to help prevent or combat the situations I have touched upon.

I concentrate my remaining remarks on underground fires and the need for my Bill. The definitions of three categories of underground fires should be established: the man-made tunnel with supporting walls, such as the Mersey tunnel; the tunnelling exercise to establish those provisions, including mining activities, where roof support is the only method of protection; and underground fires in closed, confined areas where there is no direct access by individuals, such as the fire in the coal seam which occurred at Oakthorpe in Leicestershire and the fire at

Dronfield in my constituency, where waste material caught alight under an industrial estate that had been constructed out of waste. The last category could also include other potential sources of fire where gas pipes, oil resources and the like are ignited. It is the final category of enclosed underground fires that my Bill will deal with. The available expertise in handling other underground incidents will need to be brought into consideration by the structure that is set up in the Bill. I am seeking the setting up of a special unit under the supervision of the Department of the Environment, whose services and resources of expertise can be drawn on by local authorities that are now faced with complex matters that go beyond their normal experience and expertise.

At the moment, an interdepartmental committee, which is serviced by the Department of the Environment, is discussing the redevelopment of contaminated land. In July 1986, it produced a second draft of a paper on the fire hazards of contaminated land. It dealt with the main hazards of underground fires and listed them as:

"1. Production and release of toxic . . . noxious gases which can travel considerable distances through the ground; 2. subsidence of the burnt ground, causing physical damage to any buildings or other structures on or near the site of the fire, and creating hidden cavities which may make tackling the fire or reclaiming the land hazardous; 3. heat damage to buried structures and site services, such as power supply cables."

It continues:

"All these hazards are dangerous on derelict sites and much more so on sites which are being or have already been developed. After development has been completed, it may be more difficult and expensive to repair the damage."

The final points made in the report are exactly illustrated by the problems that arose in my constituency in the underground fire at Dronfield.

A lead is required to introduce this measure, and I hope that it will be used and built upon in future after the appropriate unit has been established in the Department of the Environment to begin to tackle some of the wider hazards that I have mentioned associated with floods, fires and gales.

I hope that the Bill will gain general support in the House.

Question put and agreed to.

Bill ordered to be brought in by Mr. Harry Barnes, Mr. John Cummings, Mr. Harry Cohen, Mrs. Alice Mahon, Mr. Jeremy Corbyn, Mr. Frank Cook, Mr. Martin Redmond, Mr. Don Dixon, Mr. Bernie Grant, Mr. Alan Meale, Mr. Dennis Skinner and Mr. John Battle.

Underground Fires (Research and Control) and Land Protection

Mr. Harry Barnes accordingly presented a Bill to improve research into and services directed towards the prevention, combat, control and extinction of underground fires; and to protect land affected by such fires from consequential damage from subsidence: And the same was read the First time; and ordered to be read a Second time upon Friday 22 April and to be printed. [Bill 83.]

Opposition Day

[7TH ALLOTTED DAY]

National Health Service

Mr. Speaker: Before the debate on the National Health Service, I must announce that I have selected the amendment in the name of the Prime Minister. I should repeat what I said earlier in answer to a point of order: no fewer than 58 right hon. and hon. Members have written to express their interest in speaking in the debate, and there may be others. Many of them are Privy Councillors, so I make a special plea for brief contributions.

The House has not given the Chair authority to limit speeches to 10 minutes, but it would be helpful if all Back-Bench speeches could be limited to 10 minutes on this motion.

3.43 pm

Mr. Robin Cook (Livingston): I beg to move,

That this House notes that two out of three health authorities anticipate a deficit at the end of the current financial year and that attempts to balance their accounts have produced closures of hospital wards and cancellation of operations; affirms its commitment to the principle of a National Health Service providing comprehensive, free treatment to all citizens on the basis of need, not payment; further notes that current Treasury revenue substantially exceeds expenditure; and therefore calls upon Her Majesty's Government to release additional funds to end the financial crisis in the Health Service, and to drop proposals for new charges for dental examinations and for eyesight tests.

This is the second occasion on which the Opposition have named health for their Supply debate within the past two months. I wish to advance three reasons why we took the view that it was not only appropriate but essential that the House should have an opportunity to return to this vital matter today.

The first reason is the evidence, accumulating since we last debated the issue only two months ago, that the NHS is currently in financial crisis. Indeed, the weight of evidence pointing to that financial crisis is now so massive that even the Law Officers of this Government must be considering advising their client to plead guilty. May I produce the witnesses who have come forward in the past two months since we debated the issue to confirm the state of crisis in which they have to operate?

The first witness is the chairman of the consultants' committee of the British Medical Association. Last month he announced that that committee was setting up a survey of the acute specialties and he said:

"The acute sector is falling apart at the seams."

The director of the Association of Community Health Councils published its survey only this month. That survey showed that 56 out of 113 health authorities proposed to close wards — some of them entire hospitals — in this financial year. The director stated:

"Unless there is action now, some parts of the NHS, already on the brink of collapse, will simply fall apart during 1988."

In Oxfordshire, 296 general practitioners signed an advertisement opposing the closure of 140 beds. That advertisement said:

"These cuts will cause considerable suffering and very possibly hasten death in some patients."

[Mr. Robin Cook]

Consultants at St. Mary's hospital, Paddington wrote to the press saying:

"We have a duty to inform the public that the fabric of the NHS is crumbling about us."

Consultants at the Birmingham children's hospital wrote to the press stating that they now turn away 30 acute cases every week, and added:

"We no longer accept that this service is safe in the Government's hands."

Most damning of all was a statement, not by any doctor or any nurse or even by Brian Redhead of the BBC, but by the hospital manager of the Manchester royal infirmary last week. He wrote to the 2,500 employees of that hospital advising them that he could no longer pay for drugs and that, by the end of the financial year, he may no longer be able to pay for their wages. He added:

"To all intents and purposes we are bankrupt. If we were a commercial organisation we would have gone into voluntary liquidation".

The Government pride themselves on introducing a commercial ethos into the NHS. They have now achieved a new first — they have introduced the concept of bankruptcy into the NHS. Looking at the amendment in the name of the Prime Minister and her colleagues, I am astonished that it has the nerve to express their support for the dedicated staff of the NHS. If the Government have such respect for the staff of the NHS, they should listen to what those staff are saying to them day after day.

In truth, in the past two months, the Government have sought to pin the blame on the very staff who work in the NHS. Last month, it was the fault of the consultants. Bernard Ingham, the true voice of the Government, briefed the press on the basis that too many consultants were nipping off to do private practice. I find it breathtaking that the Government, who have done everything possible to encourage consultants to do more and more private practice, should now identify that as their excuse. In 1980, the Government even changed the consultants' contracts so that those full-time NHS consultants might carry out private practice in the time when they are paid a full-time salary by the NHS. However, I welcome the Government's repentance and their belated recognition of the fact that, if one extends private medicine, the people who are neglected are the patients on the NHS waiting lists.

Such private practice by consultants is not the major source of the current crisis. At present, all round Britain, health authority managers are telling consultants to slow down and to cut their output. They are being told to go off to the golf course, do a spot of gardening, do anything but increase the rate at which they operate on their waiting list. Indeed, at the Queen Elizabeth hospital in Birmingham some surgeons have been instructed to carry out 10 per cent. fewer operations next year than this year.

Last week a new culprit was discovered. The right hon. Member for Chingford (Mr. Tebbit), who is to grace us with a speech in this debate, discovered that it was not the consultants but the nurses who were to blame—with a little help from the BBC. The right hon. Gentleman informed us that too many nurses were moonlighting. There is a fat lot of support for the dedicated staff of the NHS in that statement. I am not entirely sure that I follow the right hon. Gentleman's logic. Presumably, if those nurses stopped moonlighting, the staffing crisis in our hospitals would be even worse. However, I bow to right hon. Gentleman's superior knowledge moonlighting.

Mr. Norman Tebbit (Chingford): If the hon. Gentle had listened to what I said, he might have perceive although it is doubtful, as his abilities in that respect limited—that my objection was to the crazy systen the Health Service which frequently precludes nurses f working overtime in their own hospitals but allows t to work overtime as agency nurses in another hosp While a nurse is doing that, a girl from a second hosp is busy working overtime as an agency nurse in hospital. That is my objection.

On moonlighting, Opposition Members might be from doing a little themselves. It might add to the de if we had a bit more moonlighting and a little moonshine.

Mr. Cook: I would acquit the right hon. Gentlema the charge of merely having moonlighted. Since he ret as chairman of the Conservative party, he has g through the whole galaxy of night-time work. On explanation that he has offered of his speech on Fri I am bound to say that if that was what the right h Gentleman intended to convey to the press, he sign failed to choose the correct words to put his mess across.

Furthermore, NHS nurses do not fail to do overtim their own hospitals. If the right hon. Gentleman followed the documents that have been cascading from professional bodies for the past two months, he wo have seen the survey carried out at the request of the Ro College of Nursing by independent surveyors, discovered that 60 per cent. of nurses did an average of hours a week unpaid overtime in their own hospit Those are the people whom the right hon. Gentle maligns.

At the weekend, the nurses were superseded by a culprit. I was distressed to read that my opposite numb the Secretary of State, is now being fingered as the culp I feel a personal sense of involvement in seeking to acq the Secretary of State. I am glad to see him back at Dispatch Box and looking so well. It is as well tha should put that on the record, because it is immediately apparent that all his colleagues feel the sa The charge being made in the alcoves of the Westmin bars is that he has created chaos out of order sin handedly and in seven months—taking two months for illness the while. Think what he could have achie had he remained in good health throughout the se months. It is a ludicrous charge. The crisis that has erup in the past few months has been years in the brewing.

Yesterday, I took part in a radio package in which hon. Member for Reading, East (Sir G. Vaughan) a participated. The hon. Gentleman was Minister for Hea during the first three years of this Government's period office. I praise him for his refreshing candour and hones On "The World at One" yesterday the hon. Gentlem said:

"We have known this would be crisis year since 1981. They knew it was coming. They did nothing to avert They deliberately planned the financial squeeze that g rise to the current crisis.

I have no doubt that we shall again hear figu showing the growth in the NHS budget. I invite right h and hon. Members to bear in mind that one third of t

increase took place before 1981 and was almost entirely attributable to the Clegg awards. Most of the increase since 1981 has taken place outside the hospital sector, among the family practitioner services, which are, of course, demand-led. We can see what would have happened to expenditure on those services had they been cash-limited by looking at what did happen to the hospital sector during the same period. In 1986, the Select Committee on Social Services reviewed the hospital budget between 1981 and 1986 and concluded that, in volume terms, the increase was 3·1 per cent. over the entire five years.

The Minister for Health has answered a question pointing out the demographic pressures on the hospital budget and quantifying it in percentage terms. During those same years, when the hospital budget increased by 3·1 per cent., on the Minister's own figures, demographic change added a 4·3 per cent. burden to the hospital sector alone. We do not have a report from the Select Committee for 1987, but it is possible to update those figures. Indeed, the King's Fund has done so and has identified a 3·4 per cent. increase in volume terms over the six years 1981-87 and a 5·4 per cent. increase in the pressure from demographic change during the same period.

Demographic change is racing ahead by two thirds of the increase in the budget of our hospitals. That is why they are now in crisis. That is why wards are closing and patients are being turned away. However, these are statistics that the Prime Minister has chosen not to use in her weekly exchanges with my right hon. Friend the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Eric Forth (Mid-Worcestershire): Will the hon. Gentleman give an undertaking that, if the Labour party is elected to government in the future, it is prepared to commit sufficient funds to the National Health Service to eliminate waiting lists totally? If he is prepared to give that undertaking, which flows from the logic of his argument, will he estimate the cost of that? If he is not prepared to give that undertaking, will he tell us which elements of the waiting lists he is prepared to live with and which he would prefer to eliminate?

Mr. Cook: Only last week, my right hon. Friend made a clear statement of the five points that we are putting forward as our commitment to the NHS. Those commitments have been costed. They mean making good the reduction in expenditure in the hospital sector during the past six years. They involve a planned and controlled expenditure increase to reduce waiting lists, rather than the ad hoc, one-off cosmetic gestures that we get from the Government.

There are other statistics which the Prime Minister chooses not to use, which shed a different light on the record of her Government. However, those statistics occasionally slip out when the guard is down. My hon. Friend the Member for Huddersfield (Mr. Sheerman) obtained an interesting answer last week, which showed that expenditure on nurse training has decreased from £479 million in 1979 to £439 million in 1986. That is one reason for the staffing crisis in our hospitals.

There are also the accelerating figures on bed closures in acute specialties. During the Government's first three years, we lost 5,000 beds for acute specialties. I concede straight away to the Secretary of State that that was more or less on trend with the long-term decline in the number of beds for acute specialties.

Mr. Tony Marlow (Northampton, North): Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Cook: No, I shall continue my speech.

During the next four years, we lost over 10,000 beds for acute specialties and last year we lost 5,000 acute specialty beds. That is three times the rate for the figure for only eight years earlier—*[Interruption.]* I am asked about waiting lists. Well, the waiting list for March 1987 was 15,000 higher than for the year before. We do not yet have the figure for September 1987 but, so far, every waiting list figure for September under this Government has been higher than any September figure under the previous Labour Government.

We also have the figures for infant mortality. Last year, alone among Western nations and for the first time since 1970, infant mortality increased in Britain. When the Prime Minister was taxed about that a fortnight ago, she was so shocked by the increase that for once she lost her confidence in statistics and said:

"It may well be that it is a statistical error."—*[Official Report,* 12 January 1988; Vol. 125, c. 141.]

I am afraid that there is no statistical error. However, I can say that the Prime Minister was absolutely right to point out that the increase did not take place in the first four weeks after birth—which is the period of intensive medical care — but in the subsequent 11 months, between the first and the 12th month of life: the post-neonatal period. I have before me a press statement by Peter Pharoah, professor of community health at Liverpool university, who said:

"Post-neonatal deaths are much more affected by social factors such as unemployment, housing conditions, low income".

That brings us to another set of statistics about the present Government. Survey after survey shows that unemployment makes people ill. The unemployed are 40 per cent. more likely to suffer from cancer, and 200 per cent. more likely to commit suicide. Even the wives of unemployed men have a higher mortality rate, and their children have a higher infant mortality rate. The current rate of unemployment, in the calculation of the *British Medical Journal,* causes an additional 3,000 deaths a year.

If the Government wish to trade statistics, there are plenty with which we can cap any that they produce. Ultimately, however, the trading of statistics is an exercise as sterile as any operating theatre in the National Health Service. Whether the position is better or worse than in 1979 is an argument of obsessional interest to professional politicians, and to just about no one else. People outside this Chamber see their wards closing and their operating theatres being shut down. They see a real problem, and they want to hear a solution to it. They may well have the wit to work out for themselves that those wards and operating theatres stayed open throughout the period of the last Labour Government. However, they are not interested in comparisions with the past; they want to know what plans have been made for the future.

That brings me to the second reason for returning to the issue. It is now clear that the Government are planning on the expectation that the coming year will be even worse than the one that we have just been through. On 18 November, the two junior Health Ministers met the regional health chairmen in Cambridge. One of the chairmen said afterwards:

"The chairmen went in to bang the table and make sure ministers understood just how bad things are out there. There wasn't any need."

[Mr. Cook]

The two Ministers

"just acknowledged it and said in effect it was going to get worse".

I have with me the letter that the Minister for Health subsequently sent to the chairmen of the regional health authorities. I do not believe that he has yet placed it in the Library; perhaps he will do so after the debate. The letter is, of course, beautifully crafted by some civil servant and written in coded terms, but it is not difficult to break the code and decipher what is meant by the "need for realism" or

"more rational use of resources".

Paragraph 3 of the letter makes it clear that there will not be a penny more for 1988-89, while paragraph 6 states that there will be the same pressure for cost improvement programmes in the next year. The Minister accepts that

"some of the more obvious things have now been done and that attention will increasingly need to be given to the cost effective use of clinical resources."

In other words, cost improvement programmes will shift this year from ancillary services to patient care.

Paragraph 8 makes it clear that the health authorities must plan on the expectation that pay increases will not be fully funded this year:

"Authorities will therefore need to plan flexibly and recognise that they may well be called on to meet some pay and price pressures in 1988/89."

For "may well", we may read that they can bet their bottom nurse that that will happen.

I have a letter from the North-West regional health authority, which was sent out following that circular, instructing every district health authority in the north-west to cut its real budget by 1·5 per cent. next year. That of course includes Manchester royal infirmary. All the chairmen in the Yorkshire health authority area were summoned to a meeting with the regional chairmen on Friday, and instructed to cut their budgets by 1 per cent. in the next financial year. I have before me the papers put before Bloomsbury district health authority last week, which show that, in the coming financial year, there will be an additional shortfall of nearly £3 million.

Mr. Max Madden (Bradford, West): My hon. Friend referred to Yorkshire. Is he aware that Bradford health authority, in a document that was leaked this week, is shown to be planning to cut health services by more than £3 million over the next two years. The infant mortality rate in the city is twice the national average, and the authority plans to close a maternity unit. Heart illness is way above the national average, and it plans to cancel the appointment of a second cardiac specialist.

The overwhelming majority of people would forgo tax cuts to improve and defend their local health services. What message has my hon. Friend for the people who want a better Health Service, and not more tax cuts? How will he persuade the Government to take that message on board?

Mr. Cook: When my hon. Friend allows me to resume, I shall try to ram that message home. The point that he makes underlines the statement by the British Cardiac Society only last week that 10 million people are living in district health authorities with no cardiac specialists in the hospitals. We are told that the response to the problem——

Mr. Tony Favell (Stockport): Will the hon. Gent give way?

Mr. Cook: No, I shall proceed with my speech if

Mr. Favell: I want to take up a point that the Gentleman has just made.

Mr. Cook: If the hon. Gentleman will bear with am sure that he can aspire to catch your eye, Mr. Sp

We are told that the response to the problem expenditure must be more cost-effective, but the which we are managing our hospitals at pres ludicrously cost-ineffective. Whole operating theatr standing idle because they cannot afford the margin of operations. These may be cuts, but they are not sa They represent waste on an extravagant scale: investment, wasted technology and wasted skills. If going to bring those skills and investment back int we need extra resources.

Mr. Favell: Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Cook: No, I shall not give way to the Gentleman: I have made that perfectly clear to him. plainly not interested in hearing what I wish to say t and I therefore doubt very much whether he will lis my reply.

For a moment last week, a light flickered. The Sec of State met the three presidents, who emerged to sa he had discussed with them extra resources for the The very next day, the Chief Secretary puffed ou light: the Government would not budge fro commitment that they had made in the A Statement.

The Secretary of State will know that, when he to this address, he will have to explain who has got it Was the Chief Secretary folded up in a corner of the keeping notes while he met the three presidents, o the three presidents right when they emerged to sa their fears had been allayed?

There is, of course, a weasel way out. The stat claims that there was a recognition of the need for resources. Perhaps the Secretary of State proposes t the line that he recognises the need for extra resour long as they do not come from the Chancellor Exchequer. Let the money come from alternative fu from income generation or from lotteries — any but from the Government.

We now come to the interesting rhetorical body s that Conservative Members keep practising. Wh they are pushed into a corner to admit the inadequa public funding, they start talking rapidly about p funding. But private funding of the NHS has noth do with value for money. The Government's handl private pay beds has been a first-rate commercial di They have increased private pay beds in our hospit a quarter, and, during the same period, the numb patients in those beds has fallen by one fifth. The tot debts of the NHS from private patients has escalated year, and now stands at £11 million — more tha Government anticipate that they will gain from i generation. In the light of that experience, o Government who had smashed the learning curve persist in the delusion that a financial problem c solved with more pay beds.

Mr. Edward Leigh (Gainsborough and Horncs Will the hon. Gentleman confirm that it is Labour

policy to end pay beds at a cost of some £60 million and, incidentally, to end competitive tendering at a cost of £100 million? Does he agree that such dogma resulted in the pay of nurses falling for three years out of four under the Labour Government?

Mr. Cook: If the hon. Gentleman wishes to talk about dogma, let us consider dogma. Let us look at the instruction from the Minister of State to the West Midlands regional health authority that it can have £250,000 to buy private operations in private hospitals, but only to buy private operations and not to spend in its own hospitals. It is a sort of Health Service parallel to the assisted places scheme. On inquiring of BUPA, the health authority discovered that a hip replacement operation in a private hospital would cost £700 more than in its own hospitals and that a hysterectomy would cost £400 more.

Meanwhile, in Wolverhampton the regional health authority has so starved the district that it has closed the operating theatre for the orthopaedic ward. All hip replacements in Wolverhampton have ceased. To save what? To save a sum that is actually less than the amount that the Minister of State offered to the west midlands, earmarked for the purchase of orthopaedic operations in the private sector.

If the hon. Gentleman wants a little dogma, I can think of no clearer and finer illustration than paying over the odds to subsidise the private sector while forcing the closure of identical facilities in the NHS. That has nothing to do with cost-effectiveness but it has everything to do with political dogma.

That brings us to the heart of the debate between ourselves and those on the Government Benches. In truth, this is not a debate about public spending priorities; it is a debate about political values. The reason the NHS is under siege is that the Government's vision of a private enterprise society cannot tolerate the contradiction of a public health system that is more efficient and more comprehensive than its private sector competitor.

Those who sit on this side of the Chamber have the advantage of being able to see the Prime Minister's face, so we notice a revealing feature that may be lost on those who sit behind her. Whenever the Prime Minister recites the extra spending on the NHS under her Government, she does not do it with pride, satisfaction or relish; she does it with self-evident resentment. In her eyes, the NHS commits two fatal offences. The first is that everyone is equal, regardless of ability to pay. The second is even worse than the first: the service is actually popular because of that.

I do not know whether the right hon. Member for Brent, North (Sir R. Boyson) is with us today. The right hon. Gentleman has participated in exchanges on this subject outside the House. I particularly relished his speech on the fringe of the Conservative party conference last autumn, when he advocated an insurance system, with the Church of England catering for those who could not afford insurance. That does not seem an adequate solution for those who live in Scotland.

The right hon. Gentleman expressed the difference between our parties very well, I thought. He is on record as saying:

> "The problem with the National Health Service is that there is no link between what people pay and what they receive, and no way of influencing what they receive by what they are prepared to pay."

The right hon. Gentleman sees that as a problem. We s it as a strength of the NHS. Having glimpsed that gulf political values between us, I think we can understand wh the NHS is in financial crisis and why it will be kept financial crisis. What we see as a crisis of the NHS som Conservative Members see as an opportunity to claim tha the NHS cannot deliver and as an excuse to dismantle service that they never liked. How else can we explain th persistent refusal to give it more funds, when we all kno that the Chancellor's wallets are as ample as his presenc

That brings me to the third reason why it is importa that the House debate the matter again. It is more tha ever transparent that the Government can afford to fun the NHS. I note that *The Times* today quotes a Whitehal source as saying that the Secretary of State's argument wi be:

> "If you haven't got it, you cannot spend it."

Possibly the Whitehall source, who may be with us, woul stand up and disclose himself so that we may see who responsible for that wonderful observation.

The fact is that, in terms of financial resources, th Government have got the necessary funds. The Chancell would need a JCB to cart the current Treasury surplu around Whitehall. Only today the Treasury, wit impeccable timing, released the public sector borrowin requirement figures, which show that the PSBR is now minus figure; that is Treasury language for being surplus. There is a surplus of £400 million rather than planned deficit of £4,000 million. Greenwell Montag estimates that next year the surplus could be £11,00 million.

Perhaps I may dampen the enthusiasm of ho Members on the Government Benches. Greenwe Montagu might not be spot on. Suppose it is wildly wron Suppose it is only half right. Suppose the surplus is onl £5,000 million. That would still be enough to cut tax b the 2p beloved by the Chancellor and to give £2,00 million more to hospitals.

We saw on "Weekend World" that the Harris po discovered that 68 per cent. of Conservative Bac Benchers would rather see tax cuts than increase spending on the NHS. Those hon. Members need agoni no more. They can have both their passion for tax cut without any nagging doubts as to whether they are bein faithful to the wards back home, and more expenditure o the NHS. If Greenwell Montagu is more wrong and there is only a quarter of that sum, there can be no seriou doubt that if the Government have to choose, this year th priority must be not tax handouts but rescuing the NH

Mr. Robert McCrindle (Brentwood and Onga *rose*——

Mr. Cook: No; I am moving to my conclusion.

If there is any doubt, may I conclude by reflecting o the people whose health and hopes are in our hands whe we vote tonight? The most remarkable feature of the pa year has been that tens of thousands of operations hav been cancelled. No one knows how many, because n statistics are collected nationally. No one ever cancelle operations en masse before. We know that all district have been postponing non-emergency operations until th next financial year. One district alone has cancelled 3,50 non-emergency operations.

Who are the patients who are non-emergency case They are patients in pain from hernias, patients goin immobile from arthritis, patients who know that their hip

[Mr. Cook]

will deteriorate and that the operation will be more difficult when they get it, patients going blind—like the lady I met at the weekend who waited six months for the first examination for cataract, only to be told that she had another nine months to wait for the operation. They are patients with cancer, consumed with anxiety by the knowledge that the longer the operation is delayed, the less chance that it will be in time to be successful. There are also the parents whom my right hon. Friend the Leader of the Opposition and I met yesterday, driven to distraction by worry that the next time their child is called for operation it may be cancelled as it was last time.

Time after time in the last few months, consultants have said that it was not reasonable, fair or just that they be asked to decide who gets an operation and who does not, who dies and who lives. Ultimately we decide whether those patients will get their operations. It is our responsibility. This year the Chancellor of the Exchequer has the money to ensure that we get a National Health Service that can deliver to its patients. Tonight the House will have the opportunity to instruct him to make those patients his top priority.

4.20 pm

The Secretary of State for Social Services (Mr. John Moore): I beg to move, to leave out from "House" to the end of the Question and add instead thereof:

"applauds the achievement of the National Health Service in providing a record level of patient care; recognises that this achievement rests on the substantial additional funds from the taxpayer which a strong economy has made possible and which has supported the dedicated work of the National Health Service staff; and welcomes the Government's continued commitment to the most effective use of all the Service's growing resources to bring about a further rise in the standard of health care, both in hospitals and in the community".

May I start by genuinely thanking the hon. Member for Livingston (Mr. Cook), my "shadow", for his kind remarks with regard to my illness. He and I have known each other for many years and I am always conscious of his continuing courtesy and personal politeness, and I do appreciate it.

Having said that, I know that the House, as I think both I and the hon. Gentleman would wish it to, will treat a subject of this importance in the 40th anniversary year of the National Health Service with the serious, rational and thoughtful tone that it clearly needs. Health—or illness, as I certainly know to my personal cost—arouses deep emotion, but we will not find long-term solutions in emotion alone. It will require clear thinking. And above all—and I stress this in the light of the remarks that the hon. Gentleman finished with — it will require a successful economy.

May I start, therefore, with the fundamental point that good health needs and must have a successful economy. That has been the essence of the argument of the hon. Member for Livingston and of his right hon. and hon. Friends in the past few weeks. They have argued that the only answer — and they have put it in the motion in terms of a "financial crisis" — is essentially to spend more public money. They want more, that is, than the increases that we have provided and more than the increases we have promised. It is the only answer that they have offered. The awful, fascinating and terrifying thing for them is that that is the only offer we know deliver if, ever again, we have the tragedy of h in office.

I know full well and accept entirely, becau not dishonourable men and women, that they d to hurt the Health Service, and never intend when they were last in office. But when th collapsed in their period of office, let me first House of the priority they put on health car attitude towards staff. I will come to the contr attitude afterwards. Let me remind the House in which they handled future investment in th their responsibilities when in office. First, publ on the Health Service fell from 5 to 4·7 per ce while they were in office.

Miss Marjorie Mowlam (Redcar): Will th clarify that health expenditure next year wi percentage of GDP under this Government?

Mr. Moore: No, I will not. In a little w explain precisely the increases, as the hon. M Livingston asked me to do. I shall also go beyo decline and specify them for the Leader of the when I come to comparisons with the Go period of office. I shall specify the actual amou we are talking about, and deal with the wa Labour treated Health Service staff. Oppositio are concerned quite rightly about staff, becau a key ingredient in the success of the Health S

Ancillary staff had their incomes reduced i in the five years that Labour were in office by 4 Administrative and clerical staff had the reduced in real terms by 14·4 per cent. For d dentists, the decline was 22·4 per cent. in real te had their pay cut in real terms for three years r in 1976-77 by no less than 10 per cent. in real t five years to 1979, nurses had a reduction in p cent.

I shall come to the comparisons with our moment. I said that there were three pillars wanted to compare the record before going on patient care. The third of those is investment i I and many of my right hon. and hon. Friends the House when investment in the capital of th Health Service was slashed by 30 per cent. in Is this a record of which the Opposition are p

What is the contrast to that appalling reco have the temerity to criticise in this Chamb again that because of our successful manage economy we have a bigger GDP to help financ services. Let us examine our priorities, becaus key question. First I shall deal with the percenta we have spent. I shall come then to the specifi fairly asked by the hon. Member for Livingsto to his comments in the newspapers.

I remind the House that the GDP percenta from 5 to 4·7 under Socialism. What has happ It has increased from 4·7 per cent. and not to but to 5·4 per cent. of GDP, so the percentage GDP has increased. That is why we are able to enormous additional amounts of money. I dealing with the points made about pressures, b actual amounts of money, quoted time and increase of 33 per cent. in real terms.

Just suppose for a moment that we had had with or without North sea oil, of having the

in office for the past eight and a half years, with the same increase in the size of the economy that we have achieved and 4·7 per cent. growth in GDP, which is the Opposition's chosen priority as a percentage. How much less would have been spent today, or in this year or last year? Spending would not have been £21 billion, but £18·1 billion. They would have spent £2·9 billion less, even with their own sense of priorities.

What about staff, who are treated so appallingly? I did say, Mr. Speaker, that before I dealt with staff I would cover the specific points made by the hon. Member for Livingston about what he thought was the difference between my views and those of my right hon. Friend the Chief Secretary to the Treasury. There is no difference at all; quite the reverse. People are able to do even basic calculations and consider matters post my party conference speech. Even though we now have the listening party sitting opposite, they do not necessarily spend their time listening to Conservative party conference speeches; but in my speech I made it quite clear that resources for the Health Service must increase.

What has happened since then? In the public expenditure round that was recently announced, there were the increases that had been planned before the general election, with £1·1 billion of further increases, which is £700 million more than had been planned. There were those increases, which I referred to in my meeting with the presidents of the royal colleges, and which were referred to by my right hon. Friend the Chief Secretary, and rightly, as the hon. Member for Livingston says, moneys that will come from the cost improvement programme and additional moneys that we hope will come from an increase in resources from the private sector.

Those figures have been tabulated, and we can consider the totals and calculate what has been spent in the past and what will go into health care next year. It might be of help to the House to know what they are. The total gross increase for 1988-89 in real terms will be 2·1 per cent. If we add to that the extra resources expected to come from CIP, that will be 3 per cent., which is far more than most of the Opposition have argued for. I am assuming those additions on the simple basis of the very good experience of the past few years.

Ms. Joan Ruddock (Lewisham, Deptford): I should like to ask the Minister, despite what he is saying about increases, whether he can explain the paradox of my own local district health authority? As a result of the extra moneys that were given to maintain services, which I suggest is an admission of gross under-funding, those sums of money will enable us at the end of this month in theory to open closed wards. But we cannot employ the nurses to staff those wards and, indeed, we shall be forced to close wards again at the end of the financial year. Even the increases that the Secretary of State has announced for next year will not enable us to keep those services in existence.

Mr. Moore: Before I comment on the specific point, the hon. Member for Livingston would not, I know, want me simply to talk about the increases within the National Health Service as a whole, because he rightly tried to distinguish between the acute care hospital sector and the National Health Service, while acknowledging that there had been massive increases in real terms in the primary health care services. If one just looks at the HCHS and at the total gross increase in the coming year, excludi CIP programme expected yield, that will be an incre real terms next year of 2·2 per cent., including th improvement programme at 3·4 per cent.

To be specific, the hon. Member for Lewi Deptford (Ms. Ruddock) shares the dilemma RAWP disadvantage that many of us, including who live within a Thames region have faced since Hon. Members who had experience and responsibi the time will recognise the nature of the chang reduction in the population and the problems asso with the Metropolis with regard to the attraction o

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

Mr. Moore: I know that a very large numb Members wish to speak. I have given way so far would like to get on as I have quite a few things t

Mr. Favell: Is it not also the case that within the sector the performance of hospitals varies enormo draw my hon. Friend's attention to some figures re published by the North-West regional health auth which show that last year the cost of an in-patient Stepping Hill general hospital was £605·28, yet at Manchester general hospital, where NUPE had re been on strike, the cost per in-patient case was £1,1

Mr. Moore: I am very grateful to my hon. Friend planning to tackle that particular point later.

I was comparing the percentage of gross do product spent on health care. I then wanted to co the appalling record of the Labour Government wi own Government's record in regard to improvi remuneration of staff. We have heard many times House, and I will not burden hon. Members by rep them, the figures of staff increases, but I think it esp important to remind the House how those dealing d with patients have increased as a proportion from 5 per cent.

In particular, I think that the record on the nurses merits attention compared with the app record of the Opposition when in office. We ha simply established the proper pay arrangements th the pay review body; we are seeking to establish a p grading structure for nurses and midwives recognises the particular individual's skills and r sibilities. I know that all hon. Members will be partic pleased that the Nursing and Midwifery Staffs Negot Council has reached agreement on the new g definition, which has been sent to the review body.

The third point that I said I wanted to touch o investment in the future of the National Health S The building of the new NHS from the appalling sl of programmes that existed when we took office ha proceeding massively in the last eight years. As op to a reduction of 30 per cent., we have seen an in in real terms, of 40 per cent. We are now runn programme where we are spending £1,000 million on building the new NHS in the United Kingdom. this shows what can be achieved with a successful ecc under our Government in contrast to the failure economy under Socialism.

I now want to illustrate, because I think that this i many hon. Members would want me to do, what, end of the day, this means to patients. This, surely, i we are all talking about. What these resources a

[Mr. Moore]

enormous efforts that the National Health Service staff have put into improved efficiency, which must be recognised, have meant in terms of patient care is quite staggering. To describe the service as being on the point of collapse, in the light of these figures, is really appalling.

The achievements of the service, as my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister said last week—*[Interruption.]* I seem to have heard an interruption from a sedentary source asking why I did not use it. Happily, throughout my adult life, I have been able to benefit from the NHS, whether in Whittingham hospital, University College hospital or St. Thomas' hospital, and I am not sensitive in any way. I would assume that the listening party would like to listen to the end of these remarks.

Every member of my family has used and continues to use the NHS. I shall never forget the debt that I owe to the St. Helier hospital, where my mother died of cancer. I shall never forget the treatment that the doctors and nurses gave. But it is a bizarre feature of the world in which we now live that, because, as a consequence of my experience and knowledge, I was willing for many years, along with my wife, to pay less than I paid when I used to smoke as a modest contribution to the premiums of a non-profit-making organisation, when I chose this time not to burden the Health Service, not to force myself upon it, somehow it is regarded as wrong. That is one of the reasons why this country will never again elect the present Opposition to office.

Our great National Health Service deals with six in-patients for every five in 1978, 11 out-patients for every 10 in 1978—these are the realities for the constituents of Opposition Members—and nearly two day cases for every one in 1978. Those are the patients who are now receiving treatment in our acute care hospitals.

Mr. Robin Cook *rose*——

Mr. Moore: I will continue for a little while, if I may.

There is not just more treatment, but better and more complex treatment. For example, many of us know that the first coronary heart bypass operation took place in the United Kingdom in the mid-60s. Three such operations are now being done for every one in 1978. Members of the Opposition do not want to hear the facts.

Mr. Cook *rose*——

Mr. Moore: I will give way in a minute, when I have completed these figures because these are the figures of real patient care—*[Interruption.]*

Mr. Speaker: Order. Let us get back to the debate and the arguments, not personalise it.

Mr. Moore: Five treatments are being given for chronic renal failure for every two in 1978. Four hip replacements are being done compared with three in 1978. We are doing not only double the kidney transplants that we were doing in 1978, but more than any other European country. There were 30 bone marrow transplants in 1978; there is nearly one a day now. It is the Opposition, in the face of the reality of the great achievements of the National Health Service, who have lost their way. Finally, there were three heart transplants in 1979—in the whole year—but 176 in 1986, as well as 51 heart-lung transplants. Those are the figures of our NHS today.

Mr. Cook: If the Secretary of State is on the situation in our hospitals being so m it was under the Labour Government, ca the House why during that Labour Gov never necessary for the presidents of the r go and see the then Secretary of State necessary for 1,000 consultants to go and Minister; it was never necessary for gener to pay for advertisements warning their pa happening to them; and it was never no BMA to set up a survey of acute specialti

Mr. Moore: I will, of course, come to t and the points on demography in a sec memories seem to be failing here, I will r Member of what happened in 1978. On pa Donaghue's book, he said—and I bel relevant—that in 1978

"Mr. Callaghan again sought ways to j extra funds to the National Health Service a Ennals to produce a paper on the NHS crisi

Beyond that, morale in the NHS was fi 1978. I can give chapter and verse and quo The British Medical Association chairman injection of money was necessary to resusc Nurses said that

"Lack of money prevents patient care"

and that it led to the NHS crisis in Aug almost beyond belief for the Oppositio temerity not to remember the winter of 1978-79.

The statistics are not just bald statisti millions of families who have benefited each hospitals and many patients whose quality improved by operations scarcely possible The hon. Member for Livingston asked wh success story, the service is still under such

Mr. Kevin Barron (Rother Valley) *rose*—

Mr. Moore: I wish to deal with this legitimate matter to address.

Despite the increased efficiency and the we have promised for the future, we must factors before we can consider the way forw see these factors as opportunities rather t They relate to demography, to medical tech changes and to what some of my hon. Frie calling from a sedentary position the le expectations of a more affluent society.

The picture is not unknown to most hon. consider seriously the dilemmas that we f society. Happily, we are living longer. The doubled since 1951. The over-80s will doubl implications for the National Health enormous. As we grow older, demands Service increase disproportionately. When 54·6 per cent. of NHS beds are used by th dimensions of the problem are better Technology is not a problem, but an oppo accept that point. The reality of increased a reflection of that.

The second feature of the inter-relatio change in demography is the total and wo in medical technology which has enabled us diagnose and treat conditions that wou ignored or left dormant in the recent past.

that new technology, there are rising expectations about what the NHS can provide and legitimate changes in the consumerist attitude of an affluent Britain.

Mr. Barron *rose*——

Mr. Moore: In an affluent Britain, consumers want more choice and expect to get the kind of choices that we are seeking to provide.

What, then, is the way forward? We must remember that the key to our policy must be a successful economy generating the wealth that allows us to continue the increases in resources that we have provided and promised, if we are to satisfy the legitimate public expectations of health care. I wish to concentrate on six matters beyond the basic improvement of the economy.

Mr. Barron *rose*——

Mr. Moore: We must improve and enhance the service in the face of technology, demography and rising expectations. We must press on for greater efficiency. This is not simply a matter of being a good accountant. It is a matter of trying to use valuable resources in health care and nobody should want anything different.

We must acknowledge and give great credit to the Health Service for what it has already done in this matter. The cost improvement programmes have radically improved the way in which it can add money to health care. As a consequence of the cost improvement programme, £1·3 billion is now the cumulative addition to health care. We have streamlined the service by abolishing area health authorities and we have introduced general management which is beginning to produce major improvements. We have introduced competitive tendering which is saving £100 million a year, which will go into better patient care.

Mrs. Ann Clwyd (Cynon Valley): I notice that there is one comparison that the Minister has not made. Does he agree that every year, apart from one since the Government came to office in 1979, there has been a decrease in the amount of money spent on nurse training? It is the lack of quality nursing care which affects those who are waiting for hole in the heart operations. Can he explain why the Government have spent less money on nurse training since 1979?

Mr. Moore: It is critical that we address the point raised by the hon. Lady and the nature of the change in demography which has given us a smaller and different pool. It is part and parcel of the way in which we have approached the clinical grading review, about which I am delighted, and of the way in which we consider Project 2000. This is an area of critical training and is a key to the future. I know that the hon. Lady will be helping in this.

I wish to explain what has been achieved beyond the improvements in competitive tendering. There has been a better use of beds. I hate to use the terminology of the accountant——

Mr. Matthew Taylor (Truro) *rose*——

Mr. Moore: —but it is important to see the way in which the throughput of beds used has increased by 36 per cent. There has been a dramatic increase in day care. A vital part of this will be the provision of more and better information to doctors about the cost of the treatment that they provide and about the basis of our current resource management initiative.

Mention has already been made of the d between authorities. When we are discussing th use of resources, we must consider published much more carefully. We now have 450 indica system was established by my predecessor the Se State for Employment in 1983-84 and was first in the latter part of 1985. We are beginning to benefits from it.

Mr. Matthew Taylor *rose*——

Mr. Moore: If we consider the nature of the us the length of stay and the cost per case, the varia still enormous. Even when we take into acc differences in the size of districts, geography, p and activity, these figures will help hon. Me understand the nature of the efficiency gains. consider general surgery and the annual numb patient cases, the lowest figure of bed use give health authority runs at 27·8 per cent. and th figure runs at 70 per cent., so there is an e difference.

Mr. Matthew Taylor *rose*——

Mr. Moore: Equally, the average length of s in-patient in general surgery varies between th half days and 11 days.—*[Interruption.]* Unles secure the most efficient use of valuable resource good putting more resources into health care.

Mr. Nigel Spearing (Newham, South): Will hon. Gentleman give way on that point?

Mr. Moore: I know that hon. Members interested in the facts.

The cost per case — the third level — th revenue in-patient expenditure on major acute ho the average district varies between a low of £467 a of £1,231. Those figures show the enormous op for improvements.

Mr. Matthew Taylor: The right hon. Gentle well illustrated the increased throughput in beds it as an example of efficiency, but why have not w crucial statistic on the readmission of patients been pushed out of hospital and who have h readmitted? For example, only a few day constituent of mine, having rescued people from house and been admitted to hospital after he was discharged at 3.30 am and had to walk 20 mi

Mr. Moore: I shall ask my right hon. Fr Minister for Health to pursue that constituency at the end of the day in every case the removal from hospital is a matter for clinical judgment, n Government.

Mr. Michael Morris (Northampton, South): hon. Friend has rightly given some conclusive Will he take heart from the fact that year in, yea Public Accounts Committee looks at the NHS an that there is further work to be done in those a

Mr. Moore: I thank my hon. Friend who many years of distinguished service on th Accounts Committee.

I said that there were six areas I wanted to part of the way forward. The second, beyond achieve major efficiency gains, is to encoura authorities to take full advantage of the income g

[Mr. Moore]

powers contained in the Health and Medicines Bill which is now being discussed in Committee. Those are not insignificant amounts of money. At least £70 million a year could be generated and my Department will shortly set up a special unit to encourage and help health authorities to pursue this initiative.

Thirdly, I want to encourage health authorities to use — this is critical and I know that many of my hon. Friends share our view — spare capacity in other authorities whenever it is sensible and cost-effective to do so. That is already happening in part under the waiting list initiative. I want to encourage it, to improve the accounting information systems and to give patients a better knowledge of the system through giving better information to general practitioners.

Mr. Barron *rose——*

Mr. Moore: I have given way frequently and I think that it would assist the House if I were to move forward.

Fourthly — this is important — I want to seek to increase the total resources going into health care by encouraging further co-operation with the private sector. I shall not allow narow-minded dogma to stop resources being used for patient care. One of the great weaknesses of Britain's Health Service is the small contribution made by the private sector compared with that in other countries.

Mr. Barron *rose——*

Mr. Moore: In France, 2·7 per cent. of GDP goes into health care from the private sector, in Germany 1·8 per cent., in Canada 2·1 per cent., and in Holland 1·9 per cent., compared with only 0·5 per cent. in the United Kingdom. There is a clear gap there. We must seek to encourage such contributions.

Mr. Barron *rose——*

Mr. Moore: Fifthly, we shall improve the primary care services. The hon. Member for Livingston has recognised the major increases in real resources in those in the past eight years. They are critical to our acute care hospital service because they are the gateway to the expensive hospital sector. The announcements in our White Paper about the way in which we are seeking to amend general practitioners' terms of service to clarify their role in the provision of health promotion services and the prevention of ill health are critical. Equally, we want to introduce a range of incentives through general practitioners' pay to encourage them to carry out specific activities such as attaining target levels of vaccination and screening. That has been welcomed by most hon. Members.

Sixthly — this is also important and surrounds the debate outside as well as inside the House—I want us to focus much more on the overall objective of our health care policies. Our aim is clear — better health for the nation. So much of today's debate has been trapped on inputs—money, staff and beds. I accept that those are important, but we look too little at the outcome or the outputs. We need better indicators and targets to help us to judge good health against which we can judge our inputs and objectives.

Dr. David Owen (Plymouth, Devonport): I, like other hon. Members, have listened for a sign of any new policy or hope. Will the Secretary of State at least say that, if the independent review body on nurses' everyone hopes, a substantial recomme above that allowed for in the Gov expenditure White Paper, that settlemen by the Government, as happened in el reassurance is genuinely needed.

Mr. Moore: It is the height of cheel Member who supported a Government record on nurses' pay to make such Government's record on the nurses, the pay review body and the way in which its implemented is second to none.

Mr. Neil Kinnock (Islwyn): Will the now answer the question posed by the ri for Plymouth, Devonport (Dr. Owe addressed before? Will the Government pay increase for the nurses? If they do, time.

Mr. Moore: First, that is factually Government fully funded—*[Interruptio* Government's record on the nurses, Gentleman knows to his discomfort, is o MEMBERS: "Answer the question."] I an despite the sedentary interruptions.

If the right hon. Gentleman ever sto the Dispatch Box—I hope that that wi am sure that he would not submit to the not only recommendations but the assur that full funding would automatically o not be a recipe for serious debate about serious attempts to achieve proper incen within the service. It would be foolish t

Mr. Kinnock: The word that the right is groping for is "no".

Mr. Moore: No, I am groping for the Government's responsibility and rec

Mr. Barron *rose——*

Mr. Speaker: Order. The hon. Gen keep rising. The Minister has already Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Moore: All the measures that I sensible and deserve the support of eve about the nation's health. I am glad that debate today and I welcome the wider deb place in the country on the future of the that the whole nation should be involve discussion about health care. What is w discussion degenerates into destructive Health Service.

The National Health Service enters i a proud record. It is wilfully blind not splendid achievements—in particular, t eight years. Worse than that, attacks damage the morale of workers in it an confidence of the public. However, the NH 40th year facing unprecedented demand is so crucial that our debates are inform Fevered attacks will not help the Nationa We stand firmly — I think the hon Livingston wanted me to say this, and I s to do so—as we always have, behind the NHS, which is that adequate health

available to everyone no matter what his means. At the same time, the dramatic changes in demography, technology and expectations that I have outlined today mean that we must constantly reconsider how that principle can best be implemented.

The Government have increased the resources that are available to the National Health Service every single year since they came to office. Those increases will continue, but, in the light of the accelerating and unending demand for health care, we must consider even more carefully how resources can best be used and how, like other western countries, we can encourage a greater private sector contribution to enhance and add to the increasing resources that the Government have already committed.

Today, thanks to the Government's excellent record, health care in this country is being provided for more people by more skilled staff in better facilities than at any time in our history. We shall build on these achievements in meeting the challenges of tomorrow. It is in that spirit that I look forward to the contributions of hon. Members to the debate, and in that spirit that I urge the House to reject the Opposition motion.

5.1 pm

Mr. Stanley Orme (Salford, East): The Secretary of State has not answered the central question why the National Health Service is in the biggest crisis since its creation in 1948. Why are hospital beds and wards closing? Why are people having to wait longer for treatment? Why is there a shortage of nurses now?

The Secretary of State referred to the period of the Labour Government. In Salford, part of which I have represented for the past 23 years, we have never known such a crisis. Under the Labour Government we were building a hospital; under this Government we are closing hospitals. Why has the whole country suddenly reached this crisis? It is to be found not only in the inner cities, but everywhere. The basic problem is that since 1981 health authorities have had to face the cuts that the Government have imposed. If there was any fat to cut out before, there is none now, so the authorities are up against it.

Let me discuss my inner-city area. We heard much from the Government after the election. We heard from the Prime Minister that priority was going to be given to inner-city areas. Some of my hon. Friends, like myself, represent inner-city areas. Salford has a large elderly population suffering from chronic medical problems. As a result, my health authority will have to cut £2 million a year right into the 1990s. If the Government make that happen, it will mean that four wards will have to close in one hospital; in another, a children's hospital, two will have to close. Salford royal hospital, a nationally known hospital with a great reputation in the medical world, is now threatened with closure.

Dame Elaine Kellett-Bowman (Lancaster): Does the right hon. Gentleman know that his authority has the second highest administrative costs in the country? Will it now save something in administration rather than close wards?

Mr. Orme: Our costs are high because demand is high in our city. We are very efficient, and I want to quote to the hon. Lady what professor Galasko, operating at the Hope hospital in Salford, has to say:

"The service we give is not ideal, but it is of such a standard that complex cases continue to be referred to our Department in ever increasing numbers. For example, the patients on my own Waiting List have increased April 1986 to 291 now. The waiting time for surg increased. The waiting time for adults on my Wai increased from 51 weeks in April 1986 to 107 n the waiting time for children with complex problems has increased from 82 weeks in April weeks now."

That is the position in my health authority. Th unit, a special unit for young disabled people, are proud, is threatened with closure. Wha Secretary of State have to say about that? Wh have to say to the young people I have seen whom it is a lifeline? They are seriously disa people in their teens and early twenties and thi chance have they when the unit is threatened w

Only last week, a nurse from the Royal children's hospital made a statement. Siste Rickard said:

"No one else will say this. I have been waiting it to be said—now I am going to say it.

A lot of these children are desperately ill. I a ill kids are going to die because there is nowhere be seen."

That is what is happening in a hospital in the c of my hon. Friend the Member for Eccles (M

Throughout the country, from one a authority to another, the story is the Government must answer these charges. But get from the Secretary of State today? He is promises of new resources, nothing concrete fo and no method of dealing with the problem. about 1978 and 1979, but I have never known profession so united and agitated as it is no local medical committees, surgeons, orthopaedi nurses and nursing ancillaries are all saying the They are talking not about what might happen what is happening now. Wards are closing cannot obtain services. From the consultants unionists, the message is the same.

Prestwich hospital is under threat, and the fighting that. What proposal has been put assist with that? Bio-Plan Holdings Ltd. has co to say that it will put some tin-pot private devel a National Health Service property. It says t treat National Health Service patients at cost cent.

There is no answer to the problem of th Health Service. The National Health Service so that people could use it at a time of need a it throughout their working lives. That is philosophy. If we move away from that, we sha the American road of different standards bet who can afford to pay and those who cannot have National Health Service hospitals, but have to wait 12 months, 18 months, or two y they get any service at all.

Mr. Terry Lewis (Worsley): My right hon. Fr about possible ward closures at Pendlebury hospital. Is he aware that on the other si constituency the Astley hospital is under threat This morning, I learnt that two ambulance s threatened with closure. The area has already the number of ambulances, but now there is t closure not only of emergency services, but of stations.

Mr. Orme: It is all cumulative. Wards are being closed. Waiting lists are increasing and hospitals are under threat. I am talking not about Britain, but about Salford. Many of my hon. Friends can give similar examples; and if Conservative Members had had the honesty to do so, they, too, could give similar examples.

The National Health Service needs to be rescued. The money is there. As my hon. Friend the Member for Livingston (Mr. Cook) said, money can be injected. Instead of money coming from the contingency fund on a one-off basis, which might suit the right hon. Member for Chingford (Mr. Tebbit), Opposition Members want the funding which is available now to be used for tax cuts to be given instead to the National Health Service in order to give it a new lease of life. We could then consider the matters about which the Secretary of State was speaking.

First and foremost, we must save the National Health Service. That is the battle in which we are engaged. For the first time in my political life, all the forces in the National Health Service are united in that battle. That is the message that we give to the House and to the Secretary of State. The British people want action, and they will demand it.

5.12 pm

Mr. Norman Tebbit (Chingford): I hope to be brief to allow other hon. Members to speak. First, I should declare an interest in that at least one of the companies in which I am involved may in future act as a contractor to the National Health Service. I am glad about that, as I believe that it will benefit the company and the Health Service.

The speeches of the right hon. Member for Salford, East (Mr. Orme) and of the hon. Member for Livingston (Mr. Cook) were interesting in that they were extremely long on complaints but short on cures. The hon. Member for Livingston was short on answers. He certainly could not answer the crisp and pointed question put to him by my hon. Friend the Member for Mid-Worcestershire (Mr. Forth).

Implicit throughout the debate has been the acknowledgment that, because of the success of the Government's policies which had always been opposed by Opposition Members, the Chancellor can make available, they say, extra resources which no Labour Government could have provided. It was not a lack of North sea oil that forced Chancellor Healey to go to the IMF with his troubled economy and to slash the Health Service, cut nurses' wages in real terms, close hospitals and lead us into the winter of discontent when almost every hospital in the country was closed.

I welcome the opportunity for a debate — *[Interruption.]* I see that the hon. Member for Liverpool, Walton (Mr. Heffer) is debating in his usual style with loud remarks made from a sedentary position.

Mr. Eric S. Heffer (Liverpool, Walton) *rose*——

Madam Deputy Speaker (Miss Betty Boothroyd): Order. I do not believe that the right hon. Gentleman is giving way. Is that the case?

Mr. Tebbit: That is quite correct.

Mr. Heffer *rose*——

Madam Deputy Speaker: Order The right hon. Gentleman is not giving way.

Mr. Heffer: The right hon. Gentleman referred to me.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Order. Is the right hon. Gentleman giving way?

Mr. Tebbit: No. *[Interruption.]* All those who know the hon. Member will know the truth about that.

I should like to express my great thanks to Mr. Maxwell and to the *Daily Mirror* for all that they have done to precipitate the debate. But for the *Daily Mirror* and others, we might have drifted on without having a proper debate on these issues. Now, if we are to have a debate, let us have an open debate and try to reach some conclusions.

Last Friday, I posed some questions about the National Health Service, and I should like to enlarge a little on those questions. Some of them were inherent in the question put by my hon. Friend the Member for Mid-Worcestershire, which the hon. Member for Livingston could not answer. The House should turn its mind to the question whether there should be any limit on National Health Service expenditure. The hon. Member for Livingston looks puzzled, but he must understand the question—I hope that he understands the question.

Should expenditure be entirely demand-led? We must think of the implications of allowing the Health Service the privilege of demand-led expenditure, which would give the Health Service the right either to unlimited taxation or to require unlimited cuts in other expenditure programmes. *[Interruption.]* My hon. Friend the Member for Birmingham, Selly Oak (Mr. Beaumont-Dark) says that nobody has asked for that. But it was implied in the speech of the hon. Member for Livingston that the Opposition would deliver it.

I should like to know whether the Opposition favour an absolute limit on Health Service expenditure, or whether they favour a demand-led expenditure. When we have an answer to that question, it would be wise to ask what that limit should be and how it should be expressed. Should we continue to express it as we do now, in public expenditure White Paper money terms, after the Star Chamber and all the trials which Ministers have to go through, or should we express it as a percentage of GDP?

My right hon. Friend rightly took pride in the fact that we have increased the share of GDP going into the National Health Service. Should we set a target or a limit in those terms? That would be a buoyant limit of revenue — unless we had a Labour Government, when GDP would fall and there would be the usual cuts. Should it be a slice of revenue or a percentage of income tax, the product of 15p off the standard rate of income tax which it currently requires, or the product of a rate of VAT, recollecting that the Health Service costs just about all the revenue at present achieved from VAT? Those questions are worth asking and worth answering.

Then we should go on to ask how that cash should be raised.

Mr. Tony Lloyd (Stretford): I follow the drift of the right hon. Gentleman's questions, which will strike a chord with Conservative Members. If he is seeking a more rational way to distribute health care, he would not support the local authority in central Manchester which is talking about voluntary or compulsory redundancies. That is irrational.

Mr. Tebbit: It is clear that I was unwise to give way to the hon. Member for Stretford (Mr. Lloyd), who wanted to make a complaint instead of contributing to the debate.

We should then ask how that cash should be raised. Should it continue to be raised almost exclusively from the general burden of taxation out of the Consolidated Fund, or should we look for other methods of raising money? Should we look to the example of West Germany where the service is funded by a payroll tax——

Ms. Harriet Harman (Peckham): No.

Mr. Tebbit: The hon. Lady immediately says no, but she has not even thought about it before reacting. The listening party is leaping to conclusions.

Should we give consideration to a payroll tax for health purposes, as in West Germany, where the current payroll tax is 12 per cent. and has been judged to be too high? Efforts are being made to reduce it because the burden is too heavy. Should we go down that path, or should we denominate some part of income tax? The Chancellor would never agree to a hypothecated tax, but a quasi-tax such as a payroll tax or a slice of VAT may be possible. We should be debating those questions, instead of the shroud-waving exercise which has been going on exclusively for the local press of Opposition Members.

We should look at how we provide the service. We cannot doubt all the statistics, but I will come now to some that I do doubt. The increase of almost one third in real terms, which has been put into the Health Service in cash, the 64,000 more nurses, the 13,000 more doctors and dentists—where are they? When my right hon. Friend the Minister referred to resources, Opposition Members posed an important question, which the hon. Member for Livingston (Mr. Cook) has not really thought about yet: "Then where has it all gone?" That is a very good question.

Are those nurses standing beside beds and are the doctors standing alongside them, or have they gone into a vast administrative black hole? We hear much about the cancellation of health care due to a lack of nurses or medical equipment, but I have never heard of a committee being cancelled because of a lack of photocopiers, paper or clerks to push the paper around. I sometimes wonder who sets the priorities within the great bureaucracy of the National Health Service.

Mr. Nigel Griffiths (Edinburgh, South): The right hon. Gentleman implies that nothing has been done for the past eight or nine years. What have his Government been doing about it?

Mr. Tebbit: The hon. Gentleman asks a fair question. We have had Health Service reorganisations under various Governments, all within the context of the nationalised provision of service, and none of them has been outstandingly unsuccessful, perhaps because of the very nature of the provision. The listening party, in a leaflet distributed over the signature of the Leader of the Opposition, asks that question. The Leader of the Opposition says that we should ask whether the way we provide health care is the best way. I do not know whether that is a genuine question or he has already closed his mind on the issue, but we should have open minds on it. I hope that the hon. Gentleman will join me in having an open mind on it and will consider it on its merits.

I dealt earlier with the point raised by the hon. Member for Livingston about my remarks on nurses who work extra time for extra money. I recognise that many nurses work overtime without being paid, but if they work overtime they ought to be paid. My criticism of the system is that it precludes them from being paid for working overtime in their own hospitals, but provides for them to work overtime in other hospitals. That seems to be administrative nonsense.

As a London Member, I recognise that the differential between the pay of nurses and others, and between the London rate and the rate in areas where the cost of living is much lower, is too narrow. If I recollect rightly, that was part of the burden of the Government's evidence to the pay review body, which unfortunately was not accepted or acted upon by that body. It is no wonder that medical staff, particularly junior nurses in London, look for other sources of pay, because they find it extremely difficult to afford accommodation unless they can increase their pay. My criticism is overwhelmingly of management and the system.

The Health Service is not just people, although people are the most important part of it. Capital—cash, money—is another part of it. I take issue with the reliance that is sometimes put on some statistics, as to which hospital is cheaper or more expensive than another for an operation because, typical of a nationalised system, there is no balance sheet and capital comes free. Nobody accounts for the cost of capital. Once the investment is made, it is written off. Nobody thinks of putting a cost on the money which must be provided so that the comparisons may be not about the efficient way a hospital is managed but about which hospital has had a huge injection of capital and which has not. The nationalised system has inherent defects, which mean that capital is not properly allocated. All too often it goes in not on the basis of need but on the basis of decibels of squeal, and we have no real idea whether the capital is being effectively and efficiently used.

That leads me to the question posed by the hon. Member for Edinburgh, South (Mr. Griffiths) and by the Leader of the Opposition—although he is not seriously interested in the answer—has hospital nationalisation been a success? We would be unwise to leap to the conclusion that it has. Is the present system likely to use scarce resources of cash or staff effectively? We should not leap to conclusions; there is time for mature consideration and to do a proper job. We must do our figures carefully, taking into account the cost of capital.

The right hon. Member for Salford, East compared the cost of the public and private sectors in his city. Is the public sector expected to remunerate its capital? Of course not, but the private sector is, so we are not comparing like with like. If capital is free, it is likely to be badly used, and if we do not account efficiently for the cost of it, how can the people in the Health Service know whether they are doing well or badly?

I end with two points: the essence of the Health Service, as my right hon. Friend the Minister said, is that treatment should be available regardless of ability to pay. It is not essential to the Health Service that provision should be made exclusively through either the public or private sector, or that the funds to finance it should come exclusively through the tax system, or exclusively or partially through charges for service at the time of provision.

I have supported the huge increases in national health spending under this Government, and I am glad that expenditure will continue to increase, but I say to my right hon. and hon. Friends that I would strongly object to a

[Mr. Tebbit]

policy of drip-feeding £100 million by £100 million, or even £1 billion by £1 billion, to those who complain the loudest.

No doubt if my right hon. Friend the Chancellor were to decide that there are to be no tax cuts, no attempt to reduce public sector borrowing, which he should do—preferably he should have a negative PSBR next year—if he spent the whole amount available on the Health Service, it would not be many years before the demand would rise again, with people saying, "We want more." The more money that is drip-fed in response to complaints which are not always—I emphasis not always—quite rational, the worse the service will become, because it is not an efficient allocation and use of resources. We should seize our chance and re-examine the whole funding and provision of the Health Service and should make that searching review a condition of any more funding. The best comment yet was the sedentary question posed from the Opposition Benches: "Where has it all gone then?" That is what we ought to know before we decide to put any more into the same system.

5.29 pm

Mrs. Rosie Barnes (Greenwich): We have heard much in recent weeks, and today in the House and in the country at large, about the crisis in the Health Service. We have heard continually from the Government that there is no crisis. Today has been no different.

There is nothing new and no hope or enlightenment for people on waiting lists. Statistical answers bring little comfort to people who do not know whether their children will live long enough to have vital operations.

I agree with some of the sentiments that have been expressed by Conservative Members. We must reconsider this problem and open a debate on the state of the Health Service, what it will provide and how we shall fund it.

The Government cannot continue to pretend that there is no crisis, when the country is screaming that there is. Short-term and panic-stricken cash injections and mindless repetition of statistics are not the answer. Equally, it is quite wrong to pretend that an infinite demand for health care can be instantly financed out of the public purse.

There is an important issue that we must face as a country. We should be looking for a consensus and we should put party politics behind us. We must acknowledge the changing circumstances in which the National Health Service makes its decisions. We must acknowledge the increase in the number of elderly people and the demands that they will put on the Health Service. We must acknowledge the fact that technical advances, in many respects, are making the Health Service a victim of its own success.

There is no point in developing new technology if ordinary people do not have access to it. We need long-term answers on which we can all agree. There is no greater sector of need for a national consensus than funding of the National Health Service. Yes, we need a debate, but not only on the expenditure involved or the limits of expenditure; society must make decisions on what level of health service will be provided and how it will be paid for.

What criterion of assessment should we use? It is simple: if it is available, I want it for my family. The rest of the community feels the same. There should be a guarantee of treatment, if it is available, within a reasonable period of time. Patients have rights. Desperate recourse to courts by distraught parents is an indictment of our society.

Mr. Tebbit: What the hon. Lady is saying is in slight conflict with what she said earlier. If she is saying that a treatment—that is, if it exists—should be available when people want it and that they should have it regardless, she is saying that there should be a demand-led service with no financial limit. Which side of the question does she come down on?

Mrs. Barnes: I am saying that society must consider this question and come up with the answer. If treatment is available, I would apply the criterion that people expect their family to be treated; if it is available privately, it should be available on the National Health Service. We must look, as a society, at how we shall pay for this service, and we must take that question very seriously.

Dame Elaine Kellett-Bowman: The hon. Lady's exact words—she can check them in *Hansard*—were:

"There should be a guarantee of treatment . . . within a reasonable period of time."

That rather answers the question that my right hon. Friend the Member for Chingford (Mr. Tebbit) asked.

Mrs. Barnes: I believe that there should be a guarantee of treatment within a reasonable time.

What is needed is a consensus and answers that will last for some time to come. That consensus should be based on three elements.

Mr. Keith Raffan (Delyn): Will the hon. Lady give way?

Mrs. Barnes: No, I shall not give way.

First, there should be increased Government spending in line with growth in GDP. Earlier, the Minister spoke of the importance of the economy and its relationship to the nation's health. There is no direct relationship, but a significant link can be made if a specific portion of the national economic cake is allocated to the Health Service.

Secondly, we must find ways in which to encourage people, individually, to spend more on health care without abandoning the principles of the National Health Service—for example, through rededicating premium bonds and through local health lotteries. There is considerable evidence that people are prepared to spend more indirectly if they know that the money that they are giving is going straight to the Health Service and not being absorbed in general income.

Thirdly, we must realise that we can use existing resources even more efficiently by creating an internal market that matches the internal supply and demand of individual health authorities in a much more effective way. Clearly, if people needing treatment would receive it far more quickly in a different health authority there is no reason why they should not be given the right to take advantage of that authority's facilities and their own health authority should have to pay the bill.

I should like to highlight one less-emphasised but equally important crisis in the Health Service—the crisis caused by the implementation, not the principle, of the Resource Allocation Working Party proposals. The problem is the lack of funding caused by the implementation of those proposals in certain parts of the country.

Ms. Joan Walley (Stoke-on-Trent, North): I should like to point out to the House that there is a myth in this country and in the Chamber that other parts of the country are benefiting from RAWP. In my constituency, the North Staffordshire district health authority is not receiving the benefits of the special deprivation programme. It has been suspended by the Government because of their failure to meet the nurses' pay increase in full.

Mrs. Barnes: I shall refer to the shortfall in some areas in that regard—but in some areas only.

I am completely committed to the principle of reallocating resources from richer health authorities to poorer ones. It is of great concern to us all that people's chances of avoiding serious illness or premature death depend far more than in comparable countries on the social class to which they belong or the area in which they live or were born.

I am concerned about the way in which the RAWP formula is being implemented. It does not take adequate account of social deprivation at regional or sub-regional level. By and large, RAWP overlooks what can be substantial pockets of deprivation in large regions such as the south-east, which generally is wealthier and better provided for than other areas. The result is that many inner-city areas, such as Greenwich, which have a high need for health care because of considerable social deprivation, do not receive the resources they need because RAWP, in terms of South East Thames regional health authority, and sub-regional RAWP, in terms of Greenwich, do not take adequate account of social deprivation, poor housing and low income, which undoubtedly contribute substantially to poor health. The assumption was that, in such areas, there would be substantial cuts in provision.

In my area, it was expected that the demand for acute hospital beds would fall, so the health authority made provision for such a reduction. The exact opposite has occurred, and demand for those beds has substantially risen. The assumptions contained in RAWP may have been true across the board, but in significant patches those assumptions have proved false. That has caused significant hardship to health authorities, and especially for patients in those areas.

I want a RAWP formula that accurately reflects the need for health care at regional and sub-regional level. What matters is how many people in a given area suffer from ill-health and therefore require care. Some of the evidence used to assess health care has been inaccurate. There has been a tendency to rely heavily on standard mortality rates. There is also a clear suggestion that, in areas of social deprivation, chronic illness is far more persistent and far more widespread. Such illness may not be fatal, but it needs treatment.

To rely solely on standard mortality rates is not enough. There are measures afoot to try to reconsider the RAWP allocations to take account of social deprivation. It has been suggested that the ACORN technique should be used to take account of such deprivation. However, that technique has aroused considerable anxieties because it was intended as a marketing tool and not as a measure of the need for health care. ACORN also uses information based on the 1981 census and, in the inner-city areas, that census material is considerably out of date and does not reflect the current position.

The practical effects of the loss of income in certain areas as a result of RAWP have been severe. In my area, we have lost three hospitals and are faced with the prospect of losing two more. Indeed, many of the areas affected by RAWP were not designed to cater for the medical needs of the 1980s and 1990s. Such areas have many small cottage hospitals — perhaps one large hospital—but do not have adequate facilities to cater for the needs of the community. The closure of five hospitals will entail substantial expensive changes. Such changes can be ill afforded and, in the light of severe cash shortages, are poorly carried out. The problems connected with RAWP allocation are the clearest illustration of the paucity of the Government's approach in specific areas.

The Secretary of State constantly tell us that the NHS has never had so much money devoted to it and that all is well, but people are feeling the pinch. They are experiencing hospital and ward closures and long waiting lists. They know that it is a very different story. The perception gap between the people and their Government is breathtaking.

District health authorities' problems have been compounded by the Government's refusal to fund nurses' pay awards in full. The Government cannot continue to evade their responsibilities by only partly funding pay awards and expecting health authorities to make savings to achieve these awards. Such authorities are already under considerable financial pressure.

It is clear that there is no room to make further cost savings. Perhaps there was some fat to be trimmed, but now we are down to the bone. Any further pay increases must be funded in full by the Government. It is clear that some RAWP money that had been reallocated and money that was intended to prioritise certain areas of health care is now used as basic revenue. There is little point in the Government encouraging health authorities to prioritise certain areas of health care or to reallocate resources to areas of greater need if the money provided to achieve those aims is used to provide the basic facilities.

I believe that we should have a national debate and a review of what we expect from our Health Service and how we are to fund it. We also need to consider the subsidiary issues of how we can be sure that the aims of RAWP are fairly realised so that broadly economically successful health authorities, which contain within their larger areas pockets of social deprivation, are not penalised.

5.45 pm

Sir Barney Hayhoe (Brentford and Isleworth): In the November debate I began my speech by regretting the absence of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State and I hoped that he would soon be fully restored to health. I am delighted that he is now back and that he will be participating in our continuing debates.

I welcome this wide-ranging debate about the NHS and health care. The debate has been raging with great intensity since we last spoke about these matters in the House. However, I deeply deplore the sharply personalised turn that has been taken in the public expression of this debate in the past few days. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State has been targeted as some sort of fall guy. It would be wholly inappropriate for my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Employment to claim credit for the steady and welcome reduction in the numbers of unemployed that he is now able to announce to the country each month. Equally it would be wrong for

[Sir Barney Hayhoe]

my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Social Services to be blamed or held responsible for the financial difficulties now facing the hospitals and community health service.

I agree with my right hon. Friend that there are serious problems deserving rational and well-informed debate. It is right to state—as my right hon. Friend did on a number of occasions during his speech — that a successful economy and sensible economic policies that provide national wealth are absolute requisites to provide money that can be spent on the Health Service and other desirable social objectives and to improve the general standard of living. However, highly emotive questions traded for repeated, well-used statistics — however impressive the statistics — make little contribution to solving the problems.

In November I said that the statistics must be considered carefully. My right hon. Friend the Member for Chingford (Mr. Tebbit) has referred to the number of nurses and asked where they have all gone. What is interesting is to consider when those nurses arrived. The annual report on the Health Service in England published a few days ago shows that there are some 403,000 whole-time equivalent people in nursing and midwifery in England. Since 1979 the number employed has increased substantially, by 44,000. It is clear from the figures that an increase of 38,700 took place before the 1983 general election.

At that election we rightly took great credit for those extra nurses and midwives. However, in the four years since then the increase has been only 5,600. The increase has flattened off. Equally, while substantial extra sums have been spent on the Health Service, the really sharp increases took place in the early years of the Conservative Government and were largely used to restore the pay of National Health Service staff to some sort of reasonable standard from the low level to which it has sunk, leading in part to the winter of discontent of 1978-79.

Mr. Robert B. Jones (Hertfordshire, West): I am most interested in the points that my right hon. Friend makes. However, is it not fair to note that comparable countries can manage with half as many nurses per bed or per head of the population and that our nurses are doing jobs that might well be done by far less well qualified people in other countries? Is not that point worthy of attention?

Sir Barney Hayhoe: My hon. Friend assumes that nurses in this country have the same qualifications as those abroad. They do not. In other countries, nursing is largely a graduate profession. We may be moving towards a graduate profession, but the process will not be completed for many years to come. Over-simplified international comparisons do not really help the debate. One needs to be sure that one is comparing like with like. I certainly do not believe that we are getting particularly poor value for the money that we spend on the National Health Service.

Let me deal with two or three of the major events that have taken place since our debate last November. First, the Government have come forward with an extra £100 million to meet specific urgent requirements in the present financial year. I welcome the decision to add that extra money from the contingency fund.

We have also witnessed a series of strikes and disruptive action by some nurses—not by the Royal College of Nursing, I hasten to add, but by other unions. I d know all the facts, but I question the Governm reaction to those strikes or at least the way in which been perceived by the press. The phrase "Gover climbdown" is often used. That seems to me to be a dangerous message. It is dangerous for it to be th that the Government are responding in that w militant and sometimes irresponsible action by the unions responsible for some National Health Service Certainly, the anti-privatisation strikes in Scotlan wholly unjustified. Of course there should be compe tendering and the money available should be used best possible way.

The £100 million extra is very welcome, but it see have been dragged out of a reluctant Treasury. different the scene would have been if that sum had announced in the wind-up of the debate on 26 Nove One of our problems as a Government is that we spent this additional money in such a way as to get praise for it. Delay has strengthened the arm o Treasury, which will say to the spending Ministers, "I We agreed to that extra money but instead of plaudi are attacked." And this because the announcement been so long delayed. For heaven's sake, when we extra resources available—and I believe that we continue to do so—let us draw credit from it and e that it is to the Government's advantage.

The bulk of that extra money will help with the se over-spending problems that confront so many di health authorities, which stem largely from the underf ing of pay increases made as a result of pay review awards, or negotiations through the Whitley system i case of non-pay review body staff. Tremendous diffic are caused when pay increases exceed the budg provision in cash-limited services. The case of the Nati Health Service illustrates that vividly. The review awards apply both to the hospital and community h service and to family practitoner service. In the case o family practitoner services no problems of implementa arise, apart from complaints from doctors implementation is staged and delayed or when the a is not paid in full. The real problems arise in the hos and community health service because it is cash-limi

What on earth can be done? If the cash limit is t maintained the pay increases have to be staged and app for only part of the year so that the budgeted provisio increased pay is absorbed over seven or eight mo rather than spread over the whole year. That end-load system. I remember from my involvement with Service pay some years ago the strictures laid down by Treasury and Civil Service Committee about end-loa because it raises the base line for the following year. S staging pushes the problem forward into the follo year.

Alternatively the cash limit can be increased with e money coming from the contingency reserve, as, example, in 1987 when the Government decided implement the pay review body awards in full. It wa election year and the Government were not wh unmindful of these important considerations. Even t the Treasury did not agree fully to fund the awards. In evidence to the Treasury and Civil Service Committee Chancellor said:

"£30 million—

I think that he was wrong and that the sum was million——

"had to be found by the health authorities from their cost improvement programmes."

Those self-same cost improvement programmes were also expected to meet non-budgeted pay increases for non-pay review body staff and other additional expenditure that exceeded the budgeted amount. Fine, so that extra spending was being met out of the cost improvement programmes. However, the cost improvement programmes had already been taken fully into account in establishing the public expenditure figures for the hospital and community health service for 1987-88. The House will not think for one moment that when the Secretary of State goes along to see the Chief Secretary or to the Star Chamber those cost improvement programmes are ignored. They are brought into the argument. The Treasury says, "You are to get £150 million a year"—the figure announced by the Secretary of State for the current year and for next year—"and we shall take that into account in arriving at the overall figure." As my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State said, the cumulative total sum arising from cost improvement programmes over the past four or five years is £1·3 billion. In the current financial year the programmes are running cumulatively at about £600 million. If those sums had not been taken into account by the Treasury in determining the overall finances for the hospital and community health service, we should largely have overcome the funding problems that are besetting so many of our district health authorities at the moment.

My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State rightly praised and commended the NHS managers and staff concerned for achieving these substantial efficiency savings. However, their motivation to find even more savings in future years must be damaged by their increasing awareness that the Treasury is taking full account of these savings in determining the cash limits for the hospital and community health service.

My hon. Friends and others who are calling for greater efficiency in the Health Service are right to do so. However, they should not be misled into thinking that as a result of that greater efficiency more money will necessarily be available for patient care because what happens is that in the arguments during the public expenditure round between the spending Department—the DHSS—and the Chief Secretary, the Treasury and others, account will be taken of those efficiency savings.

I now look more widely at the general financing of the National Health Service. I am delighted that the Select Committee on Social Services has made that its priority subject. I hope that it will get ahead with the work and produce an authoritative and useful report. I welcome the present wide-ranging public debate, with inquiries by the King's Fund, the Institute of Health Service Management, and the Public Finance Foundation and the flurry of activity from Right-wing pressure groups such as the Centre for Policy Studies, the Institute of Economic Affairs and the Adam Smith Institute. There are many new ideas, or at least re-worked ideas because there has been an awful lot of literature on this subject in the past.

Insurance funding has often been suggested as a way out of the present difficulties. It was investigated by the Government between 1980 and 1982. However, my right hon. Friend the then Secretary of State for Social Services, now the Secretary of State for Employment, announced in a written answer in July 1982 that the Government "have no plans to change the present system of financing the National Health Service largely from taxation".—[*Official Report*, 30 July 1982; Vol. 28, c. *860*.]

That was following the internal review of the insurance system.

It is also suggested that increased charges would bring more money into the Health Service and would also discourage use of particular services. I am often surprised that sometimes those of my hon. Friends who give a greater importance to market considerations than perhaps I do in the general run of things seem to ignore the fact that by their very nature increased charges discourage use. Perhaps, for some, that is even a positive merit. But on considering the Government's proposals for charges for sight testing and dental inspection, one is not encouraged to think that there is much advantage to be gained in pursuing increased charges as a way out of the present financial difficulties.

It is also suggested that lotteries could make a contribution. I ask instantly, "Why not?" Many years ago, Ireland used to have the hospital sweepstake. I gather that it now has a much more modern system which churns in a great deal of money and which follows similar systems used in California, Australia and many other areas. We should look at that suggestion and if it will produce substantial amounts of extra money, why on earth should we not adopt it?

Of course, at the same time we must search for increased efficiency. I remain a firm supporter of the National Health Service. I welcome increased co-operation with the private sector and am totally opposed to those who, for dogmatic reasons, regard any co-operation with the private sector as a betrayal of the cause of the National Health Service.

I am attracted by ideas for developing an internal market within the National Health Service to begin to deal with some of the problems of the enormous difference between the apparent costs of particular operations when carried out in different areas and regions. I should like the internal market concept to be developed.

I am also convinced that clinical budgeting, along the lines suggested by Professor Alan Maynard, will inevitably exert a growing influence on the way in which resources, which will always be scarce whatever arrangements are made, are best used in the interests of patient care.

Although I envisaged that all those suggestions are more likely to take place in the future, within a largely tax-financed service, alternative sources of funds deserve careful consideration. However, I must challenge the naive assumption that runs through much of the present debate about NHS financing—that new money means extra money—because everything that I know about the Treasury goes against it. As soon as new money is found and begins to come in, it will figure in the public expenditure discussions. The Treasury side of the table would, for example, say, "You are getting £200 million to £300 million from the lottery. We shall take that into account, which means that £200 million to £300 million less needs to come out of the tax-borne expenditure than would otherwise be the case." Those who argue that new sources of finance mean extra money for the service must somehow overcome the Treasury's long tradition of taking account of that money. That fact changes many of the arguments.

[Sir Barney Hayhoe]

I am not enunciating a new doctrine. The Royal Commission on the National Health Service reported in 1979. Paragraph 21(13) states:

"It must be understood that there is no escaping government supervision of health service expenditure whatever system of raising funds is adopted. Some advocates of an insurance system evidently see it as a mechanism for automatically increasing expenditure on the NHS as costs rise. They delude themselves if they do. The rising cost of health care is a major concern in most developed countries, and measures to control it may be, and are, introduced whatever the method of financing health services."

The Government will always look at the overall total amount of money going in to the service. So long as there remains a tax-borne element in that overall spending, the Treasury will take account of it. If the Treasury is to change its attitudes to new sources of funding, it might be much simpler and less administratively expensive if that change of attitude occurs under the existing system. However, perhaps that opens up wider considerations.

The fundamental requirements of the National Health Service that face us in this House and in the Government relate to the way in which we can introduce more taxpayers' money—there is no other money available in the short term—into the Health Service in the coming months. I am not suggesting a great deal more money, as have some hon. Members, but there must be more money for 1988-89 to meet the full unbudgeted costs of the 1988 pay increases plus, perhaps, up to £500 million — I certainly would not put the figure any higher—to relieve the mounting pressure on so many health authorities. The generous provision that has been made and the £700 million more that will be given to the health authorities for the coming year, 1988-89, represents a cash increase for next year of 6·3 per cent. according to a DHSS press release.

Inflation is estimated to be 4·5 per cent., and 75 per cent. of overall spending goes in pay. Does anyone think that the pay increases for doctors, nurses and midwives in 1988-89 will be 4·5 per cent. or less? Anyone who thinks that that will be recommended by the pay review body, or that, if it awards more, the Government will stick to their figure, is living in a dream world. Money is washing out, not from the second floor of the Treasury, but from the attics. In such circumstances, it is totally unrealistic to try to hold down nurses' pay to the budgeted level of 4·5 per cent.

The Secretary of State was right to point to the need for extra resources when he met the presidents of the royal colleges. The headlines read:

"Moore accepts NHS cash need . . . Doctors' fear on future of health service allayed . . . Minister pledges action on funds".

The stories in the papers last Thursday morning were very different from what my right hon. Friend the Chief Secretary said that evening. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State very properly and loyally tried today to equate the message that came out of his meeting with the presidents of the royal colleges with what the Chief Secretary said when he wound up the debate on the Autumn Statement on Thursday. But I think that the earlier simple message from my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State was right: more funds are required in the coming year.

Of course, that does not prejudge the wider questions, many of them posed by my right hon. Friend the Member for Chingford (Mr. Tebbit). However, there is an present need, and the sooner that the Governme that need, the better. The longer that they dela what I believe is now virtually certain to be don is, provide extra money for 1988-89—the more t dissipate the political advantages that should flo such action, and the more they will damage morale the National Health Service.

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: Before I call the next Back Benc me remind the House that at the beginning of the I appealed for short contributions. The right hon. M for Salford, East (Mr. Orme) set an admirable e Since then, however, we have had a 27-minute spe two lasting for 117 minutes. May I appeal again f contributions.

6.12 pm

Mrs. Gwyneth Dunwoody (Crewe and Nan Normally, when the House debates the National Service, it does so by arguing about how best to a service that is useful to everyone. Such deba usually marked by contributions from both sides House that pay at least lip service to the idea that th is there to provide good health care for ev irrespective of income.

That is not an accident. Although the Conse party opposed the creation of the National Health originally, it realised very rapidly that it was n popular, but essential. We do not need examinat whether the system of payment out of taxation is th one for the NHS. Never was a service more su reported on and generally commented on. The Commission on the National Health Service did pr the best survey, ever, and it remains so, but we ha had the Black report—which told us what is hap to the population as a whole when the privileged what kind of income and housing we shall have— number of other surveys, from the King's Fund an interested groups.

We know, therefore, that a service funded taxation, and free at the point of use, is not only t way of providing health care, but one of the most ef Yet, week after week in the House, we hear the Minister recite numerous statistics — most of meaningless — suggesting that the NHS is no improving all the time, but that a large injection is understood by the population as a whole producing the most wonderful results througho country.

What is really happening in the NHS is obvious population, and it is fundamentally different. constituency, we rely very much on a large hospital. That started closing wards, went on t whole sections and finally changed the way in w operated. Occasionally, it has received a great injec cash from the Mersey authority, because it is so underfunded that it has had considerable pro Nevertheless, health care has gone on declinin waiting lists have continued to get longer.

That is because the Government, since they firs office, have chosen to cash-limit the hospital service never say, when they are talking about the available, that it is in the non-cash-limited

practitioner service that much of the money has been spent. The hospital services have tended to suffer most. For example, in the constituency of the right hon. Member for Shropshire, North (Mr. Biffen), there is a specialised hospital—a fully equipped orthopaedic hospital—whose theatres are to be kept empty for three months. What contempt would be shown by Conservative Members if it were suggested that a fully equipped manufacturing unit, with high standards and expensive equipment, should be kept empty for three months, while retaining its staff and equipment. My goodness, we should hear about something like that. In the NHS, however, such action is regarded as perfectly acceptable.

We have problems in Oswestry with the district general hospital and with the family practitioner services, which are increasingly finding it impossible to obtain the back-up staff that they require. There is also a growing and frightening habit of suggesting that the reality can be changed with words. Nowadays, when people discuss decanting mentally handicapped patients into the community, they talk about "fast-track" and "slow-track" decanting, as if those patients were Norfolk turkeys being shoved through on a production line. We are talking about people, not turkeys. That means that we do not say, "How much of this land can we sell off? Where can we get a nice section to put money back into the Health Service? We will not use it to provide better services for people who were in institutions before. Oh, no; we shall simply put the money back into the Treasury." That is what is consistently happening, and happening consistently. It is mildly hypocritical for Conservative Members to come here and say, "Of course, we should be looking at other means of funding and improving the service", when what they really mean is, "In my constituency, I want you to spend more money, but elsewhere I want you to cut back."

Many of the smoke-screens relate to things that do not matter a damn in relation to overall finance. We can alter the administration as much as we like. Really the organisation was a disaster, and, although there have been larger cuts in administration than in other services, it still costs less to administer the NHS than it would to administer any comparable insurance-based scheme. We can alter the general way in which patients are moved from one list to another, and suggest that the provision of computer waiting lists will make a difference; but it will make no difference if the staff and funding for those specialised units are not there.

We should be asking one question of the Secretary of State tonight: what undertakings did he give to the august gentlemen who came to him, the presidents of the royal colleges, about funding? Why did the Chief Secretary make it clear the next day that in no circumstances was he prepared to support even the suggestion that the NHS was lacking in money? That is a question that the Secretary of State somehow did not find time to answer today, but it is relevant to this whole debate.

There is no better way of funding the National Health Service than by direct taxation. We know that because we have considered it time and again. There is no better way of providing health care than when people need it and letting them pay for it out of taxation. We do not solve the problems, as suggested in my district general hospital, by building a private unit of 12 beds which is supposed to produce a mythical answer that will encourage consultants to stay on the site, as if they were for ever running off. If consultants are not doing their job, machinery exists fo disciplining them and it is time the people in charge d something about it.

The real truth is that the NHS needs large amounts money now. It needs proper back-up for the staff no Anything that detracts from that is hypocritical, mealy mouthed and uncaring. Those are the points that shoul be made time and again until the electorate understan what the Government really mean by health care.

6.20 pm

Sir David Price (Eastleigh): I am glad to take up th general challenge made by my right hon. Friend th Member for Chingford (Mr. Tebbit) and by the hon Member for Greenwich (Mrs. Barnes) to consider th long-term funding problems of the National Healt Service. I was interested in the arguments put forward b the hon. Member for Crewe and Nantwich (Mr Dunwoody), but she will forgive me for not commentin on the immediate position. As she knows, and as my righ hon. Friend the Member for Brentford and Isleworth (Sir B. Hayhoe) pointed out, we who are on the Selec Committee are examining the immediate funding problem Indeed, tomorrow, if the hon. Lady would like to come t the Committee, we will be meeting the three augus presidents; I do not wish to anticipate their replies.

The long term is a much more serious problem. I believe that there are solutions to the immediate problem, some of which have been suggested by my right hon. Friend the Member for Brentford and Isleworth. The long term problem is getting increasingly difficult intellectually, le alone politically. I put it in these terms. It is the exponential nature of our expectations of the Health Service. The demand consequences of those exponentia expectations are likely to run increasingly ahead o available resources, even if the resources put into the National Health Service expand at the same growth rate as the economy.

The chairman of Wessex regional health authority, the distinguished mathematician who is known to some hon. Members, Sir Bryan Thwaites, demonstrated in a telling lecture at Southampton university that the demands on the NHS, projected over the next 20 years, are likely to grow at an annual rate of 5 per cent. I think I carry hon. Members with me when I say that it is equally likely that available resources will not increase by 5 per cent. a year. Indeed, I argued, when I spoke in the debate on the Loyal Address, that we should commit ourselves to a growth rate in resources from public funds to the NHS equivalent to the growth rate in our gross domestic product. Experience shows that 2·5 per cent. is the most that one can reasonably assume. That has been achieved by this Government. I do not see any alternative Government sustaining over a decade more than a 2·5 per cent. economic growth rate. Anyone who suggests more can point to no historical experience to support his hopes. Of course it would be nice to have a higher economic growth rate, but I do not see that happening.

Therefore, we must expect a growing gap between—I will be optimistic—a growth rate of 2·5 per cent. in resources and a growth rate in demand of 5 per cent. Such is the nature of exponential growth that the gap grows; so what starts at 2·5 per cent. becomes 29 per cent. over 10 years but over 20 years—that is not very long in the

[Sir David Price]

lifetime of a health service—it becomes 62 per cent. That is the nature of geometric progression. That is the real problem to which the House has to address itself.

The House may think that I am exaggerating when I hypothesise, as Bryan Thwaites did, a 5 per cent. growth rate. Following your instructions to be brief, Mr. Speaker, I suggest, almost in synoptic form, some factors that have led Bryan Thwaites and myself to that view. Indeed, I think we are being conservative in putting as low a figure as 5 per cent. on the growth of expectations.

The first factor is the continuing advance in medical knowledge and in medical practice which makes possible what was hitherto impossible. We have heard all the arguments about the Birmingham hospital and about hole-in-the-heart surgery. When I first came to the House—a long time ago—hole-in-the-heart surgery was not an issue, because it did not happen.

Secondly, following that advance, there are more sophisticated treatments for more conditions. That increases the demand upon available resources. More people get more treatment. That is admirable in itself, but the process is self-generating. I need only refer to hip replacement operations as an example.

My right hon. Friend touched on the third factor, that more people are living longer. The old, and especially the very old, are heavy users of the National Health Service—surprise, surprise. So an increase in the numbers of the very old leads to a disproportionate increase in the demands upon the National Health Service. Today those aged 80 and over total 1·8 million. In 20 years they will have increased from 1·8 million to 2·3 million, or from 3·2 per cent. to 4 per cent. of the population. God willing, I shall be one of them.

Mr. Nicholas Winterton (Macclesfield): And still here?

Sir David Price: An ancestor of mine remained a Member until he was 96. He had served the House for 64 years. I have only done 33.

Going to the other end of the age scale, the fourth factor is the survival of more severely handicapped children. A great plus for society is that many are surviving today who in previous generations would have died at birth or shortly afterwards. Many of them are multiply handicapped and for their entire mortal existence will require help. I do not think that we have begun to face up to the resource consequences.

The fifth factor is the technological advances in equipment which follow the almost explosive rate of development in science. I point only to microelectronics to illustrate the point. As a result, equipment within the service rapidly becomes technically obsolescent. Of course, the consequences affect both the capital budget and the revenue budget.

Another factor, number six, is professional expectations, which again put an increasing demand on resources. It can be summed up in the simple phrase, "My patient must get the best." That is totally honourable and right, but it is very demanding on resources. To put it another way, the more cynical might say that it is keeping up with the professional Joneses.

The seventh factor is the public's expectations, which are self-perpetuating. They are encouraged by a growing public awareness of the potential of modern medicines. These expectations apply not only to the practice and the delivery of medicine, but to the general st patient care and patient comfort, which some to call the hotel aspect of hospital treatment.

Factor number eight is the general determin 1 million or so people who work for the Natio Service in the four countries within the Unite that they should share in the growing prosp nation as a whole. Nurses, as well as other gr the NHS, wish to push their position up in pecking order of pay and remuneration. That growth factor within demand on the service remembers that staff costs represent roughly 7 of total revenue costs within the NHS.

That is a factor that my right hon. Friend We underestimate staff expectations at our pe also a desire to share in working less anti-socia to have more leisure and holidays, which ha taken into account sufficiently in forward cost

The ninth factor is the potential threat of n that might make heavy demands upon reso year, in the Social Services Select Committe looking at what could happen to this country i epidemic really took off. I do not wish to go AIDS, because everyone is probably bored subject and has heard enough about it. But dise remain static, nor do viruses cease to muta because they are not recognised in the Treasury model of the economy.

We must take it into account and not be s there is a new virus or, as we have with AID virus, which I have described as an "Alice Th Looking-Glass" virus. It behaves in the oppos a normal virus. We must expect this outcome, thrown by it. Indeed, it could well be that some comes back with a new and much stronger form of mutations. We should be ready for the une that is not too Irish a thought for the House a of the evening.

I hope that I have said enough to explain to that there is a growing gap between expecta resources, which will be present under any Go The sooner we realise it the better. I hope that Committee will be able to throw a little light on come back in a few months with a thoroughly co report. Whatever the Government do, we shall solutions to the problem.

Certainly, in playing my own part in the w Select Committee, I am very conscious of the c words of the Royal Commission on the Natio Service, which reported in 1979, as my right ho the Member for Brentford and Isleworth remind report said:

"it is important for any Health Service to carry its it, given that it can never satisfy all the demands n it. It is misleading to pretend that the National Hea can meet all expectations. Hard choices have to b is a prime duty of those concerned in the provisio care to make it clear to the rest of us what we can expect."

I remind the House that this Royal Commissi up by a Labour Prime Minister, so let us aband party skirmishing and try to work together, as Member for Greenwich (Mrs. Barnes) invited us us find a solution to this very real problem. There of gold at the end of the rainbow for the NHS,

play silly partisan politics with the NHS, the rainbow of hope will disappear and our constituents will be left only with the bitter tears of disappointment.

6.34 pm

Mr. Barry Jones (Alyn and Deeside): The hon. Member for Eastleigh (Sir D. Price) has quoted some chilling figures. I hope that he achieves his century. It seems from this side of the House that there is plenty of life in him yet.

I agreed with the right hon. Member for Brentford and Isleworth (Sir B. Hayhoe) when he called for urgent money in the short term for the National Health Service. I thought that he spoke with some insight into the Treasury. He should know; he was speaking from experience.

Yesterday, 17 Labour Members of Parliament from Wales met the Secretary of State for Wales, and also his junior Minister, and senior health advisers. It was a serious session and a businesslike encounter. We told the Secretary of State for Wales of the problems in the south and north of Wales, in the urban and rural areas and in the industrial valleys of the south-east.

We said that every health authority in Wales claimed that it was underfunded. Each Welsh Member of Parliament gave convincing examples of underfunding. There were reports of low morale among ancillary workers and of consultants being told to treat fewer people. There were calls for more hospitals, and for more nurses in special and intensive care units. We urged the Secretary of State for Wales to put a paper to the Cabinet, and use it to argue for more and urgent funding to deal with the very pressing and real problems in the Principality. We said that he had a crisis on his hands and that he would need much new money to cope with the problems that we reported to him from our constituencies.

The people of Wales have special needs. We still suffer from major unemployment. Nobody would deny, that, arising out of mass unemployment, there are greater demands on the Health Service. We still have in Wales an unenviable reputation for ill health, specifically for heart disease, which may come top of the league in Europe, and, arguably, in the world, and for other diseases related to smoking.

We gave the Secretary of State some woeful instances of the cycle of deprivation. There are many deprived, under-nourished, under-privileged and unemployed communities in Wales. We pointed to the problems of the economy, where basic industries are declining. We know that in mining there are special health problems, and we are having to cope now with mine-working throughout this century.

We know that our housing problem is the worst in Britain; we have more houses that were built before 1917 than any other region. We know that housing conditions are directly related to health.

Major steel closures have taken place in the 1980s. Some of the steel communities are still reeling from those closures. There are consequences for their health and demands for health care. We could argue that the Health Service might have been conceived or invented in Wales. Certainly, it was the great Aneurin Bevan who put the Health Service together for the people of Britain. His achievements have been great and lasting. He said that preventable pain is a blot on any society and that a society is spiritually healthier if it has access to the best of medical skills.

I shall briefly instance the difficulties faced b Health Service in Wales by specific reference t constituency. Many people in north-east Wales who from cancer cannot get treatment there. My consti have to travel to Mersey hospitals. This year, as befo were promised a major new community hospital, was to have been started in 1985. It will probably n started until next year.

The neighbouring district health authority is Ch and thousands of my constituents receive treatment But I have received letters from consultants in Cheste complain of the worrying situation because the required to cut back their care. There is a major ho in Shropshire, which was referred to by my hon. Frien Member for Crewe and Nantwich (Mrs. Dunwood Gobowen. Beds are being taken out of service there wards closed. That hospital serves north-east Wales the consequence of cuts there is very real to constituents and the people of Clwyd.

I can tell the House of a young woman in constituency who had trouble with her ear. She had to for two years before she could have treatment, when i discovered that she had a hole in her ear-drum.

We have a special school in my constituency. T have been complaints about there being insuffi incontinence pads available for the daily working of school. Cuts are planned in a much cared for hospit Holywell, the Lluesty hospital; and many of constituents have complained bitterly to me abou likely consequences of those cuts.

The Secretary of State in his speech—not a h speech—said that he wanted to see the use of s capacity. The experience of my constituents is that t is insufficient capacity. Indeed, there are cuts not on my area, but in neighbouring health authorities. I instance the result of a very distressing one. On the e Christmas, the *Daily Post*, a newspaper in north W reported as follows:

"Chester district health authority is facing a demand a government inquiry over the hospital transfer of el orthopaedic patients in a huge van."

The front page has a picture of that four-ton red Bed van. The article goes on:

"Said one hospital employee: 'The van was dirty, free and smelt of something like stale cheese. Nurses were cr openly. They could not believe that this was actu happening.'"

That was also reported extensively later in the *Ma Sunday*. I bring it to the attention of the House becaus very unfortunate manner in which two elderly citizens patients were transported between hospitals on the ev Christmas was the consequence of cuts, how temporary. That does not sit well with the posture of Secretary of State for Social Services. I go further and that it is vital to maintain the quality of our social serv and to ensure that they are fully available to those most need them.

"Governments exist to ensure that the strong do tyrannise over the weak. It is necessary to care for the nat for the whole of society, and to express that care."

Those are not my words. They are the reported word the former right hon. Member for Cambridgeshire, So East, a former Cabinet Minister, now ennobled an another place, Lord Pym. That was perhaps one of toughest and most bitter speeches made by a for Cabinet Minister in the autumn of 1983, but I think he summed up the situation.

[Mr. Barry Jones]

Social justice demands that Her Majesty's Government should provide more financial support for the beleaguered National Health Service. It is my fear that before very long, unless there is urgent Government action, we shall have two forms of health service: one for the rich of our land, a Rolls-Royce service that can provide miracles, the best of health services for the very privileged; and the second, which we are in danger of getting, for poor people—a system that is shabby and does not deliver the best and most needed services.

That is the drama of the situation in which Britain finds itself today, and unless the Government, in their remaining years in office, are prepared to find the funds and take the decisions, our Health Service may be lost to all the nation as a free service giving the best of care, as the great Mr. Bevan would have wanted it to do.

My demand is that we avoid the temptation of tax cuts to buttress the political standing of the Government among the upwardly mobile. Indeed, Her Majesty's Government should realise that the divisions in British society which are now manifest and growing could be narrowed and partly eliminated if our Health Service were made better. The Health Service in Britain can be a unifying factor for all our people. Major tax cuts would put massive pressure on the balance of payments problem that will face our country for the immediate future.

Huge investment or even urgent investment in the Health Service would create work and give greater happiness and security to countless families.

I urge the Government to think again about their attitude and strategy and, when the Budget comes along, or even before, to give massive new funding to help our National Health Service.

6.45 pm

Dame Jill Knight (Birmingham, Edgbaston): Perhaps I should begin with the charges. The charges made against my right hon. Friend and the Government today deserve to be rebuffed with energy, determination and, indeed, contempt. I say contempt because of the disgraceful personal attack on the Secretary of State over his recent medical treatment. The Opposition really have it both ways on this. Had my right hon. Friend not used some of his salary to pay for his own medical attention and therefore had taken up a bed in an NHS hospital he would have been under attack for that. I have always understood that the Labour party believed in rich people paying for what they get and not getting it for nothing.

Mr. Jeremy Corbyn (Islington, North) *rose*——

Dame Jill Knight: No. Mr. Speaker is anxious that all Members be very swift in their speeches, and I intend to be so. The hon. Member can make his own speech.

When people are in receipt of a fairly high salary for the job that they do, it seems to me to be absolutely right that they should pay for their own health care and leave a bed available for someone who is less well off.

As for the remarks made a moment ago by the hon. Member for Alyn and Deeside (Mr. Jones), who seems to be about to leave the Chamber, he is quite wrong about the private sector. All too frequently the National Health Service is the one that provides the highest standard of very complicated care. In many cases, if v cancer or other treatment is needed there the NHS to get it. For that, too, I salute

We affirm that our Government hav good record. We are not saying that ever been done, every last "t" crossed and every But we are saying that there is an extrem to talk about. Almost unimaginable ex already been made available.

The hon. Member for Greenwich (Mr does not grace the Chamber with her pr long, said that the Secretary of State amount of money spent and said that all w not say that all was well. None of us on t side of the House would say that all is well Service. We are as anxious and worr difficulties that come to our notice as any Opposition. But we are entitled to say that of money have been made available inefficiency have been tackled as neve goodness knows action was very badly nee would never have been tackled by the La

The recruitment of doctors and nurs substantial extra money being paid out in s There are far more patients going int treatment and far more being dealt with clinics as well. Of course, it is also true people waiting for treatment, but we are much more money on extra treatments, ext extra nurses, and all of these are being used in the NHS. And we are to a certain exten own success. We are short of money beca being done. If so much were not being done be short of money.

The press seems to concentrate exclus people who have not had treatment. Th emotional mileage in postponed operatio wards. Some papers with more space th pictures of funerals, wreaths and tears. If t is fair enough, but surely something s sometimes about the tremendous number are getting treatment. Is there no emotio someone having a cornea transplant and able to see, or having any of the other tra miraculously, although expensively, are such as coronary artery bypass grafts? Sure be some human interest in that, but we stories of that kind in the press. The onl those of people who have not immediatel have treatment.

Statistics do not count very much to th treatment. It is rather like being unemploy not unemployed, it is not nearly such a 100 as when you are unemployed. Many peo treatment and the media should highlight th the alleviation of their conditions.

The press and some Opposition Memb everything is fine everywhere else in the w only the NHS is in terrible trouble, but is th have been reminded, heavy cuts in expendi made in West Germany where there is hu in many hospitals. There was an estimate o of 50,000 beds lying empty at great expen Members will be riveted to hear that in Russ even provide lavatory paper in the hospitals drugs. In Italy, hospital patients have to pro

food and strikes by nurses and doctors are common. In France, the Health Service is described as being on the verge of bankruptcy. Although I warmly recommend Greece as a delightful place for a holiday, I do not advise hon. Members to become ill there because its health service treatment is appalling. We all know what happens in the United States where many people are literally bankrupted when a member of their family is ill.

I was disappointed that my right hon. Friend did not say very much about future funding of the National Health Service. As is apparent from many of tonight's speeches, there is real concern about getting more money for the National Health Service. The figures need careful examination, given that inflation in Health Service technology is far higher than it is in the outside world. We need new pieces of equipment and we want to buy them when they come on stream, but they are extremely expensive. There are growing numbers of elderly people and the problems that we shall have to face on that score are very severe. We do not know how much we shall have to spend on AIDS. The amount we spend on abortion is amazing. We must consider all these matters when discussing funding.

The cost of drugs has increased very much. The Government deserve a bouquet for having brought in the restricted list. Let nobody deny that that has given an extra boost of money to the National Health Service. Although, at first, there was an immense row and the Opposition were in there fighting, we hear nothing about it today because the idea has been a great success and has saved a lot of money. The Government do deserve credit for that.

We need two sorts of cash. First, we need an immediate cash increase because we all know places where more cash is needed. The trouble is that it is virtually impossible to be told how much is needed to end the problems. Secondly, we must consider long-term funding. The Opposition attack us on the Health Service because there is nothing else on which to attack us, but they are on a false trail.

6.54 pm

Mr. Robert Litherland (Manchester, Central): The Opposition make no excuse for highlighting the starvation of resources and finance in the National Health Service and its contribution to hospital problems. Not a day passes without reports of hospitals facing extreme problems of finance and manning levels in their attempts to provide a medical service to people in need in their catchment areas. Rural cottage hospitals and major inner-city hospitals are in a state of crisis unknown since the introduction of the National Health Service.

I shall take one hospital which epitomises the situation in the National Health Service. The Manchester royal infirmary in my constituency is a hospital whose management continually strives to achieve a balanced budget. It has sold land and property belonging to the hospital, introduced privatisation, reduced general nurse training, reduced midwifery nurse training, consolidated operating sessions in one fewer theatre and saved through early retirement and changes in shift work patterns, yet it still faces an overspend of £1 million. The Government are coming back for further cuts. In fact, the hospital is a victim of its own efficiency.

What have been the consequences of this budget balancing? The Manchester royal infirmary now faces the worst crisis in its 200 years of existence, because the word "bankruptcy" is being bandied about. This is c letters being sent to 2,500 hospital staff, say hospital may not be able to pay their wages.

Mr. Favell: Will the hon. Gentleman give

Mr. Litherland: I shall not give way, bec from experience that the hon. Gentleman's will be longer than my speech, and shorter sp been requested.

Balancing budgets by delaying paymen suppliers has resulted in a debt of £5·6 m suppliers are now demanding payment and th cut off these vital medical supplies. Wh consequences of this situation? Just before C was informed that babies are dying because t care system has collapsed; five cots for prem were closed at Christmas. The electricians ca off the oxygen supplies. These are not th politicians making political capital out o situation. They are the words of the head of care baby unit at North Manchester general

Mr. Stephen Day (Cheadle) *rose*——

Mr. Litherland: Young women with abnorm cervix are turned away because the hospital c with an increasing waiting list. Women are alr a six-month wait for treatment and, because funds, there is no possibility of cutting that There are cuts in nursing and closures of operating theatres. Babies are turned away women with cancer of the cervix are refused t

All this is happening in one hospital in ar area that has suffered enormously becau Government's policies. The area is more relian on a good hospital service. There is a correlati unemployment, deprivation and bad health. C these are not the words of politicians, but the a report by eminent people in the medical profe expectancy in my constituency is well below th average. The child mortality rate is higher national average.

In an article in the *Manchester Evening N* Thatcher—I shall not hold his unfortunate na him—reminds us:

"In South Manchester, all the cost-efficiency s can be made have been made, and we are now d bone. There's basically no money for new develo this means the so-called contingency plans are d and we've seen this happen before in the last fi and the wards are closed about four to six month the contingency plans have a lot of adverse publ dies down, and then, usually around May or Ju closures are put into operation. We've lost over medical and surgical beds in South Manchester in

He goes on to point out how two-faced the G are. They are consistently praising the hospital being more efficient, which means more patient treated. He says:

"Wythenshawe Hospital has the highest clini mance indicator of any major acute hospital, th definition it is highly efficient. But because it is so e attracts patients throughout the North West r elsewhere, we are to be penalised by the administr say they haven't got the money to treat all these The patients come to Wythenshawe and Manche infirmary for special treatment that they c anywhere else.

In this debate we have talked about other finance, but what has the hospital service com

[Mr. Litherland]

90 per cent. of the equipment in the intensive care unit at Manchester royal infirmary has been bought with money raised by its staff? What has the hospital service come to when ultrasound scan pictures of unborn babies are sold at £3·50 a time to raise money? Hospitals cater for weddings and other functions, sell babywear, even book trips on Concorde and develop shopping malls, all in an effort not to increase the hospital service, merely to maintain it and to ensure that it continues to provide a service. That is happening in what the Prime Minister and Chancellor inform us is a buoyant economy, when consideration can be given to a further cut in income tax. It is the Government who are sick to allow this unnecessary predicament to exist. Babies are turned away to die when tax handouts can be given to the rich.

The Government should listen to the leading doctors when they inform us that the NHS is on a downhill slide. They should listen to the dean of the medical school at Manchester university when he informs us of the dangerous impact of the cuts on undergraduate medical education. They should listen to the nurses who are forced to strike because they cannot exist on a pittance and with poor service conditions.

For their pains, the nurses receive snide insults from Conservative Members about lining their own pockets. The former chairman of the Conservative party, the right hon. Member for Chingford (Mr. Tebbit), referred to nurses moonlighting. That is rich coming from a man with so many directorships. From being held in high esteem as angels of mercy, nurses suddenly become devils of greed. There has been talk about shroud waving and whingeing.

Above all, I ask the Minister to listen to the people who are in desperate need of treatment—to listen before it is too late for them and too late for the NHS.

7.4 pm

Sir Rhodes Boyson (Brent, North): The genesis of the Health Service came in the Labour Government after 1945 at a time when, after total war, there was a feeling on both sides — more strongly on the Socialist side than the Conservative side — that, having won the war by a concentration of resources and people, one should win the peace in the same way. The National Health Service represented that.

The National Health Service is a nationalised, not a national service. I shall define the difference between the two shortly. The Health Service was nationalised at the same time as the railways, the coal mines and all the rest. It involved the nationalisation of 1,000 voluntary hospitals, 500 municipal hospitals and many private hospitals.

At the time, nationalisation was popular. The general climate of opinion in Britain among Socialists was strongly in favour of it and the Conservative party was half-heartedly in favour of it, if I may put it that way after reading speeches of the time. The National Health Service grew out of a time when nationalisation was a popular policy in Britain.

Since 1948, 40 years have passed and three things have happened which have led to the crisis in the Health Service. This is a crisis not just of resources, but of design—whether the service now meets the needs of the present time. That must be said to Opposition Members, each of whom I respect.

It is interesting that no other country
example. If ours was the best service in
would be coming here to see it. The NI
general belief at that time and out of the
as all of us know.

Nationalisation, in the view of the
entirely different now from what it was
1951. That is why the Conservative party
elections on denationalisation and has
from all classes in our society. Nationalis
seen as a great frontier advance. It
something to be rid of, so that we can ret
of competitive enterprise for the benefit
groups in our society.

The second difference is the rising st
Rationing was all around us between 194
has gone. People then were used to w
making a virtue of that, but people were
The war meant that rationing continued
time.

That time has gone. Now, 16 millio
abroad. People buy videos and cars. Th
to wait. They do not go to the travel agen
there is a queue and that they should c
years' time when they may get a holiday i
of Turkey. People read their brochures,
and go away when they want for as lon

The outcry about queues in the NHS
do not exist in any other area. Peo
important health is. All hon. Members d
many have been present for the deb
Government must be given credit fo
people's expectations. The Government
for the economic advance and, in particul
better off those in work are now than ev
are no longer willing to join queues for

Thirdly, great technical advances hav
the cost of medicine has increased.
advances were unheard of 40 years ago.
to go back to first principles, and o
Beveridge report an estimate of what
expected to cost. In 1945 it was estimated
Index that for inflation and we now are s
more in real terms than Aneurin Beva
those who brought it in—thought it wo
time.

First, nationalisation is no longer po
a denationalising age. Secondly, people
to queue because the consumer goods
people a taste of getting things when
Thirdly, technical medicine has become

Let me define the difference between a
a national Health Service. A National
one in which the Government somehow
parts of society, including the poorest, ge
one in this House would disagree with th
Government do not need to provide that
need to ensure that it is available to
authorities now use competitive tend
services, and they do not provide them.
expect that the best service available
longer do we need a nationalised Health

My right hon. and hon. Friends and
continuing debate. Often, these days, w
have to provide our own debate within
is sad, but I am glad to contribute to th

is something wrong with the design of the system. I shall not throw figures around; I shall be brief. We now know that we have more than twice as many nurses as we had in 1960—480,000 as against 236,000. We have fewer hospital beds, and a shortage of nurses that we did not have then. The ordinary man or woman in the street might say that that looked odd, and he or she might have a point. I have some odd figures to illustrate this, which are interesting but do not require deep analysis. On one set of figures—many are going around—510,000 more people are employed in the Health Service now than were employed in 1970. Since 1970, the population of this country has risen by 500,000. So we are employing 510,000 more staff for a population that has grown by 500,000. Thus, on a straight-line graph projection, there will come a time when more people are employed in the Health Service than live in this country. It will not happen in our lifetimes, but the man or woman in the street or in the public bar—on second thoughts, we are all in the saloon bar now, thank goodness—may say that that is odd. And I say that he or she may have a point.

Because of the lack of time, I cannot advance a detailed scheme now; nor do I have one ready. Bright lights in dark corners, I always say, and one must start looking at what must be done to improve things now. Money must follow the patient. Wherever there is a service in which the money drips down from the top there will be massive numbers of administrators, and a lot of the money will go to the wrong places. Money following the consumer is the basis of denationalisation, and consumer control has transformed so much of the economy of this country which before was an economic dinosaur.

Some form of insurance will have to come. The Government's job will be to ensure that all the people can properly insure themselves. It will cost somewhere between £300 and £500 per person. Three booklets that have come out recently — the author of one is sitting on the Conservative Benches now — on the subject all give different figures, so if I average the lot, we shall say that it will cost £400. Every person in the country could be given a voucher for £400 for health insurance. It is the same system as we have for car insurance, which is not done by the Government. One insures the car, and the insurance company has to provide the service so that one is not bankrupted. That is one way of doing things.

The trade unions began as benevolent——

Mr. David Hinchliffe (Wakefield) *rose——*

Sir Rhodes Boyson: I have no intention of giving way. I have made up my mind on that, which is a good thing to do in society. The hon. Gentleman is a good man and I have the greatest respect for him. Long may he remain up there on the Back Benches. No: why not welcome him to the Front Bench in a generous-hearted way?

The trade unions, which are losing their meaning these days, could go back to being the benevolent societies that they began as. In France, one can insure with a trade union. After getting the bill, one goes along and expects to pay something oneself, and the trade union pays the rest. If people cannot pay, they go to social security. It is a relatively effective system, and I inspected it when I went to France in the course of my ministerial duties.

The Government lack the wisdom—even more now that I am no longer a member—to run 1,800 hospitals effectively by means of Ministers, civil servants, regional and area boards, trades unions and profes
all battling for control. It is no wonder t
lost somewhere along the way. So why n
many of these hospitals and, as happ
Wembley hospital, which began under lo
them back under local control? They would
of money. Why cannot the trade unions t
hospitals? Why cannot the churches? T
them something to do at last. They spen
talking about social events. Why cannot th
the hospitals over? It would give them so
Why do not the workers take some of t
Opposition believe in that until it happen
these people take over the hospitals and
market?

The hon. Member for Livingston
mentioned me in his speech, and I am alw
that. He talked about whether the chur
something, mentioning the Church of E
Methodist lay preacher, I never mentioned
England; I think that the non-conformists
share. On behalf of them, I make that poi

I have said it outside the House, and I n
this problem is the Government's Achille
who has suffered from that trouble, I kno
it can be until it is cured. The House, in i
allow me to mix metaphors. This problem
the Government's albatross, with the ancie
different garb, sitting outside each hospital
will have to be dealt with. It is no good doin
either. While sorting out the immediate pro
has come to change the whole basis of the H
design. It is antiquated and will have to
hope that the Conservative party, of which
be a member, will be as radical in social m
been in economic matters. The Governmen
market in control in economic matters to th
everyone in society, and I trust that we sha
for health, so that everyone, from the p
richest, can be dealt with, not by a natio
Service but by a national Health Service.

7.18 pm

Mr. Sam Galbraith (Strathkelvin and
contrast to that of the right hon. Member fo
(Sir R. Boyson), I enjoyed the contribution
hon. Member for Eastleigh (Sir D. Price) an
analysis of the stresses and demands on the H
and I agreed with part of the reason he
problem. He outlined the numerous thi
pressure on the Health Service, but I want
with one part of his analysis. He spoke ab
There is an important distinction to be m
demands and needs. We should try to me
demands. Demands do not necessarily c
needs.

The advantage of the Health Service is t
related to need, which it can control and
private system, such as that suggested by t
Member for Brent, North, leads to a sy
demand-led. Then there are difficulties
people's expectations from available resource
the hon. Member for Eastleigh will take that
Only the NHS deals with need; private syst
demand, which has only a tenuous relationsh

[Mr. Sam Galbraith]

I want to address some other points about the market and the National Health Service that have been made by hon. Members. I shall deal, first, with another factor that is used as an excuse for the problem. We have heard that the consultants, the nurses and, finally, the Minister himself were to blame. Another factor is known as the bottomless pit. We always hear about it, but I do not think that health care is a bottomless pit. It is certainly true that health care expenditure can and does increase rapidly, but that is true of every country and health care system in the world.

If Health Service expenditure is to be controlled and used correctly, the most fair—and the only—way of doing that is to have a National Health Service. In the National Health Service, which is a system based on need rather than demand, staff examine new techniques and treatments. Doctors and nurses in the NHS agonise whether treatment is needed. They must go through the whole system before eventually deciding that treatment would be appropriate under the National Health Service. During the past few years, having looked at new techniques and systems of care and decided that they will meet a need, doctors and nurses find that there is no money with which to meet it. That is the crisis in the National Health Service.

We have heard a lot from Conservative Members about the market philosophy and the National Health Service. It is not appropriate to look at the National Health Service and the health care system in those terms. Silly statistics were quoted by the right hon. Member for Brent, North. He said that we have many more nurses but fewer beds. I will tell him the reason for that. Intensive care units, which we did not have in the 1960s, require about 50 nurses. Before the 1960s those nurses could have looked after seven or eight wards with 40 or 50 patients.

The market economy does not apply to the NHS, for a number of reasons. The first relates to consumer knowledge. I cannot make an absolute statement that within the health care services consumer knowledge is limited, but it is not easily defined. The lack of consumer knowledge is part of the reason for not applying a simple market philosophy to the NHS. Secondly, there is no competitive advertising, because advertising is against the General Medical Council's code of practice. There can be no advertising within the NHS. I suspect there would have to be some arm-twisting to get the GMC to change that.

The right hon. Member for Brent, North likened health care to choosing a holiday from a range. However, when we choose a holiday, we must look at our finances to see whether we can afford a holiday in a far-flung part of the world or whether we will have to take a holiday nearer home. That choice is based on resources. However, if someone needs an important operation, such as a gastrectomy or a neurosurgical operation, there is no such range of choice. A person cannot say, "I have limited resources, so can I have only half of my brain tumour removed?" That is an important reason why the market philosophy is not relevant to the National Health Service.

We constantly hear the Secretary of State talk about better value for money, and in particular about clinical efficiency. First and foremost, that is not a new concept for me or for other Opposition Members who have been campaigning for years that resources should be used much more efficiently. The Government have not listened. We recognise the great discrepancies in the use of operating theatres, beds and investigations. The Minister must realise that improved clinical efficiency will cost more money. It is not a substitute for putting money into the NHS. It will cost more money if a bed is used by five patients in a week instead of by one patient. If an operating theatre is used by more patients, it will cost more money. We need more money to treat more patients. We do not want clinical efficiency because it will save money. We want the correct and proper use of resources that have been under-used to benefit the patients and eliminate waiting lists.

The right hon. Member for Brent, North and other hon. Members spoke about alternative systems. I want to clear up a few fallacies about the United States and various European systems. First, the administrative charges in those systems are much higher than ours. We hear all the nonsense about the National Health Service being a lumbering bureaucracy. It is not. In the National Health Service 5 per cent. of the costs are used for administration. In some parts of the United States that can be up to 31 per cent. of the costs. Is that what Conservative Members want?

When we examine the care provided in those systems which are demand-led, not need-led, we find that many more operations are done. I shall give some examples of that from Mr. K. McPherson in *Social Sciences and Medicine*:

"Regional Variations in the Use of Common Surgical Procedures."

It says:

"Hysterectomy rates in the US and Canada were around three times greater than for England and Wales. Similarly Prostatectomy was around two and a half times more common in the United States and Canada than in England and Wales, while tonsillectomy was around twice as common."

That is what happens in a private, demand-led system. I understand the reasons for that. I have worked in such a system. If a difficult clinical decision is involved as to whether an operation is needed, in a demand-led private system an important aspect is that it will receive £1,000 for the operation. That is a reason for the discrepancies. That is why those systems are subject to such pressure.

In Britain, doctors agonise too much about whether to carry out an investigation or an operation. In demand-led private systems they do not think about that. They go ahead with the investigation or the treatment. I have worked in both systems, and that is what happens. It is part of the reason for the escalating costs in private systems, and that cannot be controlled in a demand-led system as opposed to a need-led system such as the National Health Service.

Mr. Ray Whitney (Wycombe): I wonder whether the hon. Member for Strathkelvin and Bearsden (Mr. Galbraith) saw the report in *The Sunday Times* which compared the experiences of a man in Bristol with that of a man in Germany. They had both had heart attacks, but the man in Bristol had to wait 15 months for his operation and was out of hospital within a week. The German was immediately given his heart operation and was given three weeks for recuperation in hospital and another six weeks of convalescence. That is another example of the service enjoyed by Germans compared with the British system.

Mr. Galbraith: The hon. Member for Wycombe (Mr. Whitney) has highlighted our case for the need for more money within the NHS to provide a better service.

Finally, the Minister made great play about primary care and how it is a way forward. The primary care sector is the backbone of our system. If we change to a demand-led system, we will eliminate primary care and people will be pushed off to specialists. For all those reasons, I should like us to consider no further the question of demand-led, private health care.

We cannot apply market forces to health care. The correct and proper system is the National Health Service. Resources are limited and we have to ration and use them properly. We want that rationing to be based on medical need, not on some nebulous demand stimulated by private finance. The most cost-effective and cost-efficient way of doing that is through the National Health Service. That is why Opposition Members wish to sustain the National Health Service, and ask that it be given more money.

7.28 pm

Dame Elaine Kellett-Bowman (Lancaster): In Lancaster we do not fear but welcome the Secretary of State's determination, put forward so forcefully, to compare costs and achievements in the regions, because we would do well on any tests so far devised and any he may put forward. We welcome the extra £100 million that the Government gave on 16 December. Contrary to the local gloomy forecast that Lancaster's share of the additional £5·8 million allocated to the north-west would be "negligible if anything", we got the largest district allocation of £600,000. That was good news for Lancaster and it goes some way towards meeting my plea that we need more money because 23 per cent. of our population are aged and need a great deal more care.

Twenty years ago in Lancaster the decision was taken to centralise hospital services on the Royal Lancaster infirmary site for midwifery, elderly services and acute services. Since then our programme has gone ahead steadily, except for the unfortunate check in 1978 referred to by many hon. Members when all hospital building was halted abruptly by the Labour Government because of the financial crisis. That delayed our progress, but phases 1 and 2 for maternity and elderly persons have been successfully completed. Phase 3 for acute services is at the planning stage, as announced by my right hon. Friend the Minister for Health when he came to Morecambe in the autumn.

As new facilities are provided, old ones must close, and regrettably that leads to much heartache. The Beaumont hospital, which is to be closed, was built as a fever hospital with widely spread buildings to insure against cross infection. It is unsuited to modern needs and is wasteful of the time of doctors and nurses. It is definitely not in the best interests of the health services in Lancaster to campaign for it to remain open when the specialist facilities can be provided elsewhere. Discussions are now under way in the health authority to decide where to reprovide the specialist facilities currently provided at Beaumont. It is still in the melting pot, but if it is decided to provide them at the RLI—which, I believe, is the best place for them, because all the advanced support facilities are available on the spot—the building of a new ward block for ear, nose and throat, dental and neurology services could begin in April, and the £600,000 additional funding will cover most of the cost.

At the same time, the accident, emergency and intensive care facilities at the RLI will be upgraded. When I saw those facilities yet again at Christmas I was horrified by them. Given that we are near the motorway, where, sadly, many multiple accidents have occurred, it is absolutely essential to upgrade our emergency and intensive care services.

On Friday I received news that services will have to be reduced in the orthopaedic and accident and emergency departments, not because of a shortage of funds, but because we are short of six junior hospital doctors, for whom we have been adverising since October. We recruited one on Friday and we hope to fill the other posts in February. When we do, the facilities will again be opened. Another hospital in the north-west has had to close its maternity ward, for the excellent reason that 11 midwives are on maternity leave.

In Lancaster we are proud of our leading role in many aspects of health care. We lead in the proportion of our children who are immunised. Having a large elderly population, a year ago we purchased laser equipment for eye surgery. Because our citizens are intensely proud of our reputation for health care, since for many generations we have been the primary hospital area for the whole of the north of Lancashire, up to Cumbria, we have raised £10,000 to buy another keratometer to use in the eye unit, and the local service for cataract sufferers has been revolutionised. No longer must we send patients to Liverpool or Manchester for the measurement and supply of customised lenses. Some eye patients, who had to spend lengthy stays in hospital, can now return home the same day, or after only two days, and up to 160 patients per week can be dealt with at clinics.

The new techniques have reduced the numbers of beds required from 24 to 14. That is a reasonable way to reduce beds. Nobody can say that we have lost the beds; we have made them unnecessary because of the rapid treatment in that specialty. But I do not intend to let the Government off the hook. In our large district, which covers 170,000 people, we have only one orthoptist, and we would like another to detect the early stages of glaucoma and to treat squints in children

We are an efficient health district and our treatment costs compare favourably with those of other areas. Our good housekeeping keeps waste to a minimum. We had a limited list for drugs long before the Government brought it in. We are always looking for ways to improve efficiency and reduce unit costs. We never rest on our laurels. We believe in cash generation and, before it became the fashion, we were winning orders for outside laundry contracts to keep our modern machinery fully occupied and reduce the cost of our own laundry. Money allocated to Lancaster is never wasted. We would dearly like to build on the immense progress we have already made and to cut our waiting lists for miraculous treatments that we could not even have attempted a few years ago. We are determined to provide for our citizens in the future, as we have in the past, the highest standard of health care that modern techniques can achieve. We are looking to the Minister and his colleagues to ensure that we get a fair share of the health cake.

7.35 pm

Rev. Martin Smyth (Belfast, South): Despite the crystal ball gazing of my friend from past years, the right hon. Member for Brent, North (Sir R. Boyson), I agree with the

[Rev. Martin Smyth]

Association of the British Pharmaceutical Industry which said that for the foreseeable future health care will spring predominantly from the Health Service. It is important to put on record the words of the association's director of public and economic affairs, who said:

"But ideologically based criticisms of the NHS and/or its funding and performance from both the extreme left and the extreme right which exaggerated . . . its failings should not be allowed to obscure the successes of the British health care system."

I believe that would be the view of most people and most hon. Members.

In the light of the pressures on the Health Service, the only real grain of comfort I got from the Secretary of State was when he said that this is the 40th anniversary of the Health Service. I was reminded of the old saying that life begins at forty, so there is hope that we can build on the success of the past.

The question from the right hon. Member for Plymouth, Devonport (Dr. Owen), which was not answered, was not whether the recommendation should be funded but, if the Government decide on a salary increase, whether that would be funded fully by the Health Service rather than the health authorities. That has been the source of tremendous discontent and problems in the past.

It is difficult to find factors to assess efficiency. Some authorities and hospitals are seeking to change the system of health care by providing more day care in hospitals, but the National Audit Office did a survey at midnight, so those hospitals that were efficiently using beds during the day were penalised. It would be better to take audits at midnight and noon to establish the real use of beds. The National Audit Office has taken figures on the use of operating theatres which showed that some hospitals had a high usage of theatres. On closer scrutiny it may have been discovered that the nursing staff and theatres were ready for the operations, but on many occasions the surgeon was not in post, so the theatres, as well as the equipment and staff, were not being used efficiently. I make that point to remind us all that it is not just a simple matter of assessing efficiency; other factors must be borne in mind.

I hope that when the Minister replies to the debate there will be an understanding that the funding of the National Health Service should not only keep pace with the growth of GDP — if I understood the Secretary of State's statement correctly—but should raise the proportion of GDP to meet need throughout the nation.

I am speaking particularly as a representative of Northern Ireland. The hon. Member for Alyn and Deeside (Mr. Jones) said that Wales was the most deprived area of Britain. I do not wish to bandy figures, but the region that I represent suffers from the highest number of deaths from cancer of the colon, which is 30 per cent. higher than other regions, diabetes is 25 per cent. higher and ischaemic heart disease is 60 per cent. higher. Unemployment is also higher than in any other region, which accordingly has a health impact.

I know that expenditure on health in the region is 25 per cent. greater than that for England and Wales, but professionals in the service say that it does not meet the present need.

I regret that recently there was a public dispute between the Under-Secretary of State with responsibility for health care in Northern Ireland and the chairman of the Eastern Health and Social Services Board, who is a careful economist. He judiciously chooses his words, and during his chairmanship there has been a tremendous increase in efficiency. The area caters for more people than in any other region in the United Kingdom not only in the health sector, but in social services as well.

It is necessary to take a hard look at the facts. In Northern Ireland, between June 1981 and June 1987, not in exotic surgery or treatments but in everyday medical care, there was a 16 per cent. increase in ear, nose and throat cases, a 56·5 per cent. increase in plastic surgery and a 51·7 per cent. increase in general surgery waiting lists, despite the acknowledged efficiency of the Province. We are faced, as is every other part of the nation, with the challenge of our own success. It is to that that we must direct our attention.

I used normal surgery as an illustration rather than what I called exotic surgery because those who can paint a dramatic picture of need in particular specialist cases —heart surgery, renal treatment and such like—often use emotional blackmail, which catches the imagination of some of the media, and indulges in a bit of queue-jumping. I find some measure of concern in that practice.

I have no axe to grind about the use of private medical care. It is obnoxious, however, that a person can be admitted to a National Health Service hospital because of clinical need and great pain but be told by the specialist at the hospital who is attending him, having obtained him that bed, "I cannot operate on you for 15 months, but if you go private I can do it very shortly."

There is something equally obnoxious in the case of a young man who had private insurance that covered his mother as an elderly person who managed to obtain treatment for her, without difficulty, in a National Health Service hospital. We may quibble about the use of a private bed in that instance, but when that insurance ran out, the specialist said, "I can no longer treat you." That is a reflection on the tension between the National Health Service and private health care.

I agree with the right hon. Member for Brent, North that where the treatment is given does not matter as long as we ensure that it is given. However, in many cases, it has not been given as it should have been.

The Eastern Health and Social Services Board has been told that the Government have said that the increase in services for Northern Ireland will be 5·3 per cent. That is 1 per cent. less than England and Wales are receiving, even though the board has made efficiency savings of 1 per cent. With a higher level of provision than England and Wales, it is discovering that it will run into greater difficulties in the coming year.

At a time when the Treasury is reporting tremendous surpluses, the House should reflect the views of the nation. The average citizen would prefer not to have his tax reduced if cutting taxes meant that the level of health care would not be maintained.

7.46 pm

Mr. Nicholas Winterton (Macclesfield): I am delighted to follow the hon. Member for Belfast, South (Rev. M. Smyth). He and I have campaigned politically together and as members of the Social Services Select Committee.

As has been mentioned once already during the debate, the Committee will tomorrow be taking evidence from the presidents of the three royal colleges — Messrs. Todd, Hoffenberg, and Pinker. Perhaps one of the questions that

we shall put to those three distinguished members of the medical profession is whether they believe that the doctors and consultants in the Health Service honour to the letter their contract with the Health Service. I hope that we shall receive a truthful answer, because while some members of the medical profession have been highly critical of Government — the Government have a major role to play in solving the current resourcing crisis in the Health Service — the medical profession, the doctors and consultants, have a major role to play in contributing to the solution of the problem with which the Health Service is faced.

My speech will be short. It will contain few sterile statistics, which unfortunately have been the hallmark of debates such as this and exchanges across the Dispatch Box. Having spoken to my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State, I know that he hopes that solutions to the problems, and perhaps an element of all-party agreement on some of those solutions, might be the order of the day in the future rather than trading statistics about who did what and when. While statistics were relevant in the debate last November if one is comparing what Socialist and Conservative Governments have done, this debate is not the time for trading statistics. This is the time for solutions that will help to cure the severe resourcing problems of the Health Service.

I take my responsibilities as a member of the Select Committee on Social Services extremely seriously. My uninterrupted service of some 13 years to that Committee has given me contacts with those who work within the Health Service at all levels. Those contacts have been extremely useful to me and, I hope, have given me an understanding of the problems faced by the Health Service.

Perhaps it would be appropriate at this stage and an illustration of the all-party approach if I said that the new Chairman of the Social Services Select Committee, the hon. Member for Birkenhead (Mr. Field), would normally be here wishing to participate, but he has had to attend a funeral in the West Midlands. The hon. Gentleman will be back in the House tonight but, sadly, he and I may be in different Lobbies.

I believe that the Select Committee, by undertaking its new inquiry into the resourcing of the NHS, will play a vital role in seeking to find some of the solutions to the problems facing the Health Service. Those problems are serious. I only wish that, when my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister exchanges remarks, questions and statistics with the Leader of the Opposition, she said, "We are proud of what we have done in the Health Service. We have provided more money than any other Government in the Health Service, but there are serious problems. I recognise that, but how can we solve them?"

Mr. Christopher Gill (Ludlow): Does my hon. Friend agree that so far in this debate there has been a presumption—evident on both sides of the Chamber—that additional funding is the only answer to the problems? Will the Committee give serious consideration to the structure and management of the Health Service?

Mr. Winterton: Certainly there is an assumption that more money is required and I must tell my hon. Friend that I intend to urge the Secretary of State—I am sorry to see that he has left his place, no doubt for just a moment —that, in the short term, the only way to solve the severe crisis in resourcing that exists in many district health authorities is a further amount of money from central Government.

I note that my hon. Friend the Under-Secretary of State is taking prolific notes at this moment. I am seeking an assurance from the Front Bench that the necessary money will be available. I also believe that the Government should set up, as a matter of urgency, an inquiry into the long-term resourcing of the Health Service and that that inquiry should report before the end of the year. I do not believe that there should be a Royal Commission, because that would take far too long—a minimum of two years. I do not believe that the inquiries taking place within the Department will be enough to deal with the fundamental problems facing the Health Service.

As a member of the Select Committee, may I give my hon. Friend the Member for Ludlow (Mr. Gill) the catetorical assurance that the matters to which he referred — the management of the Health Service and its structure—will be part of the inquiry undertaken by the Committee. My hon. Friend's question has brought me to other matters of consideration because I believe that we must look at alternative forms of resourcing the NHS.

We should consider whether that funding would include the extension of private medical assurance and the additional involvement of the private sector in the operation of the NHS. Such involvement is already taking place to some extent in some district health authorities. We must also consider whether we should extend the contracting-out of services that are currently undertaken in-house within the NHS. We should consider further privatisation and hotel charges. I also believe that we should consider—the hon. Member for Greenwich (Mrs. Barnes) made a similar suggestion—the use of national and local lotteries to raise additional funds.

My right hon. Friend the Member for Brentford and Isleworth (Sir B. Hayhoe) spoke at some considerable length on the basis of his experience in various Government Departments. I believe that the Government must control the Treasury rather than the Treasury control the Government. If we raise extra money for the Health Service I believe that it is wrong that the Treasury should automatically deduct that sum from the money that it would otherwise give towards the running of the NHS. I hope that the Chancellor and other Ministers are of the right calibre and competence to counter any such activity at the Treasury.

Mr. Ian Taylor (Esher): When the Select Committee is considering this problem, will it also take into account the attitude of the Treasury to splitting out a tax charge as part of the tax system? I hope that my hon. Friend would agree that, if we continue with a tax-based financing of the NHS, it remains almost impossible for the public to understand what it is that they are contributing to health care.

Mr. Winterton: I am delighted to have the opportunity to answer that question. Perhaps I could refer my hon. Friend to an excellent article that appered in the *Sunday Telegraph* on 17 January. A five-nation survey was undertaken and reports were produced on Germany, France, Russia, America, Italy and the United Kingdom. Mention was also made of New Zealand. In the introduction to the survey, Martin Ivens said:

"Like Britain, New Zealand is one of the few countries to pay public hospitals for their costs, not what they actually do. An official report to be published soon"—

[Mr. Winterton]

in New Zealand, I understand—

"is expected to recommend privatising the hospitals and making patients pay for treatment."

I am not suggesting such a policy for the United Kingdom because I remain convinced that, in the main, the NHS should be free at the point of delivery—it is not free as such, because we pay for it in taxation and other ways.

May I pick up a point made by my right hon. Friend the Member for Brent, North (Sir R. Boyson)? I do not go along with many of the things that my right hon. Friend said about marketing the NHS and denationalising the Health Service. However, my right hon. Friend did warn the Front Bench—we should take note of such warning —that the Health Service is the Achilles heel of the Government. Indeed, to pick up an expression that my right hon. Friend used, the Health Service could become the albatross for the Government unless we are seen not only to understand the problems, but also to tackle them in a meaningful way.

I hope that my suggestions will come out in the recommendations from the Select Committee. Indeed, we will be producing interim reports because we are undertaking a major inquiry into the NHS. We must provide additional resources for the NHS.

The hon. Member for Manchester, Central (Mr. Litherland) spoke with great passion about the Manchester royal infirmary. I have a number of constituents who are consultants at that hospital. I have visited the MRI in a private capacity; otherwise I would have notified the hon. Gentleman, and have spoken not only to the management, but to some of the leading consultants. That hospital faces a serious crisis in resources and it must be tackled by Government. The Under-Secretary may turn away in disgust at what I have said, but I assure her that there is a crisis.

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Health and Social Security (Mrs. Edwina Currie): I am noting down what my hon. Friend says.

Mr. Winterton: I am glad that some of what I have said is being noted.

The MRI is a centre of excellence and a leading teaching hospital in the centre of Manchester and part of the central Manchester health district, which is part of the North Western regional health authority. Its catchment area is relatively small. However, that hospital draws in from a wide area because it is a teaching hospital and a centre of excellence. I believe that the Government must pay special attention to hospitals such as that.

I believe that the Government mean what they say when they speak of value for money. Can it be right that in the Macclesfield district health authority an expensive and excellently equipped first phase of a district general hospital, costing some £18 million, should have two of its important acute wards closed at this time? Is that value for money? Is that bringing a return on the substantial capital investment? No, it is not.

However, there is more that is wrong. The consultants have been co-operating with the management of that district to bring about the savings that the Government have urged all district health authorities to make, but is it right that the management should say to those consultants that they must reduce their theatre sessions? Are they going to go out on the golf course or undertake m private practice? I urge them to fulfil their National He Service contracts to the letter. However, what happen they cannot fulfil their NHS contracts to the le because, for example, they cannot use the operat theatre to carry out the operations for which there waiting lists? The Government did well on waiting until last October when the crisis developed. Waiting li which were falling, are now beginning to increase ag That is a very serious matter.

I pay tribute to my right hon. Friend the Minister Health, who met a delegation led by me just bef Christmas. He heard at first hand of some of the proble with Macclesfield health district. In spite of what media and some hon. Members say, the problems fac the Health Service have arisen not because of cuts because of the Health Service's outstanding success. I because of the success of the managers — follow Griffiths — consultants, doctors, nurses and all N staff. Medical techniques have advanced so fast in rec years that we can now carry out operations that were m pipe dreams a year or two ago. We are now treating m patients in our hospitals. The replacement of joints— just hips but ankles, knees, elbows and wrists—is n possible but the operations cost a great deal.

The Health Service is precious to all the people of t country and to most Conservative Members. I urge Government not only to provide a further sum to help Health Service through the present crisis but to set up urgent inquiry into the long-term resourcing of the Hea Service so that we can continue to be proud of the fin health service in the world.

8.1 pm

Mr. Eddie Loyden (Liverpool, Garston): I listen carefully to the remarks of the hon. Member Macclesfield (Mr. Winterton). It is encouraging to n that there are Conservative Members who recognise value of the Health Service.

It is important that we should remind ourselves that legislation that brought the Health Service into being 1948, introduced by the then Labour Government, v probably the most progressive for many years. In th respect, it may not have been superseded since. Like oth hon. Members, I can remember when there was National Health Service and compare the health care the pre-war period with that following 1948, when Health Service was established. It is because they are a to make such comparisons that people outside the Hou recognise the importance of the Health Service and prepared to defend it at all costs. That is why there been such an outcry from the public at large. As they it, and indeed as we perceive it, the recent deterioration the National Health Service has reached cri proportions.

The establishment of the Health Service largely end the appalling and unacceptable pre-war divisions in administering of health care. We must remember how working classes were treated during that period. T poverty of the working classes and the environment which they lived resulted in almost daily visits by hears arriving to carry away young children or their mothers fathers. The life expectancy of such people was drastica shortened because the conditions that prevailed caus widespread and serious disease and illnesses. We saw t

great value of the Health Service and the benefits that accrued from it when we watched the first generation of post-war babies growing up.

Especially after having listened to the Secretary of State this afternoon, Opposition Members are concerned at the way in which statistics have been to the fore in our debates on the National Health Service. Those outside the House who are worried about the Health Service are not concerned about the accusations or statistics that have been bandied about every time that the NHS has been debated in this House — particularly by the Prime Minister, who has ignored Opposition, and sometimes Conservative, warnings that the statistics disguised the reality at the coal face of the National Health Service.

Many hon. Members are more sensitive about this subject than they were, because there have been clear signs of the decline in standards in the areas that they represent. That decline cannot be measured by statistics. It is seen in the number of people waiting for hospital treatment, in the number of beds that have been withdrawn, in the closures and in a whole range of factors which are recognisable and which have been identified by patients and their families —those who are directly involved. They know about the decline in the National Health Service.

I do not want to bandy statistics around to verify the argument that the crisis exists. I am glad that the hon. Member for Macclesfield recognised that the Health Service is a regime. That regime includes people who may not be directly associated with medical care but who are as necessary as nurses, doctors and other hospital staff. It includes those who provide patient care in other ways— who keep our hospitals clean or provide direct services to hospitals. Frankly, those people have been treated most callously by this Government, with the result that this concept of patient care has changed. Patient care must include the role of the person who pushes the trolley that takes patients to the treatment room.

Let me give an example from my constituency. An 83-year-old woman waited for three and a half hours to be moved to the place where the ambulance would pick her up. That is one of many examples of the stresses unnecessarily caused to patients and arising from the changes that have taken place among ancillary staffs in hospitals, whose role is as important as the role of anyone else in the hospital. It is paramount that we should view the Health Service as a total regime. The decline started with the privatisation of cleaning and other services, which has left a bad taste in most people's mouths and has led to a deterioration of standards.

Those of us who sought the establishment of the Health Service saw the great benefits that derived from it. Opposition Members recognise the importance of the steps taken to end the scandalously poor health care available to hundreds of thousands, if not millions, of people in this country. The first post-war generation exerted pressure on the Government and made it clear that they were not prepared to return to local authority hospitals. It is ironic that Conservative Members should argue for a return of the control of hospitals to the local authorities, while at the same time slashing local authority funding. When hospitals were under local authority and charitable control, the care given most people was of a very low standard indeed. We all have a responsibility to ensure that that legislation that transformed the health care of people in this country, which, quite frankly, has been in decline for several years, must be arrested.

Statistics cannot alter the fact that there is a w ranging crisis in the National Health Service which n to be tackled now, not in a year or two or later, follow inquiries. The Government must respond to wha happening. They must recognise that people are wai for treatment but not getting it; that people have b moved out of hospital too quickly, only to return, and t many people, especially old people, are waiting cataract operations that they cannot have for the nex months or two years. My wife attended Clatterbri hospital as a cancer sufferer. She was turned back times because the machines were not functioning. Tha the state that the National Health Service has got into o the years.

I hope that this debate will not be meaningless but t the Secretary of State will take it on board. I hope tha will end the jargon of statistics and that the Governm will recognise the reality of the situation in the Hea Service and the fact that it needs immediate and urg attention—which means funding to ensure that peo who are waiting for treatment get that treatment. T Government should ensure that hospital services brought back to the standards that those who establish it envisaged, not only for that time but for the future. was envisaged that there would be constant improvemen rather than constant decline, in the National Hea Service.

We believe that the National Health Service is not o worth defending, but that standards should rise. should ensure the standard of health care to which c people are entitled. I advise Conservative Members th the most important investment that any country can ma in its people is the investment in their health care. Witho that, all else is meaningless. One cannot achie production or the type of society that one wants if one do not provide the Health Service and health care that t people of this country need.

8.11 pm

Mr. Roger King (Birmingham, Northfield): The city Birmingham and, I suppose, the West Midlands regio health authority have been much in the news recently f various reasons, which centre, possibly almost exclusivel on the role of the Birmingham children's hospital.

It was apposite of my right hon. Friend the Secreta of State to say in his opening speech that much has be achieved by the Health Service during the past nine yea under the Conservative Government. Indeed, a great de of evidence is available in Birmingham and the we midlands to support that achievement. We can boast many successes in terms of extra doctors and nurses a the number of family doctors has increased during the pa few years. There has also been a reduction in the chi death rate and in the number of stillborn births.

In Birmingham the improvement that has been broug about by the £4 million reduction in costs has meant th that sum is available for improving patient care. Th number of staff has increased. In Birmingham, fo example, the hospitals now employ over 800 more nurs than in 1979. The statistics are fairly substantial and mo people, whatever their view, would accept that a enormous amount has been achieved since 1979. Th trouble is that politicians jump on certain bandwagons t try to point out and identify areas in which there a problems.

[Mr. Roger King]

The Birmingham children's hospital does have problems. It does not have its full complement of nurses for intensive care. Such nurses are not available, despite national advertising. Training such nurses takes time and there is nowhere else, outside London, where such training takes place. The West Midlands regional health authority has taken the initiative and is to start to train its own nurses in the hope that out of the 12 who start to train shortly, provided agreement can be reached with the nursing unions, most will stay in the west midlands area and at the Birmingham children's hospital.

Operating on young children is not a straightforward task. One cannot simply say that on 25 February one will give a certain child a major operation on his or her heart. Whether the operation takes place is dependent on the state of the child when the operation day arrives. The child may not be well enough to take the difficult and intricate operations that are carried out at that hospital.

Some of the publicity during the past few weeks has perhaps put hospital staff under tremendous pressure when making decisions which may not always be in the interests of the child, but are certainly in the interests of responding to widespread public feeling. The decision to operate is difficult for consultants and it is not pleasant for them to see television cameras and news reporters outside the children's hospital waiting for the latest crisis to emerge.

It is not helpful for Members of Parliament to place great emphasis on the problems in their community. I draw attention to the outrage that occurred in this House during prayers on the first day that we were back when the hon. Member for Coventry, North-East (Mr. Hughes) made a great crusade. Obviously he felt strongly about a child, presumably in his constituency, who was being denied an operation. It was a life and death situation. One would have hoped that the hon. Gentleman might have been present today to give us further background on his problems and that he would not have had recourse to such cheap publicity. As my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister said during Question Time this afternoon, the consultant of the child in question does not want to operate for another 12 months or so. That decision has been made to ensure that the child stands a good chance of recovering from a difficult operation when he or she has the strength to undergo it, not when a politician demands it. We are owed an explanation by that Member of Parliament.

Mr. David Winnick (Walsall, North) *rose——*

Mr. King: No, I shall not give way. Time is pressing and other colleagues want to have a say, so I must get on.

When one considers the funding of the National Health Service, there are obvious opportunities to improve the resources available to the Health Service. We want to know where our money is going. We want to be absolutely certain that a pound that is given to the Health Service is a pound that is spent on hospital and patient care. Arguments are made about tax cuts versus extra resources for the Health Service. We need to be reminded that 1 million people work for the Health Service. Unfortunately, those people usually receive a low income. I am certain that they benefit enormously from the tax cuts that we have given during the past few years and that they will benefit again when my right hon. Friend the Chancellor has his say at Budget time. It is right to point that because Opposition Members are always saying t Health Service workers receive low pay. However, w the Government try to bring their pay up to an accepta level, using the mechanism of tax cuts, that is acceptable either.

I recently appeared on the Kilroy-Silk programme fr an excellent private hospital in Birmingham to talk ab the problems of the NHS. Following that programm mother who was having difficulty obtaining an operat for her child asked me, "Where has all the money gone the Health Service?" I explained to her that we w putting record sums of money into the Health Servic told her that she was in a building that had been crea because of resources that had been taken out of the He Service because private patient treatment used to be p of the National Health Service responsibility many ye ago. Those private patients were thrown out of National Health Service as a result of doctrinaire decisi by the then Labour Government. Their money has g into the creation of new private hospitals. Therefore, t large extent, many of the resources that the Health Ser used to have have gone elsewhere, to the detriment of Health Service.

Miss Mowlam *rose——*

Mr. King: I repeat that time is pressing and many h Members wish to speak, so I must get on.

The concept of free health, as we have understoo since 1948, when disposable incomes were non-exist because people had a job to house, feed and clo themselves, is inapplicable now. They could not decid have a new car or a continental holiday or anything like that. Therefore, a free Health Service at the point receipt was well received at the time. However, things h changed. Although we need extra resources in the He Service, I want those resources to be bought by prospective patients themselves. National insura contributions could be reduced by a significant amou provided that we established the principle that those w could afford it—not those of pensionable age, those low incomes and the unemployed—would pay 50 cent. towards the cost of their operations.

What would those people do in turn? To guarantee t they did not pay the 50 per cent., they would take out insurance policy. And who would offer the best insura policies? I hope that the hospitals themselves would o competitive opportunities and treatments to patients their areas and regions. I see no reason why such a syst could not be introduced.

We should also look at reorganisation of the He Service. To a degree, the service is too closely attached this Parliament. Perhaps we should look at a British he corporation, which could operate at arm's length, whose board and chairman could be given the money told to get on with the job of running the Health Serv

I also believe that some of our specialist hospit which are wrapped up in the general morass of the He Service — examples are the Birmingham childr hospital, the Queen Elizabeth hospital, the orthopa hospital at Oswestry and the Great Ormond street hosp —could be taken out of the existing organisation areas, regions or districts in which they now operate, put under a single national hospital organisation. organisation of hospitals of excellence could well extr

a substantial income from voluntary contributions through a national lottery. The trouble with a national lottery is that the £100 million or so that it would raise for the National Health Service would go a very short way to providing extra services all over the country. However, if the resources went only to hospitals of excellence, they would go a substantial way.

The challenge that now faces us is neither an Achilles heel nor an albatross around our necks. It is an exciting opportunity for us to get the Health Service right. We need to start a series of debates such as this, in which we can debate new ideas and exchange our visions of the future.

We are not talking about updating the service, or reverting to 1948. We are planning for a Health Service for the year 2000 and for the next century. This debate should form the groundwork for a national debate on what future structure the Health Service should take. It is a great challenge for the Government.

8.21 pm

Mr. Dennis Turner (Wolverhampton, South-East): It is said that we live in hope and die in despair. I further despair after listening to the hon. Member for Birmingham, Northfield (Mr. King). What he said shows clearly the dilemma faced by the Government and their supporters in their attitude to, and philosophy on, the National Health Service.

The hon. Member for Northfield demonstrated, to me at least, that he is echoing one of the views of the Conservative party that is the most worrying to people in this country who cherish the National Health Service and wish us to address ourselves to the problems that it faces, not to misrepresent the difficulties of sick people who should be receiving our attention tonight.

Since I was elected in June, rather than thinking in party-political terms, I have sought to represent the interests of the people of Wolverhampton and the west midlands in facing up to our health problems. In my maiden speech, I mentioned that, in the last few weeks before the general election, 85 people in Wolverhampton had been turned away from hospitals in the town. I also said—and it was not challenged, then or subsequently, by the Minister—that we had lost £3·9 million from our budget since 1983. A more local issue, but a very deeply felt and sensitive one, was the reduction by 50 per cent. of the provision of incontinence pads for the elderly and the disabled.

On 7 December, I was kindly allowed to contribute to the debate on the Health and Medicines Bill. I was able then to illustrate the problems that faced Wolverhampton by pointing out that three people had died in recent weeks as a result of not being admitted to hospital, because no beds were available. Four hundred people had been refused admission, although, again, they were seriously ill. I also pointed out that we were experiencing considerable difficulties with the temporary renal unit, which could not meet the needs of kidney patients.

The Under-Secretary of State, the hon. Member for Derbyshire, South (Mrs. Currie), was present at that debate on 7 December; indeed, she wound up for the Government. She did not challenge the point that I made, although she had the opportunity to do so.

Miss Mowlam: The hon. Lady is not even listening now.

Mr. Turner: I do not believe that she was listening when I spoke last time. Perhaps there is something wrong with me. I do not know. However, my voice is coming acr more clearly tonight. In any case, I shall continue, ever the Minister is not listening.

One can imagine how people in Wolverhampton felt. contrast to the argument that, while we know that thi are bad, they are getting better, I am trying to illustr that, in Wolverhampton, things are getting worse. I kn that we have certain views about the accuracy of the pre however, on one occasion the press reporting w accurate. Let me give the House a picture of developme in our hospital service during the Christmas period. Fi we saw:

"114 more beds to close".

They were at the Royal and New Cross hospitals. Ne we read:

"All admissions to town's hospitals temporar suspended".

"Patients threaten to chain themselves to beds to preve closure."

"Surgeons in scathing attack on Heath Service funding

The hon. Member for Northfield talked abo Birmingham, and said that the focus was on the childre hospital. No doubt he saw the headline announcing th 18 cancer sufferers at the Queen Elizabeth hospital h died as a result of not being able to receive the treatme that they needed. We met many parents and little childr yesterday whom the Prime Minister did not see. We ha seen the cases of David Barber and Matthew Collier, a we are all very pleased——

Mr. Winnick: In view of what was said by the hon Member for Birmingham, Northfield (Mr. King), does m hon. Friend agree that the reason that my constituents M and Mrs. Collier went public was that the child was give an appointment—not admission—only at the end February? The only reason that he was not admitted w that there were no beds available. It was agreed th Matthew should have an operation as quickly as possib and, in those circumstances, the parents decided that the was no alternative but to go public. They were right to d so. If I was of any assistance, I am very pleased. I hop as we all do, that Matthew will recover fully and will li a long life. As to the Queen Elizabeth hospital, is he awar that when I visited the hospital on the same day two week ago that I visited the children's hospital, I was told that 2 beds in the section dealing with cancer patients had bee closed last year?

Mr. Turner: My hon. Friend has made a valid poin that the problem in both hospitals is a shortage of bed Wolverhampton hospitals in all the acute specialties, wit the exception of ophthalmics, are short of beds. As I sai on 7 December, in some cases the shortage is as great a 50 per cent. The case has been made for Birmingham a it has been for Wolverhampton.

The Department belatedly and reluctantly responded t the crisis by giving the non-recurring £700 million, whic we were told was equivalent to £6·7 million for the wes midlands and £200,000 for Wolverhampton, which wi have to meet a deficit of £650,000 by 31 March. How ca that contribution of £200,000 be reconciled to the crisi that we will face at 31 March and, indeed, the impossibi task of meeting the 1 per cent. efficiency demands tha apparently will be made for 1988-89?

There is non-reality about where we are moving i 1988. We can see no hope, only despair, for the people w represent in Wolverhampton. It is not a party-politica issue. We are stating the case on behalf of the people tha

[Mr. Turner]

we care about. The greatest contribution that the Minister could make for the Government would be to give us a full and total commitment to the principles and values of a national, centrally-funded Health Service available to all at the point of need. We should start to restore the faith and confidence of all who work in the Health Service. We should acknowledge properly their skills and ability. Further, we need at least £1 billion to begin the process of putting the heart back into our National Health Service.

8.33 pm

Mr. Robert McCrindle (Brentwood and Ongar): My basic approach to the debate is that there are no simple solutions to the dilemma in which we find ourselves in the National Health Service. Anyone who speaks to the contrary is misleading the people whom we represent. There is certainly no point in pouring funds in without a real understanding of the nature of the problems that confront us. I was struck by the fact that the hon. Member for Livingston (Mr. Cook) talked about nothing else but the need to provide additional funds. Many of us would concede that that has a part to play in solving the problems, but to say that that alone is the matter to which we should turn our attention is wholly misleading.

I find it equally unacceptable to contemplate what I think my right hon. Friend the Member for Brent, North (Sir R. Boyson) calls the privatisation of the National Health Service if by that he means the selling of hospitals and the provision of health vouchers to the population. That is unacceptable, although it is different altogether from saying that I am other than a firm supporter of the private sector in health care. I want to see that expanding and playing a more vital role in total health provision. Apart from believing that the proposals of my right hon. Friend the Member for Brent, North are politically unsaleable, I believe that in 1988—things may change in the years ahead—the majority of the people continue to support a National Health Service which is funded predominantly by taxation. I repeat that that is different from saying that there is no argument for additional sources, but I do not believe that we should lose sight of the fact that the National Health Service as we have known it for 40 years remains basically acceptable to the vast majority of people.

As in most things, the likeliest solution to the problems of the NHS may lie in what I shall probably be ridiculed for calling the middle way. That means that sufficient funds must be made available in the short term but that Her Majesty's Government must simultaneously take a grip on the many administrative difficulties which in turn may require the establishment of a swift, meaningful examination by an impartial body. I listened with interest to the suggestion of my hon. Friend the Member for Macclesfield (Mr. Winterton). He is correct in saying that we do not need a Royal Commission, but I am less persuaded about whether we can be so certain that we understand all the basic administrative problems.

I suspect that sufficient funds are available — they have already been allocated — but there are two immediate areas of concern to which the Government should pay attention and for which funds must be provided, if they are not available, within the additional sums that will come forth in the next financial year—a point, incidentally, to which very few hon. Members have paid attention. We keep pressing for more expen the next financial year without recognising that w know that a substantial amount of addition expenditure will be forthcoming as a result of the Statement.

The Government must accept that if there is pay award in the next few months at the same l as that for last year of 8 per cent., they must pay cent. They must not accept the award and pass the responsibility for meeting it to regions authorities. If they do that this year, as happened the additional 4 per cent. which will have to co existing budgets can be found only by a red patient care. We should not countenance that.

There is a strong case for the restructuring c pay so as to provide incentives to attract people i specialties where, as the popular press has been over the past few weeks, there is an acute short

In the short term, there is also a strong argu again targeting a limited amount of funds at the of waiting lists. The success of last year's effo minimal resources, was such that I recommend to Friend the Under-Secretary of State that consideration be given this time, not to targetin lists in general, but to taking note that in some pa country the waiting lists for kidney and operations are in all conscience far too long. Wh this occasion we should target the additional reso to waiting lists as such but to the ailments in r which we know there long waiting lists is w exploration.

Beyond that, additional funds may still be That will be so only after we have cleared our ov as to exactly where money is required. I repeat t is no advantage in saying indiscriminately that w invest more in the Health Service without being to the reasons why the Health Service is in diffi

Let me give the House some examples of the c I believe must be answered before we have a clea the direction of additional funds. Why, for ex there such a disparity in the efficiency of distri authorities? Why are waiting lists in one area so from waiting lists in another? It cannot b accidental. Is bed management better in some ar there bed managers in some areas but not in oth should they be a requirement? Do we need—d it in quite basic terms that I know will provo people outside the House—regional health auth all? We seem to have survived perfectly well with health authorities, which were considered to be before 1974.

What future role is there for the private sector there not be more cross-fertilisation with the N should we not have more choice within the NHS development of an internal market? We need an all these questions, but they need not necessarily additional resources. If the answers to these point more money, then I would willingly go along w This is again a personal viewpoint, but I would forgo some of the tax cuts to which we can look if that is the way to achieve it. I believe that we ca desirable tax cuts and the desirable increase in exp necessary for the Health Service.

What we must not do is convince ourselves tha is needed is to throw money at the problem. We n

establish priorities. Again I say to my hon. Friend the Under-Secretary of State that there seem to be a myriad of inquiries within the Department of Health and Social Security, and within health regions and health districts. It is high time that there was some co-ordination of all these inquiries. Indeed, if I were to send just one message to the Secretary of State, it would be that it is time for him to take a grip of the National Health Service, and no longer to be pushed around and fobbed off by some of the representations made in recent months by the health regions and districts and by trades unions. If in the process he can come close to taming the bureaucratic monster, as my hon. Friend the Member for Wokingham (Mr. Redwood) has rightly described it, so much the better.

I should like to add some random final thoughts. The blood transfusion service, a main centre of which is in my constituency at Brentwood, provides and has provided in the past a great service to the people of this country. I was alarmed to notice, however, during the recent King's Cross disaster that we only just managed to cope with what was by some measurements a fairly small disaster. I wonder whether there is a case, as I see suggested in the press today, for greater centralisation of the supply of blood so that we can co-ordinate it to a greater extent and make sure in the event of such disasters that there is never a suggestion of a shortage of these necessary supplies.

Mrs. Currie: I hesitate to interrupt the excellent flow of my hon. Friend the Member for Brentwood and Ongar (Mr. McCrindle). I have been listening to him with great interest. As he knows, I attended the hospitals on the night of the King's Cross disaster, and I was repeatedly assured that there was no problem with the supply of blood. The patients there did not require blood; their problem was that, because they were burnt, they needed albumin. That is a highly specialised material which tends to be produced only on demand in small quantities. That is why the hospitals had to call for the material from Scotland. I was never at any time told that there was a problem with the supply of blood.

Mr. McCrindle: My hon. Friend had the advantage of being there, and I have had to rely on press reports, which I hope she has seen in the past few days. They show that my point was valid, but if it was not I am happy to withdraw it.

I do not think my hon. Friend's remarks invalidate what I have said — that, while the blood transfusion service has done a lot for the country in the past few years, there is perhaps a case for seeing whether greater centralisation is called for.

Another hobby horse to which I must turn my attention is the funding for the Thames regional health authority. It is high time that RAWP was overhauled. When it was introduced, many of us were prepared to accept that our level of provision was good, whereas that was not the case in Liverpool, Huddersfield or Manchester. With the greatest respect, and bearing in mind that my hon. Friend the Minister represents a Derbyshire constituency, I say that we are now suffering after several years of the operation of RAWP. I also remind the Minister that the former Secretary of State for Social Services promised me in October 1986 that a report would shortly be received concerning the revision of RAWP. So far, that report does not seem to be forthcoming. It is an inordinately long time to wait, and the level of patient care has endangered as a result of the progressive funding parts of the country in preference to the Thames

I do not suggest for one moment that we should provision that we make for other parts of the coun if it means that we need additional resources so four Thames regions can obtain some advantage, would have to say to my hon. Friend that it is hi consideration was given to that.

I repeat my fundamental conviction that mor are required in the short term, but much more be required if we are to reshape our National Health to meet the requirements of 1988. It is crucial to re that. If more funds are needed, then so be it, having willed the end we must will the means.

8.46 pm

Mr. David Hinchliffe (Wakefield): One of m Friends, who unfortunately is not in the Chambe refers to the "clockwork parrot" from Downing stre appears twice weekly to churn out endless cold sta I prefer to regard her as a heartless, aged ostric comes here, with her head in the sand, denying th that are presented to her daily about what is happe the National Health Service under the Government.

The vital issue in the debate is how to g Government to accept what is happening througho land at local level to the National Health Service. refer briefly, Mr. Deputy Speaker — I apprecia need to be brief — to the situation that prevails constituency, and the difficulty that I have experien getting a response from the Government.

I am passed from the district health authority regional health authority, and from that authority Government. The Government blame the DHA a RHA. It is a buck-passing exercise second to certainly in my area, and, I have no doubt, elsewh the country.

On 11 September, I wrote a six-page letter to the U Secretary, who never listens when I am speaking, sick and tired of addressing the hon. Lady who cons and deliberately ignores the points I am making. I in September a six-page letter about the cuts packag affected people in my constituency. I saw the hon. subsequently and she promised to reply to me. I letter back on 5 October referring to what she calle proposed changes" in health services in Wakefield, n fact that the Health Service was being systematicall down before my very eyes.

On 26 November we had a debate in the House, was told off for speaking too long. I spoke for abo minutes detailing the situation facing my constitue should like to remind the House of those points, be the situation has not changed. If anything, it is wors are talking about the closure and sell-off of Snapet hospital, the most modern hospital in my constitu and the failure to open a ward at Clayton hospital. E this week, I did receive an answer from the Mi saying that it was nothing to do with her. The auth cannot open the ward, which has had thousands of po spent on it in an improvement programme, beca cannot afford the staff.

We have also seen the introduction of an alle unsafe cook-chill system of catering, again to bring

[Mr. David Hinchliffe]

a saving with the local health service. Within the past year, 38 acute beds have been closed when there is a 25 per cent. increase in the waiting list for these beds.

When the cuts package was agreed, the consultant representative on the health authority said that, quite clearly, that action would increase morbidity and mortality rates. That will affect my constituents.

I had no response from the Minister to the points that I made in a 20-minute speech. There was not one comment from the Minister in her wind-up at half-past nine. I went up to her afterwards in front of the Prime Minister, and she will recall that I asked her why she had not responded to my problems in Wakefield. She said that she had not got enough time to respond.

So I wrote to her on 3 December asking for detailed responses to the points I had made about the problems in my health service in Wakefield. I have had no response six weeks later—not one letter back from her about the situation we are facing in the health authority in my area. Since the last debate, we have had an additional allocation of some £4·7 million to the Yorkshire regional health authority, but I have made the point to the hon. Lady in the Health and Medicines Bill Committee that that will not even restore the cuts that have been agreed in my health authority during the last few years directly as a result of Government underfunding.

My hon. Friend the Member for Livingston (Mr. Cook) made the point that there has been a directive for a further 1 per cent. reduction in health services within the Yorkshire region. I understand that it was prised out of the general manager of the Wakefield health authority at the last meeting—the chairman was not aware of it—and that it is a directive to make a further 2 per cent. reduction in the present year's allocation within the local health service.

I want answers tonight. I want to know from the Minister why she has since September refused to respond to the problems that my constituents face about the rundown of the National Health Service in Wakefield. I should also like to know why she refuses to meet the leader of the Wakefield metropolitan council to discuss the clear implications for the council of the cuts and closures that have been agreed by the Wakefield health authority. The Wakefield council estimates that these cuts and closures in the acute sector and in other parts of the health service in Wakefield will mean that it will have to spend an additional £529,000 on the provision of community care, on top of home helps and that sort of thing, to cover the problems arising from the cuts in the National Health Service.

Having referred to the local issues that directly concern me—I hope that I shall get some response from the Minister today—I think that it is even more important that we look at what the Government's real agenda is for the National Health Service. I am delighted to have sat through about five hours of different speeches, because it has given me the opportunity to hear at first hand the real agenda of the Tory party.

I listened to the right hon. Members for Chingford (Mr. Tebbit) and for Brent, North (Sir R. Boyson), and it is quite clear that the real intention of the Tory party is to transform the solid and, I am proud to say, Socialist values of the National Health Service into a free market, with the buying and selling of health care as a commodity. Quite clearly, that is the intention of the Governm cuts are a deliberate attempt to force pe private sector. Increasingly, people are mee the need to bribe—I use that word becaus it is the only explanation of the action—a treat them, to enable them to jump the H queue. That is the kind of situation that Members want, because they want delibera an expectation of paying for treatment, wholesale changes in the Health Service tha to generate before very long.

I want to digress to raise one small person I was reminded of when the Secretary attempting to defend his period of time hospital prior to Christmas, referred to the mother, when she was dying of cancer, wa National Health Service hospital. I had the my father waiting for a year for admission heart operation to Killingbeck hospital in Le got into hospital, he was dying, and the blo next to him told me that he had exactly the as my father but had got into hospital wit because he had paid. Where is the morality i situation?

When I hear the right hon. Member for talking about competitive enterprise, that i situation that I look at. What happens handicapped people, physically handicappe chronically ill people, those whom insuran will not touch with a bargepole, under th system? He has forgotten about them, and care less about them.

Sir Rhodes Boyson *rose*——

Mr. Hinchliffe: No. I will return the comp not give way either.

The Secretary of State said that all the O for is more money, and I do not think that true. We ask for an honest response on wh happening within the National Health Servic a Secretary of State and a Government National Health Service, not the bunch of jumpers that we face in the mob across the H for a return to a commitment to the underly of the National Health Service, the right regardless of individual ability to pay.

When are we going to get some answers to about Wakefield and the wider points that in the debate tonight?

8.56 pm

Mr. Sydney Chapman (Chipping Barnet) but rightly, as the hon. Member for Wa Hinchliffe) has reminded us, Back Benche occasions to raise constituency anxieties re issues being debated. I intend to be no exce great parliamentary tradition tonight, not last Friday it was announced that the loc hospital just round the corner from where constituency was to close temporarily at th month — not because of lack of funds because there are insufficient properly qual give that hospital the attention it needs.

I think that it would be quite wrong to tal problems without mentioning that we are dis

matters in the context of the Government's having provided significant extra resources to our National Health Service. They have done that, at least over the last eight years, not in finance alone. There are many thousands more nurses working in the Health Service, and we needed thousands more, because we cut their working week from 40 to 37½ hours. There are 13,000 more doctors and dentists working in the NHS. We are treating many millions more patients a year than in 1978. About 240 major capital building programmes have been completed, having been planned by this Government, and another 100-plus are in the pipeline, and the news is good.

The twin problems and the twin challenges facing the National Health Service are these: that demand is escalating, and demand always will escalate; and that one of the causes of that is that new treatments are being devised and expensive new prescriptions and drugs are being introduced. These are the problems we face, but they arise from the success of the National Health Service, not in any way from its failure.

One other thing must be said: we have increased NHS expenditure, which is now running at £21,000 million a year. That is an increase, as many hon. Members have said, in real resources of almost one third in the last eight years. It is incumbent on the Government to continue to increase those resources, as they have patently done in the last eight years, and to ensure that they are used in the most effective way. We are discussing a level of expenditure on the Health Service which represents £375 per year for every man, woman and child in our country.

One of the problems that we face in the Barnet health authority area is a shortage of nurses. I want to spell out precisely why this situation has arisen. If the Government increase the resources to our Health Service by, say, 2 per cent. a year in real terms, under the RAWP formula, to which my hon. Friend the Member for Brentwood and Ongar (Mr. McCrindle) referred, the London regions receive only 0 per cent. to 1 per cent. Health authorities such as Barnet, which was perceived to be the third most over-endowed district health authority in the most over-endowed regional health authority, usually receives minus 1 per cent. to 2 per cent. That is the situation this year. The latest figure for cash revenue limits for Barnet health authority in this financial year, which I got from the general manager this morning, is about £70 million. In 1986-87, it was about £68·5 million. That is an increase of 2·6 per cent., but there has been an inflation rate of about 4 per cent. to 4·5 per cent.

Mr. Corbyn: Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Chapman: No, I shall not give way because we are up against time and I have been here for every minute of the debate.

In real terms, therefore, we are suffering a loss of almost 2 per cent. Seventy-five per cent. of the budget goes in wages and salaries, but wages and salaries have increased by much more then 2·6 per cent. Many NHS employees will say that they have not increased sufficiently, but they have gone up considerably more than 2·6 per cent. Barnet has had to cut not the number of nurses—they have left for other reasons — but some patient services. That situation cannot continue year after year.

We must have a more intelligent system for dealing with this problem. Barnet health authority is short of the equivalent of 200 full-time nurses. It is Catch 22, because the nurses cannot be recruited, even if the h authority could afford to have them, because housing and other costs of living in the area. I that there is a London weighting allowance fo £930 per annum, but I remind my hon. Friend th that the major clearing banks in London pay a allowance to their staff of about £3,000 a ye leave for other jobs which pay comparatively they leave the area because they cannot afford t costs.

I apologise for having gone on so long about but it is crucial to the future successful working health authority. There are 191 district health areas in England. We must have, if not differ according to area, a much more sensitive an London weighting allowance. The present anachronistic and inadequate. The litmus te simply that the matter is urgent. I hope very muc Victoria maternity hospital will reopen in April to close at the end of this month. It can do, if grapple with this problem now.

I look forward with confidence to my right hon. Friends on the Treasury Bench dealing matter and helping to continue the great and u progress that we have made in the National Heal in Barnet and other parts of the country.

9.3 pm

Ms. Joan Walley (Stoke-on-Trent, North): reason for today's debate is the severe crisis in the Health Service. It affects just about every consti every hon. Member who has spoken in the deb

People are dying who need not die. People w them and their families and live with them communities feel strongly that people are dying not be dying. They feel helpless. I blame the Go for not making available to the NHS some of money that we know to be available.

We are also here today because, against th judgment, people have had to resort to publici only way to get something done.

They do not like doing that. They find it distas those of us who represent constituents who have able to obtain health care have chosen the cri NHS as the subject for debate because we established the principle that health and treatme be available to everybody through the promotio health and through a National Health Servi provides treatment for people when they need than because they can afford to pay for it.

We are here today also because of the many staff throughout Britain who work at all levels hospitals, whether as nurses, ancillary workers o paid consultants. They feel that it is about time t is happening in their daily work experience is ex the general public. They cannot tolerate the conditions and the lack of care for their patients Government are forcing them to adopt. I almos whether the NHS is being deliberately run down to force people to turn to the private sector.

The final reason for our being here is because w week, before and after the recess, at Prime M Question Time, the Prime Minister—who, perha than anybody else, is responsible for our Health

[Ms. Joan Walley]

—has come to the Chamber and repeated statistic after statistic. That has not helped the people who are waiting for treatment.

To add insult to injury, when families from my area went to Downing street yesterday to plead with the Prime Minister to do something about their problems, she refused to see them. I can only hope that she did so because she was having urgent discussions with the Secretary of State so that a major decision could be announced today to assure the nation that the extra money that is so urgently needed, over and above existing resources, will be made available. I hope that we shall have that announcement.

Like every hon. Member who has spoken, I want to refer to my constituency. The last time that we debated the NHS, the Under-Secretary of State, the hon. Member for Derbyshire, South (Mrs. Currie), said:

"Many hon. Members from the west midlands have spoken tonight. It is probably worth remembering that Birmingham is not the whole of the west midlands".

I agree with that. However, I did not agree with her when she went on to say that the House had not heard much from hon. Members representing other areas, including Stoke,

"because they do not have much to whinge about." — [*Official Report*, 26 November 1987; Vol. 123, c. 472.]

Those of my hon. Friends who represent north Staffordshire have a great deal to whinge about. We have had meetings with the Under-Secretary of State, and she is fully aware of our problems. The hon. Lady is aware that a brand-new surgical block is due to be opened in Stoke-on-Trent at the end of the year, for which an extra £4 million is needed. If she cannot assure us that that money will be available, the Government will have a lot of explaining to do all over the country.

Secondly, we have a lot to whinge about because of RAWP, about which we have heard a lot this evening. Many hon. Members have complained that hospitals in their areas are closing because of RAWP, which means that money is being spent in other areas of Britain. I want to put on record the fact that the money that we in north Staffordshire should be getting as a result of the RAWP formula is not being spent in north Staffordshire — *[Interruption.]* It is not being spent in Birmingham because our special deprivation programme, which should have been £500,000 last year, and an additional £500,000 this year, was suspended last Wednesday simply because the money is no longer there. The reason for that is that the Government have refused point-blank to fund the nurses' pay award in full.

How can anybody plan the National Health Service with such uncertainty? The staff who are working in the Health Service are being given undertakings by the Government that certain money will be made available, but that pay increase is not being met in full and money is being taken away from other aspects of the NHS.

Another reason why we have much to whinge about in north Staffordshire is our orthopaedic waiting lists. I have been told—I have no doubt the figures are correct—that our waiting lists for orthopaedic hospitals are the longest in the west midlands, in the country and even in the universe — and this nation supposedly cares about health. A constituent of mine, a young man with a family, is now likely to have to wait for more than two years for an essential hip replacement operation. He will probably lose his job while he is waiting. In north
had a capital programme that was to g
million, to be spent on rebuilding ortho
replacing beds. Unfortunately, like
psychiatric hospital service, that was an
the cuts in the Health Service, and I am
capital programme has been suspended.
when it will be reinstated.

Mr. William Cash (Stafford) *rose*—

Ms. Walley: I have been waiting all ni
I do not intend to give way now.

The levels of deprivation concern me
agree with the Secretary of State and the
of State when they say that nothing is mo
prevention. I know as well as anyone tha
deaths from lung and stomach c
Staffordshire are possibly the highest i
support any measure to prevent that a
occurring in the first place. I want some
we can solve the problems facing the
Service in both the short and long term.

All these issues, and many more, are
in north Staffordshire, but my final p
Government must accept the views of
work in the National Health Service. I re
in Manchester who have already bro
strongly they feel about proposals to intr
payment for overtime; to the blood tra
who rightly said that enough was enough
the special duty payments that they were
to be taken away; and to all the work
strongly that the work they do is crucial
Health Service and who will not be s
Government, having examined the nurse
only recommend that its proposals shou
but make more money available. Such i
Government tonight.

The father of Claire Wise, my co
waiting for an operation at the Birmin
hospital, told me when we were waiting
Prime Minister yesterday that people wh
and new homes may think that everythin
if they do not have their health, their po
I should like to think that the country
words and that some progress could be m
The Government climbed down befor
giving us extra money, because they reco
was an overspend this year, and they cli
the flat-rate pay increases and the ext
blood transfusion workers. I hope that th
their need to climb down from their fa
extra funding for the National Health S
heard that the Treasury will have ex
constituents want that money to be spent
Health Service so that Claire Wise, like th
can have the treatment that she needs at t
it—when she is well—before it is too la
of life and death. The Government have
to act now. If they fail, it will be to ever

9.14 pm

Dr. David Mudd (Falmouth and Cam
Member for Stoke-on-Trent, North (N
absolutely right when she said that these

to people. There has been too much of a tendency for politicians to consider their perceptions of the National Health Service, forgetting that the NHS involves members of the public and professional people working in the National Health Service. We should constantly be listening to those people, and doing our best to answer their demands.

Much has been said tonight about the RAWP formula. For the Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly health authority, that has led to a shortfall of about £30 million during the past 10 years. Now Nemesis is upon us. I shall speak briefly and bitterly of the effects in my constituency which has made the National Health Service virtually an endangered species.

Falmouth casualty unit, which treats more than 5,000 cases a year, is to be closed. Of course, the closure of that casualty unit will not stop 5,000 people needing attention for minor injuries and ailments. It will not make life more convenient for them in the height of summer when there are delays on the crowded roads between Falmouth and Truro, or in the winter when the roads are blocked by fallen trees. It will not help the manpower situation as the same number of staff will be required to deal with the same number of casualties. It will not help to increase the effective availability or use of ambulance services in critical cases.

Tehidy hospital is to be closed, causing, in the words of one consultant, "catastrophic consequences", in that the ensuing reallocation of beds will ultimately mean the loss of 23 surgical beds in the Royal Cornwall hospital in Truro. The highly successful stroke rehabilitation unit will be moved to what the consultant described as "unacceptable" accommodation in Truro and which even the local health authority admits to being "less than satisfactory". It means the loss of the highly successful mobility scheme which has assisted stroke-afflicted patients to become competent drivers.

Tragically, the Tehidy savings come when the Redruth Methodist community programme agency and the local league of friends of Tehidy hospital are pouring more practical support into the increased value of that distinguished and important hospital.

Paradoxically, Tehidy's finances could be improved by adding to its use rather than axing it. Thought should be given to it being partly used as a general practitioner hospital, catering for patients who do not need the high technology of the Royal Cornwall hospital at Truro. That would utilise the high commitment of local doctors, with the continuing dedication of the staff, and stimulate even more voluntary support from local agencies to create a lower cost per patient bed.

During the past six weeks, I have listened carefully to the views and suggestions of consultants, doctors, nurses and staff of the National Health Service in Cornwall, because, with the greatest respect, they know better than any of us that health cannot be quantified in profit and loss terms as easily as other economic issues. Some of the things that they have told me are food for thought—practical and compassionate thought, not political and insensitive thought. They told me that there is something wrong with the National Health Service when a highly trained anaesthetist is restricted in his professional choice of drugs. There is something wrong with the National Health Service when, in Cornwall, with an estimated 10 per cent. increase in confinements over the predictable future, maternity beds are being closed. There is something wrong with the National Health Service w urgently in need of check-ups, follow-ups or scr denied the hospital car service to keep their app There is something wrong with the Nation Service when facilities are closed before alter replacements are available.

There is something wrong in the Nation Service when an incontinence adviser is add management structure to decide how many in pads a patient should have. Above all, there is wrong with a Government who cannot in any w the public belief that the cuts are designed deli ease the burden of those wealthy enough to pay in Cornwall many people either do not earn eno tax or, sadly, are unemployed and so do not eve dignity of work.

9.19 pm

Ms. Harriet Harman (Peckham): This year anniversary of the Health Service. I understand member in the Department of Health and Soci has been appointed to arrange celebrations, but year of the Health Service there is great fear fo and growing recognition that there is a crisis lack of resources. People know from their own and the experience of their friends and relatives is a crisis in the Health Service. Nothing that Minister or Health Ministers say and no amoun they reel out can change that, because people it takes longer to get the treatment they need, an in pain with their condition deteriorating. They when they finally get into hospital they are nurses and doctors who are hard pressed and d enough time, and they are discharged from ho quickly—often before they are well enough home.

Not only patients recognise the crisis in Service. The recognition has spread to docto whom there has been an unprecedented outcr have taken out advertisements in local new Oxford and west Berkshire. The British Association has said that the National Health S terminal decline and the presidents of the colleges have talked about patient care deterio services reaching breaking point. There petitions from doctors to Downing street and of regional and district health authorities.

Nurses have been warning the Governm ticularly the 30,000 nurses who vote with their the Health Service every year by leaving. Recr nurses is dangerously low. For the first time, gone on strike in Manchester and Edinburgh relatively demoralised because they cannot p care that they joined the Health Service to p make matters worse, district health auth imposing recruitment freezes because they cann nurses they have.

Health Service organisations are unanimous developing crisis. The National Association Authorities has said that the work of the Hea is being jeopardised and community health co said that they are on the brink of collapse. Na local newspapers are overflowing with tragi people dying before they get their operatio mothers condemned to watch young children breath as they wait and wait for heart operati

[Ms. Harriet Harman]

The Government are now slowly and reluctantly beginning to acknowledge that there is a crisis only in order to join the Right wing of the Conservative party in urging us to ditch the Health Service and start looking for alternatives. They say that we should look for an alternative system because the National Health Service is too expensive, but alternative systems are more expensive than ours. We spend £364 per head on health care, whereas in America £1,300 per head is spent on health care. The Institute of Actuaries has said that if our health system were run like that in America, we would overnight spend 10 per cent. more on health without getting any improvement in the service.

The Government try to make out that, whereas in the rest of Europe the percentage of GDP spent on health care is higher, the contribution from the public purse is lower in those countries than here. That is not the case. Our public sector contributes 5 per cent. of GDP on health, which is less than the public sector contribution in France, Belgium and Ireland. It is therefore a travesty to label the Health Service as greedy and out of control, when it is already substantially underfunded compared with health care systems abroad.

The Health Service treats patients more cost-effectively than the private sector. In the west midlands it costs the private sector £450 more to do a hysterectomy than a National Health Service hospital, and it costs the private sector £700 more to do a hip replacement operation than the National Health Service.

I expect that the right hon. Member for Chingford (Mr. Tebbit) would say that no account is taken of capital, but no account is taken in the private sector of the training of staff by the National Health Service, who then leave for the private sector.

We are told that we must have an alternative system because we cannot control Health Service costs, which are somehow spiralling out of control. It is true that costs are increasing, but that is partly because of the large number of elderly people. We should welcome that as an advance. I welcome the fact that my parents have been able to live to a ripe old age. I want to live to a ripe old age, and I want my children to do so. That should be welcomed as an advance in health and well-being, and should not be complained about by Conservative Members as being a problem. Costs have increased because of medical advance. We should be welcoming that rather than complaining and wishing to return to a system in which we cannot treat people and send them home without hope.

No lessons can be learnt from abroad about curtailing cost increases. The free-market or insurance-based system has a far greater rate of increase in costs. Last year, in the United States—in one year alone—costs rose by seven times more than the rate of inflation. Germany, which was given as an example by the right hon. Member for Chingford, has similar problems with runaway costs.

Alternative foreign systems are more expensive and less subject to cost control. If the Government are looking for alternatives to control costs, they are barking up the wrong tree.

Mr. Tebbit *rose*——

Mr. Dennis Skinner (Bolsover): What are you doing, Mr. Speaker, letting the moonlighter in?

Mr. Tebbit: If the hon. Gentleman did a little moonlighting he might learn something. With a bit of luck, he might find someone willing to employ him.

Mr. Speaker: Order. Questions to the Front Bench, please.

Mr. Tebbit: Is it the hon. Lady's premise that we have nothing to learn from anyone overseas—that our system is perfect, we know it all, we know it better, we have got it all right and they have got it all wrong? Is she willing to learn something from other people's experience?

Ms. Harman: What I have learnt from other people's experience is that other systems are more expensive, more unfair, more bureaucratic and more costly.

The Government say that we need an alternative to the Health Service because it is bureaucratic. It has been described as a bureaucratic monster, but a certain amount of administration is necessary for a system to run properly. We want doctors and nurses to be free to care for patients, not to be bogged down with administration.

The Health Service demands less in administration than other systems abroad because it is simpler. We spend 6 per cent. of our health budget on administration. France, in which there is a large insurance element in its health service, spends 12 per cent. on administration—double the amount that we spend—and America spends 21 per cent. of its health budget on administration.

Mr. Whitney: Will the hon. Lady quote the source of that remark? She will know, if she has read anything about the matter, that academic studies show that the administrative costs of the United States health service account for 10 per cent. of its health budget. Our figure is so low because it does not include the cost of collection and because we have a centralised system. I invite the hon. Lady to tell the House where she obtained that figure of 21 per cent., which is one of the many bogus statistics that she is reading from her schoolgirl essay.

Ms. Harman: I am quoting internationally recognised OECD statistics. In some states of America the administrative costs amount to 30 per cent.

I should like to give the example of a friend of mine in America who took her son to hospital because he had to have a grommet placed in his ear. His operation was due at 9 am, but he was called in at 6 am so that staff could do three hours of administration and paper work. That is the way the system runs.

In Britain the private health care companies are far more expensive to administer than the NHS. Compared with the 6 per cent. that is spent by the NHS on administration, BUPA spends 10 per cent.. Therefore, the message is clear: insurance-based schemes are far more expensive to run than the NHS.

Another idea promoted by the Government is that the NHS is inefficient. It is true that underfunding is starting to reduce the efficiency of the Health Service and to cause unit costs to increase. Of course it is a waste of capital resources to have 50 per cent. of operating theatres—valuable capital resources—lying idle. Of course unit costs are increased if wards are closed and beds in wards are closed. Of course it increases staff costs to allow the nursing work force to decline to such a level that hospitals must increasingly rely upon expensive agency nurses. But that is not to say that we do not think that we should have

a continuous review of performance within the NHS. Of course we want value for money because we want value for patients.

All the evidence suggests that insurance-based or open-market systems of health care are far less efficient than the NHS in allocating resources. The absence of any coherent planning framework in the United States has led to an oversupply of hospital beds. It is estimated that between one in three and one in two of American hospital beds are surplus to requirements.

The medical director of BUPA in this country recently backed the idea that the Health Service is a good mechanism for planning and use of resources. He said:

"Due to the structure of the NHS, the distribution of health services is reasonably good and there is relatively little waste—particularly when this is compared to America."

Perhaps the most important question is the access to care and the quality of care delivered by our Health Service compared with foreign systems. It is relatively well understood in Britain that the poor get a third-rate health care service in America. When an ambulance arrives at an accident in the United States, what the team is really interested in when deciding whether or where a victim should be treated is not where the nearest hospital is or where the appropriate facilities are available, but whether the person has got insurance.

There is no doubt that less well off people in the United States suffer because they delay seeking treatment and discharge themselves dangerously early because of the cost of health care. That is widely understood in Britain. It is also beginning to be understood that an insurance system is bound to allow gaps. It is estimated that more than 40 million people in the United States have no health insurance because insurance companies will not accept them because they are too old, because they have a chronic illness or because they are regarded as being an AIDS risk.

It is not as though someone is home and dry if he has an insurance policy, because there are also gruesome stories of insurance running out. When insurance runs out against a person's medical interest, he must move to a cheaper hospital. What is less well known, but extremely chilling, is that it is not only the poor who are the victims of the American health care system. The rich are also the victims of that system. It is a commercial system, and the doctors do what is profitable rather than what is medically necessary. For example, a doctor will not make much money from telling a patient with a headache to take an aspirin and lie down in a darkened room for an hour. Big money is made if the doctor starts brain and neurological investigations.

My hon. Friend the Member for Strathkelvin and Beardsden (Mr. Galbraith) has said that medicine in the United States is distorted by the profit motive. An American woman is three times more likely to have her womb removed than a British woman. An American man is four times more likely to have his prostate removed than a British man. An American is three times more likely than a Briton to have a hernia operation and twice as likely to have his tonsils removed. That is what happens in a health system in which the profit motive comes into play. An American woman is twice as likely as a British woman to give birth by caesarean section than by spontaneous delivery. A Congressional study estimated that 2·4 million surgical procedures had been carried out unnecessarily and that 11,900 deaths had been caused by unnecessary intervention.

That cannot be explained away by reference to different medical traditions or legal systems—although different medical traditions and different legal systems there are — because parallel differences exist in this country between the Health Service and the commercial medical sector. A woman in a private hospital is twice as likely to give birth by caesarian section as her counterpart in a National Health Service hospital. The alternatives that we are being offered by the Government are more expensive, more bureaucratic and more wasteful. They are unfair to the poor and they do no favours to the rich.

The central question is whether we want health care on the basis of people's ability to benefit from treatment or on the basis of their ability to pay for the treatment. The Health Service is fairer and more humane than commercial, insurance-based, profit-motivated systems. To any Government interested in acting sensibly, the obvious course of action would be to give the National Health Service a reasonable and fair allocation from public funds. We could then release all the enthusiasm and commitment that remain among doctors, nurses and other Health Service staff—enthusiasm and commitment that have not been stifled—who not only want to do more of what they are doing now but want to push back the boundaries of medical science, to make breakthroughs with new diagnostic techniques and treatments and so to improve our Health Service.

The Government and Conservative Back Benchers tell us that the money is available but that the Government are simply unwilling to use it for the Health Service. They prefer, as a matter of priority, to use it for tax cuts. The Government are considering abolishing the top rate of tax, which will benefit only 4 per cent. of people in this country but with a windfall of £850 million. They are considering abolishing inheritance tax, which will benefit only 35,000 people, but to the tune of £1 billion. The Government are considering plans to abolish capital gains tax to give a further windfall of £1·3 billion. Those amounts total more than £3 billion. While the Government pursue the theory that cuts in taxes encourage the rich to work harder, cuts in the Health Service are threatening people's lives.

In the year of the 40th anniversary of the Health Service, people will be paying particular attention to the Chancellor's treatment of the Health Service in his Budget. The real choice is not between the National Health Service and foreign systems, but between tax cuts and a soundly-based, well-resourced Health Service. Instead of forcing the Health Service to resort to flag-day finance, the Budget should use public finance to relieve the pain and suffering of the growing number of patients on the waiting lists. The Secretary of State tells the presidents of the royal colleges that the Health Service should get more money. The Chief Secretary to the Treasury says that it will not. People are expecting Budget day to be Health Service day. On 15 March, the eyes of all who care about a fair and effective health care system will be on the Chancellor.

9.38 pm

The Minister for Health (Mr. Tony Newton): In many ways, this has been a more thoughtful and constructive debate than most of us expected at the outset—at least until the last few moments. The hon. Member for Peckham (Ms. Harman) appeared to be setting up nine-pins of her own making simply to knock them down. However, with that exception, hon. Members on both sides of the House have recognised—that recognition may be strategically

[Mr. Tony Newton]

significant in terms of the whole political debate on the NHS—the complexity of the problems and pressures involved in the controversies and arguments that surround the National Health Service.

I want to comment on some of those themes and on the constructive points that have been made. However, before I come to what I take to be the central theme of the debate, it is right for me to comment on some of the specific points raised by right hon. and hon. Members from the Opposition Front Bench and by hon. Members of all parties, although inevitably I shall be unable to take up every point, especially some of the local ones.

I give an undertaking to the hon. Member for Livingston (Mr. Cook) that I shall not rehearse all the statistics that obviously leave him uneasy. One striking thing about his speech was what I took to be his extremely defensive comments when he sought to suggest that the statistics were not presenting a true picture of what is happening in the Health Service. Without seeking to repeat the statistics which my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State set out clearly in his opening speech, I challenge the hon. Gentleman to provide me with any significant measure of the outputs of the Health Service in terms of patient care which do not show the marked and dramatic increase that has taken place during the eight years that this Government have been in office.

However, I must challenge the hon. Member for Livingston on some statistics that I understood him to take from the report of the Select Committee on Social Services. I say in the presence of my hon. Friend the Member for Macclesfield (Mr. Winterton)—*[Interruption.]*—unfortunately, he is not here—that I normally have the greatest respect for that Committee. However, I challenge the hon. Gentleman's statistics about the effect of demography on the pattern of Health Service expenditure in recent years because, in my judgment, there has been persistent misrepresentation of the position on the basis that the picture has remained steady and that a regular 1 per cent. per year has been needed to cope with demographic pressures. So much of the attack on our suggestions and our view that there has been a real increase in expenditure on the National Health Service rests on that statistic, and, frankly, it rests on a misapprehension. The run of statistics——

Mr. Robin Cook *rose*——

Mr. Newton: May I first finish my point?

The run of statistics, which I can go through although I had not intended to, shows marked variations, down as low as 0·3 per cent., for example, for demographic factors in 1981-82. Over the period as a whole, the average is significantly less than 1 per cent. It is important that people should recognise that fact when making some of the wilder generalisations about the real increase in Health Service funding.

Mr. Cook: I invite the Minister to contemplate the answer that he gave to the House on 13 July 1987 when he set out the annual increase in the pressure of demographic change on the hospital sector alone. He is absolutely right—it is not 1 per cent. per annum; the figure varies. Over the period at which the Select Committee looked, there was a 4·3 per cent. additional requirement on the hospital sector. The Select Committee estimated the increase in the volume terms of expenditu on the hospital sector as 3·2 per cent.—a clear 1·2 p cent. less. For next year it is a clear 2 per cent. less. Th is why our hospitals cannot meet the demand on ther That is why they are in crisis and are turning aw patients.

Mr. Newton: As I understand it, at least we agree th the 1 per cent. figure is an exaggeration as an average ov the period concerned. Just as the hon. Gentleman and t hon. Member for Peckham have persistently refused take account of the gains in efficiency in the service, so d the Select Committee. When account is taken of tho factors, the increase in resources for the hospital an community health services represents a real increase whic can be seen in the increases in patient care which all t statistics demonstrate.

I should like to make one other point to the hon Member for Livingston, on a purely statistical issue. H referred to the representation of the British Cardia Society about the number of cardiologists, quoting th society's reported view that some 10 million people we living in districts without the appropriate cardiologic consultant care.

The number of consultant cardiologists has increase from 110 in 1979 to 152 on the latest available figure, a increase of more than 50 per cent. Although I have no been able to do all the maths involved, if 10 million peopl were living in districts without such consultants in 198 that is a whole lot fewer than were living in such district in 1979.

Mr. Nigel Griffiths: What consolation are thos statistics to parents whose children are dying because o shortages?

Mr. Newton: Their consolation is that the increase resources for the hospitals and services involved create fo their children a very much better chance of proper healt care than they had eight years ago, when the Governmen came to office.

As the hon. Member for Edinburgh, South (Mr Griffiths) has incited me, let me give one more statistic *[Interruption.]* Let him listen: he raised the subject. Let m give the hon. Gentleman the statistics for the number o hole-in-the-heart operations carried out on youngster under one year old. In 1978, there were 333; in 1985— this is the latest figure that I have—there were 469 That is the scale of the increase.

I can give the House, and the hon. Member fo Peckham, some helpful, up-to-date information. In th course of several references to nurses, the hon. Lady implied that the number had been falling. As it happens I placed in the Library of the House yesterday the latest figures on NHS staff. I am glad to be able to tell the hon Lady and the House that, in the year from September 198 to September 1987, the number of nurses employed— excluding agency staff—rose by a further 3,400. That reflects the continuing increase that has taken place in the lifetime of the present Government.

There will always be legitimate public discussion and debate about the balance between expenditure and taxation at any one time, and about the balance in that expenditure between different desirable objectives—whether in health, education, housing or, for that matter, matters other than social policy such as defence, law and order or any other objective to which we attach collective

importance. What is not in doubt, however, is the commitment that the Government have shown by their decisions since 1979——

Mr. D. N. Campbell-Savours (Workington): What about nurse training?

Mr. Newton: The hon. Gentleman wishes me to go into the subject of nurse training, which was raised by the hon. Member for Cynon Valley (Mrs. Clwyd) in an intervention. The hon. Lady is right to say that there has been a modest decline in the total expenditure on nurse training over the past few years. There are two reasons for that. One is that there has been a reduction in the number of nurses leaving training before they complete that training which obviously tends to reduce the costs.

Mr. Campbell-Savours: Why?

Mr. Newton: There has been a reduction in the wastage. Why? Because no doubt they find it more attractive to be nurses now than they did when this Government came to office. Other factors are involved as well.

The Government have demonstrated by their decisions since 1979 the commitment they have to the Health Service, not only in the fact that expenditure has risen by 33 per cent. in real terms but that Health Service expenditure as a proportion of total public expenditure has risen by 2 per cent. in that period and, as my right hon. Friend said at the outset of the debate, the percentage of public expenditure on health in relation to the gross domestic product has risen from 4·7 per cent. to 5·4 per cent., after falling when the Labour party was in office.

The other point that has so far attracted less attention than I might have expected is that during the present year it is likely that health expenditure and personal social services expenditure, taken together, will overtake defence as the second largest item in Government expenditure after social security.

Mr. Anthony Beaumont-Dark (Birmingham, Selly Oak): Before my right hon. Friend moves away from the main thrust, can he help many of us who are genuinely his friends—*[Laughter]*—that is true—because many of us are perplexed? In Birmingham we are surrounded by great hospitals, good surgeons and good physicians who tell us —unless they are charlatans and liars, which I doubt but the Minister may convince me otherwise—that they are short of resources, that cancer beds are being closed and that kidney dialysis is rationed to those under 55 years of age. Either there are enough resources, or there are not. Who is right? Are those at the sharp end of public health right or is the Minister right?

Mr. Newton: The statistics that I have used — relatively few — and the figures that my right hon. Friend gave in his opening speech measure the increase in funds which has gone throughout the Health Service and not least to the West Midlands regional health authority, which has consistently gained under the process of resource allocation.

Mr. Campbell-Savours: Answer the question.

Mr. Newton: One point that I wish to deal with, because it is part of the core of the problem which both sides of the House face in talking about and dealing with these issues, is that——

Mr. Campbell-Savours: Answer the question.

Mr. Speaker: Order. The Minister is trying to answer a question which has been put to him. It is no good the hon. Gentleman shouting across the Chamber at him.

Mr. Newton: I recognise that there is always more that people would like to do whether they are Health Service workers, Ministers or those to whom my hon. Friend has been speaking in Birmingham.

Whatever view is taken of spending, whether capital or current, present or past, one thing that should surely be clear to everyone who has participated in the debate is that there is no single, simple answer in anything that the hon. Member for Livingston suggested or, dare I say, in any of the many suggestions from hon. Members on both sides of the House.

It is right that we should examine the extent to which some of the proposals may be able to contribute, as indeed we are doing and will continue to do. The inescapable conclusion outlined by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State is that the pattern of steadily rising demand, from factors that he described and above all from a combination of rising numbers of elderly people and the rapid pace of medical advance, is that we need to pursue steadily and consistently a range of measures of the sort that we have already embarked upon, not as a substitute for proper support from taxpayers nor a retreat from the responsibilities of Government, but in straightforward and practical recognition of the fact that, however much is contributed by taxpayers, there will always be more that all of us who are concerned with health would like to do.

Mr. Roland Boyes (Houghton and Washington): A man came to my office recently to canvas my support to raise cash for Freeman hospital in Newcastle. He had written to a number of people, one of whom was the Prime Minister, to raise £50,000. He had a letter back from an aide to the Prime Minister, saying, in effect, "Find enclosed an autographed photograph of the Prime Minister, which has been used by many organisations to raise a considerable amount of money." How many autographed photographs does it take to run a Health Service?

Mr. Newton: Mention of Newcastle reminds me of my visit there, when I saw at the Freeman hospital undoubtedly the finest heart transplant unit in this country. It was designated and paid for by funds allocated by this Government since 1979.

The sad thing about the debate today is that the Opposition have not only sought to deny their past, but have resolutely ignored the real issues and practical problems that must be faced. A smile came to my face——

Mr. Campbell-Savours *rose*——

Mr. Newton: No, I shall not give way to the hon. Gentleman. A smile came to my face when I heard the hon. Member for Livingston challenge us on the basis that no problems had occurred in the Health Service under the previous Labour Administration. I have in my hand copies of some headlines from newspapers in 1978 — *[Interruption.]* In March 1978, the headlines were:

"Patients sent home early to release beds, doctors say; NHS morale falling, MPs told; Minister told of threat to nursing standards; Big injection of money essential to resuscitate National Health Service, doctors told; Heart patients will die, warning in hospital dispute".

Then, most telling of all, there is a headline from *The Times* of August 1978 in the "Home News", which says:

[Mr. Newton]

"NHS in crisis; doctors complain of chronic under-financing."

That was what happened under the previous Labour Government. If we do not go down the track that they urge of taking yet more money from taxpayers, it is because we are conscious that down that track lies the same failure to fund the Health Service properly that marked the whole of their period in government. What we can and will do is to build on the expansion that we have already brought about.

Question put, That the original words stand part of the Question:—

The House divided: Ayes 233, Noes 338.

Division No. 144] **[10 pm**

AYES

Abbott, Ms Diane
Adams, Allen *(Paisley N)*
Allen, Graham
Alton, David
Archer, Rt Hon Peter
Armstrong, Ms Hilary
Ashdown, Paddy
Ashley, Rt Hon Jack
Ashton, Joe
Banks, Tony *(Newham NW)*
Barnes, Harry *(Derbyshire NE)*
Barnes, Mrs Rosie *(Greenwich)*
Barron, Kevin
Battle, John
Beckett, Margaret
Beith, A. J.
Bell, Stuart
Benn, Rt Hon Tony
Bennett, A. F. *(D'nt'n & R'dish)*
Bermingham, Gerald
Bidwell, Sydney
Blair, Tony
Blunkett, David
Boyes, Roland
Bradley, Keith
Bray, Dr Jeremy
Brown, Gordon *(D'mline E)*
Brown, Nicholas *(Newcastle E)*
Brown, Ron *(Edinburgh Leith)*
Bruce, Malcolm *(Gordon)*
Buchan, Norman
Buckley, George
Caborn, Richard
Callaghan, Jim
Campbell, Ron *(Blyth Valley)*
Campbell-Savours, D. N.
Canavan, D[illegible]
Carlile, A[illegible]ont'g)
Clark, D[illegible]vid *(S Shields)*
Clarke, [illegible] *(Monklands W)*
Clay, Bob
Clelland, David
Clwyd, Mrs Ann
Cohen, Harry
Coleman, Donald
Cook, Robin *(Livingston)*
Corbett, Robin
Corbyn, Jeremy
Cousins, Jim
Cox, Tom
Crowther, Stan
Cryer, Bob
Cummings, J.
Cunliffe, Lawrence
Dalyell, Tam
Darling, Alastair
Davies, Rt Hon Denzil *(Llanelli)*
Davies, Ron *(Caerphilly)*
Davis, Terry *(B'ham Hodge H'l)*
Dewar, Donald
Dixon, Don
Dobson, Frank
Douglas, Dick
Dunnachie, James
Dunwoody, Hon Mrs Gwyneth
Eadie, Alexander
Eastham, Ken
Ewing, Harry *(Falkirk E)*
Ewing, Mrs Margaret *(Moray)*
Fatchett, Derek
Faulds, Andrew
Fearn, Ronald
Field, Frank *(Birkenhead)*
Fields, Terry *(L'pool B G'n)*
Fisher, Mark
Flannery, Martin
Flynn, Paul
Foot, Rt Hon Michael
Forsythe, Clifford *(Antrim S)*
Foster, Derek
Foulkes, George
Fraser, John
Fyfe, Mrs Maria
Galbraith, Samuel
Galloway, George
Garrett, John *(Norwich South)*
Garrett, Ted *(Wallsend)*
George, Bruce
Gilbert, Rt Hon Dr John
Godman, Dr Norman A.
Golding, Mrs Llin
Gordon, Ms Mildred
Grant, Bernie *(Tottenham)*
Griffiths, Nigel *(Edinburgh S)*
Griffiths, Win *(Bridgend)*
Grocott, Bruce
Hardy, Peter
Harman, Ms Harriet
Hattersley, Rt Hon Roy
Haynes, Frank
Healey, Rt Hon Denis
Heffer, Eric S.
Hinchliffe, David
Hogg, N. *(C'nauld & Kilsyth)*
Holland, Stuart
Home Robertson, John
Hood, James
Howarth, George *(Knowsley N)*
Howell, Rt Hon D. *(S'heath)*
Howells, Geraint
Hoyle, Doug
Hughes, John *(Coventry NE)*
Hughes, Robert *(Aberdeen N)*
Hughes, Roy *(Newport E)*
Hughes, Simon *(Southwark)*
Illsley, Eric
Ingram, Adam
Janner, Greville
John, Brynmor
Jones, Barry *(Alyn & Deeside)*
Jones, Ieuan *(Ynys Môn)*
Jones, Martyn *(Clwyd S W)*
Kaufman, Rt Hon Gerald
Kilfedder, James
Kinnock, Rt Hon Neil
Kirkwood, Archy
Lambie, David
Lamond, James
Leadbitter, Ted
Leighton, Ron
Lestor, Miss Joan *(Eccles)*
Lewis, Terry
Litherland, Robert
Livingstone, Ken
Livsey, Richard
Lloyd, Tony *(Stretford)*
Lofthouse, Geoffrey
Loyden, Eddie
McAllion, John
McAvoy, Tom
McCartney, Ian
McCusker, Harold
Macdonald, Calum
McKelvey, William
McLeish, Henry
Maclennan, Robert
McNamara, Kevin
McTaggart, Bob
McWilliam, John
Madden, Max
Mahon, Mrs Alice
Marshall, David *(Shettleston)*
Marshall, Jim *(Leicester S)*
Martin, Michael *(Springburn)*
Martlew, Eric
Maxton, John
Meacher, Michael
Meale, Alan
Michael, Alun
Michie, Bill *(Sheffield Heeley)*
Millan, Rt Hon Bruce
Mitchell, Austin *(G't Grimsby)*
Molyneaux, Rt Hon James
Moonie, Dr Lewis
Morris, Rt Hon A *(W'shawe)*
Morris, Rt Hon J *(Aberavon)*
Mowlam, Marjorie
Mullin, Chris
Nellist, Dave
Oakes, Rt Hon Gordon
O'Brien, William
Orme, Rt Hon Stanley
Patchett, Terry
Pendry, Tom
Pike, Peter
Powell, Ray *(Ogmore)*
Primarolo, Ms Dawn
Quin, Ms Joyce
Radice, Giles
Randall, Stuart
Redmond, Martin
Rees, Rt Hon Merlyn
Reid, John
Richardson, Ms Jo
Roberts, Allan *(Bootle)*
Robertson, George
Robinson, Geoffrey
Rooker, Jeff
Ross, Ernie *(Dundee W)*
Ross, William *(Londonc)*
Rowlands, Ted
Ruddock, Ms Joan
Salmond, Alex
Sedgemore, Brian
Sheerman, Barry
Sheldon, Rt Hon Robert
Shore, Rt Hon Peter
Short, Clare
Skinner, Dennis
Smith, Andrew *(Oxford)*
Smith, C. *(Isl'ton & F'bu)*
Smith, Rt Hon J. *(Monk)*
Smyth, Rev Martin *(Bel)*
Snape, Peter
Soley, Clive
Spearing, Nigel
Steel, Rt Hon David
Steinberg, Gerald
Stott, Roger
Strang, Gavin
Straw, Jack
Taylor, Mrs Ann *(Dewsb)*
Taylor, Matthew *(Truro)*
Thomas, Dafydd Elis
Thompson, Jack *(Wansb)*
Turner, Dennis
Vaz, Keith
Walker, A. Cecil *(Belfas)*
Wall, Pat
Wallace, James
Walley, Ms Joan
Wardell, Gareth *(Gower)*
Wareing, Robert N.
Welsh, Andrew *(Angus E)*
Welsh, Michael *(Doncas)*
Wigley, Dafydd
Williams, Rt Hon A. J.
Williams, Alan W. *(Carm)*
Wilson, Brian
Winnick, David
Wise, Mrs Audrey
Worthington, Anthony
Young, David *(Bolton SE)*

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. Frank Cook and
Mr. Allen McKay.

NOES

Adley, Robert
Aitken, Jonathan
Alexander, Richard
Alison, Rt Hon Michael
Allason, Rupert
Amery, Rt Hon Julian
Amess, David
Amos, Alan
Arbuthnot, James
Arnold, Tom *(Hazel Grove)*
Ashby, David
Aspinwall, Jack
Atkins, Robert
Atkinson, David
Baker, Rt Hon K. *(Mole Valley)*
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Baldry, Tony
Batiste, Spencer
Beaumont-Dark, Anthony
Bellingham, Henry
Bendall, Vivian
Bennett, Nicholas *(Pemb)*
Benyon, W.
Bevan, David Gilroy
Biffen, Rt Hon John
Biggs-Davison, Sir John
Blackburn, Dr John G.
Blaker, Rt Hon Sir Peter
Body, Sir Richard
Bonsor, Sir Nicholas
Boswell, Tim
Bottomley, Peter
Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Bowden, A *(Brighton K'p)*
Bowden, Gerald *(Dulwich)*
Bowis, John

Boyson, Rt Hon Dr Sir Rhodes
Braine, Rt Hon Sir Bernard
Brandon-Bravo, Martin
Brazier, Julian
Bright, Graham
Brittan, Rt Hon Leon
Brooke, Rt Hon Peter
Brown, Michael *(Brigg & Cl't's)*
Browne, John *(Winchester)*
Bruce, Ian *(Dorset South)*
Buchanan-Smith, Rt Hon Alick
Buck, Sir Antony
Budgen, Nicholas
Burns, Simon
Burt, Alistair
Butcher, John
Butler, Chris
Butterfill, John
Carlisle, John, *(Luton N)*
Carlisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Carrington, Matthew
Carttiss, Michael
Cash, William
Channon, Rt Hon Paul
Chapman, Sydney
Chope, Christopher
Churchill, Mr
Clark, Hon Alan *(Plym'th S'n)*
Clark, Dr Michael *(Rochford)*
Clark, Sir W. *(Croydon S)*
Clarke, Rt Hon K. *(Rushcliffe)*
Colvin, Michael
Conway, Derek
Coombs, Anthony *(Wyre F'rest)*
Coombs, Simon *(Swindon)*
Cope, John
Cormack, Patrick
Couchman, James
Cran, James
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Curry, David
Davies, Q. *(Stamf'd & Spald'g)*
Davis, David *(Boothferry)*
Day, Stephen
Devlin, Tim
Dickens, Geoffrey
Dicks, Terry
Dorrell, Stephen
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James
Dover, Den
Dunn, Bob
Durant, Tony
Emery, Sir Peter
Evennett, David
Fallon, Michael
Farr, Sir John
Favell, Tony
Fenner, Dame Peggy
Field, Barry *(Isle of Wight)*
Finsberg, Sir Geoffrey
Fookes, Miss Janet
Forman, Nigel
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Forth, Eric
Fowler, Rt Hon Norman
Fox, Sir Marcus
Franks, Cecil
Freeman, Roger
French, Douglas
Fry, Peter
Gale, Roger
Gardiner, George
Gill, Christopher
Gilmour, Rt Hon Sir Ian
Glyn, Dr Alan
Goodhart, Sir Philip
Goodlad, Alastair
Goodson-Wickes, Dr Charles
Gorman, Mrs Teresa
Gorst, John
Gow, Ian
Gower, Sir Raymond
Greenway, Harry *(Ealing N)*
Greenway, John *(Rydale)*
Gregory, Conal
Griffiths, Sir Eldon *(Bury St E')*
Griffiths, Peter *(Portsmouth N)*
Grist, Ian
Ground, Patrick
Grylls, Michael
Hamilton, Neil *(Tatton)*
Hampson, Dr Keith
Hanley, Jeremy
Hannam, John
Hargreaves, A. *(B'ham H'll Gr')*
Hargreaves, Ken *(Hyndburn)*
Harris, David
Haselhurst, Alan
Hawkins, Christopher
Hayes, Jerry
Hayward, Robert
Heathcoat-Amory, David
Heddle, John
Heseltine, Rt Hon Michael
Hicks, Mrs Maureen *(Wolv' NE)*
Hicks, Robert *(Cornwall SE)*
Higgins, Rt Hon Terence L.
Hill, James
Hind, Kenneth
Hogg, Hon Douglas *(Gr'th'm)*
Holt, Richard
Hordern, Sir Peter
Howard, Michael
Howarth, Alan *(Strat'd-on-A)*
Howarth, G. *(Cannock & B'wd)*
Howe, Rt Hon Sir Geoffrey
Howell, Ralph *(North Norfolk)*
Hughes, Robert G. *(Harrow W)*
Hunt, David *(Wirral W)*
Hunt, John *(Ravensbourne)*
Hunter, Andrew
Irvine, Michael
Irving, Charles
Jack, Michael
Jackson, Robert
Janman, Timothy
Johnson Smith, Sir Geoffrey
Jones, Gwilym *(Cardiff N)*
Jones, Robert B *(Herts W)*
Kellett-Bowman, Mrs Elaine
Key, Robert
King, Roger *(B'ham N'thfield)*
Kirkhope, Timothy
Knapman, Roger
Knight, Greg *(Derby North)*
Knight, Dame Jill *(Edgbaston)*
Knowles, Michael
Knox, David
Lamont, Rt Hon Norman
Lang, Ian
Latham, Michael
Lawrence, Ivan
Lawson, Rt Hon Nigel
Lee, John *(Pendle)*
Leigh, Edward *(Gainsbor'gh)*
Lennox-Boyd, Hon Mark
Lester, Jim *(Broxtowe)*
Lightbown, David
Lilley, Peter
Lloyd, Sir Ian *(Havant)*
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
Lord, Michael
Luce, Rt Hon Richard
Lyell, Sir Nicholas
McCrindle, Robert
Macfarlane, Sir Neil
MacKay, Andrew *(E Berkshire)*
Maclean, David
McLoughlin, Patrick
McNair-Wilson, M. *(Newbury)*
McNair-Wilson, P. *(New Forest)*
Madel, David
Major, Rt Hon John
Malins, Humfrey
Mans, Keith
Maples, John
Mariand, Paul
Marlow, Tony
Martin, David *(Portsmouth S)*
Mates, Michael
Mawhinney, Dr Brian
Mayhew, Rt Hon Sir Patrick
Mellor, David
Miller, Hal
Mills, Iain
Miscampbell, Norman
Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)*
Mitchell, David *(Hants NW)*
Moate, Roger
Monro, Sir Hector
Montgomery, Sir Fergus
Moore, Rt Hon John
Morris, M *(N'hampton S)*
Morrison, Sir Charles *(Devizes)*
Moss, Malcolm
Mudd, David
Neale, Gerrard
Nelson, Anthony
Neubert, Michael
Newton, Rt Hon Tony
Nicholls, Patrick
Nicholson, David *(Taunton)*
Nicholson, Miss E. *(Devon W)*
Onslow, Rt Hon Cranley
Page, Richard
Paice, James
Parkinson, Rt Hon Cecil
Patnick, Irvine
Patten, Chris *(Bath)*
Patten, John *(Oxford W)*
Pattie, Rt Hon Sir Geoffrey
Pawsey, James
Peacock, Mrs Elizabeth
Porter, Barry *(Wirral S)*
Porter, David *(Waveney)*
Portillo, Michael
Price, Sir David
Raffan, Keith
Raison, Rt Hon Timothy
Rathbone, Tim
Redwood, John
Renton, Tim
Rhodes James, Robert
Rhys Williams, Sir Brandon
Riddick, Graham
Ridley, Rt Hon Nicholas
Rifkind, Rt Hon Malcolm
Roberts, Wyn *(Conwy)*
Roe, Mrs Marion
Rossi, Sir Hugh
Rost, Peter
Rowe, Andrew
Rumbold, Mrs Angela
Ryder, Richard
Sackville, Hon Tom
Sayeed, Jonathan
Scott, Nicholas
Shaw, David *(Dover)*
Shaw, Sir Giles *(Pudsey)*
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Shelton, William *(Streatham)*
Shephard, Mrs G. *(Norfolk SW)*
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Shepherd, Richard *(Aldridge)*
Shersby, Michael
Sims, Roger
Skeet, Sir Trevor
Smith, Sir Dudley *(Warwick)*
Smith, Tim *(Beaconsfield)*
Soames, Hon Nicholas
Speed, Keith
Speller, Tony
Spicer, Sir Jim *(Dorset W)*
Spicer, Michael *(S Worcs)*
Squire, Robin
Stanbrook, Ivor
Steen, Anthony
Stern, Michael
Stevens, Lewis
Stewart, Allan *(Eastwood)*
Stewart, Andrew *(Sherwood)*
Stokes, John
Stradling Thomas, Sir John
Sumberg, David
Summerson, Hugo
Tapsell, Sir Peter
Taylor, Ian *(Esher)*
Taylor, John M *(Solihull)*
Taylor, Teddy *(S'end E)*
Tebbit, Rt Hon Norman
Temple-Morris, Peter
Thompson, D. *(Calder Valley)*
Thompson, Patrick *(Norwich N)*
Thorne, Neil
Thornton, Malcolm
Thurnham, Peter
Townend, John *(Bridlington)*
Townsend, Cyril D. *(B'heath)*
Tracey, Richard
Tredinnick, David
Trippier, David
Trotter, Neville
Twinn, Dr Ian
Vaughan, Sir Gerard
Waddington, Rt Hon David
Wakeham, Rt Hon John
Waldegrave, Hon William
Walden, George
Walker, Bill *(T'side North)*
Walker, Rt Hon P. *(W'cester)*
Waller, Gary
Walters, Dennis
Ward, John
Wardle, C. *(Bexhill)*
Warren, Kenneth
Watts, John
Wells, Bowen
Wheeler, John
Whitney, Ray
Widdecombe, Miss Ann
Wiggin, Jerry
Wilkinson, John
Wilshire, David
Winterton, Mrs Ann
Winterton, Nicholas
Wolfson, Mark
Wood, Timothy
Woodcock, Mike
Yeo, Tim
Young, Sir George *(Acton)*
Younger, Rt Hon George

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. Robert Boscawen and
Mr. Tristan Garel-Jones.

Question accordingly negatived.

Question, That the proposed words be there added, *put forthwith pursuant to Standing Order No. 30 (Questions on amendments)*:—

The House divided: Ayes 336, Noes 236.

Division No. 148] **[10.16 pm**

AYES

Adley, Robert
Aitken, Jonathan
Alexander, Richard
Alison, Rt Hon Michael
Allason, Rupert
Amery, Rt Hon Julian
Amess, David
Amos, Alan
Arbuthnot, James
Arnold, Tom *(Hazel Grove)*
Ashby, David
Aspinwall, Jack
Atkins, Robert
Atkinson, David
Baker, Rt Hon K. *(Mole Valley)*
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Baldry, Tony
Batiste, Spencer
Beaumont-Dark, Anthony
Bellingham, Henry
Bendall, Vivian
Bennett, Nicholas *(Pembroke)*
Benyon, W.
Bevan, David Gilroy
Biffen, Rt Hon John
Biggs-Davison, Sir John
Blackburn, Dr John G.
Blaker, Rt Hon Sir Peter
Body, Sir Richard
Bonsor, Sir Nicholas
Boswell, Tim
Bottomley, Peter
Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Bowden, A *(Brighton K'pto'n)*
Bowden, Gerald *(Dulwich)*
Bowis, John
Boyson, Rt Hon Dr Sir Rhodes
Braine, Rt Hon Sir Bernard
Brandon-Bravo, Martin
Brazier, Julian
Bright, Graham
Brittan, Rt Hon Leon
Brooke, Rt Hon Peter
Brown, Michael *(Brigg & Cl't's)*
Browne, John *(Winchester)*
Bruce, Ian *(Dorset South)*
Buchanan-Smith, Rt Hon Alick
Buck, Sir Antony
Budgen, Nicholas
Burns, Simon
Burt, Alistair
Butcher, John
Butler, Chris
Butterfill, John
Carlisle, John, *(Luton N)*
Carlisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Carrington, Matthew
Carttiss, Michael
Cash, William
Channon, Rt Hon Paul
Chapman, Sydney
Chope, Christopher
Churchill, Mr
Clark, Hon Alan *(Plym'th S'n)*
Clark, Dr Michael *(Rochford)*
Clark, Sir W. *(Croydon S)*
Clarke, Rt Hon K. *(Rushcliffe)*
Colvin, Michael
Conway, Derek
Coombs, Anthony *(Wyre F'rest)*
Coombs, Simon *(Swindon)*
Cope, John
Cormack, Patrick
Couchman, James
Cran, James
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Curry, David
Davies, Q. *(Stamf'd & Spald'g)*
Davis, David *(Boothferry)*
Day, Stephen
Devlin, Tim
Dickens, Geoffrey
Dicks, Terry
Dorrell, Stephen
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James
Dover, Den
Dunn, Bob
Durant, Tony
Emery, Sir Peter
Evennett, David
Fallon, Michael
Farr, Sir John
Favell, Tony
Fenner, Dame Peggy
Field, Barry *(Isle of Wight)*
Finsberg, Sir Geoffrey
Fookes, Miss Janet
Forman, Nigel
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Forth, Eric
Fowler, Rt Hon Norman
Fox, Sir Marcus
Franks, Cecil
Freeman, Roger
French, Douglas
Fry, Peter
Gale, Roger
Gardiner, George
Gill, Christopher
Gilmour, Rt Hon Sir Ian
Glyn, Dr Alan
Goodhart, Sir Philip
Goodlad, Alastair
Goodson-Wickes, Dr Charles
Gorman, Mrs Teresa
Gorst, John
Gow, Ian
Gower, Sir Raymond
Grant, Sir Anthony *(CambsSW)*
Greenway, Harry *(Ealing N)*
Greenway, John *(Rydale)*
Gregory, Conal
Griffiths, Sir Eldon *(Bury St E')*
Griffiths, Peter *(Portsmouth N)*
Grist, Ian
Ground, Patrick
Grylls, Michael
Hamilton, Neil *(Tatton)*
Hampson, Dr Keith
Hanley, Jeremy
Hannam, John
Hargreaves, A. *(B'ham H'll Gr')*
Hargreaves, Ken *(Hyndburn)*
Harris, David
Haselhurst, Alan
Hawkins, Christopher
Hayes, Jerry
Hayhoe, Rt Hon Sir Barney
Hayward, Robert
Heathcoat-Amory, David
Heddle, John
Heseltine, Rt Hon Michael
Hicks, Mrs Maureen *(Wolv' NE)*
Hicks, Robert *(Cornwall SE)*
Higgins, Rt Hon Terence L.
Hill, James
Hind, Kenneth
Hogg, Hon Douglas *(Gr'th'm)*
Holt, Richard
Hordern, Sir Peter
Howard, Michael
Howarth, Alan *(Strat'd-on-A)*
Howarth, G. *(Cannock & B'wd)*
Howell, Ralph *(North Norfolk)*
Hughes, Robert G. *(Harrow W)*
Hunt, David *(Wirral W)*
Hunt, John *(Ravensbourne)*
Hunter, Andrew
Irvine, Michael
Irving, Charles
Jack, Michael
Jackson, Robert
Janman, Timothy
Johnson Smith, Sir Geoffrey
Jones, Gwilym *(Cardiff N)*
Jones, Robert B *(Herts W)*
Kellett-Bowman, Mrs Elaine
Key, Robert
King, Roger *(B'ham N'thfield)*
Kirkhope, Timothy
Knapman, Roger
Knight, Greg *(Derby North)*
Knowles, Michael
Knox, David
Lamont, Rt Hon Norman
Lang, Ian
Latham, Michael
Lawrence, Ivan
Lawson, Rt Hon Nigel
Lee, John *(Pendle)*
Leigh, Edward *(Gainsbor'gh)*
Lennox-Boyd, Hon Mark
Lester, Jim *(Broxtowe)*
Lightbown, David
Lilley, Peter
Lloyd, Sir Ian *(Havant)*
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
Lord, Michael
Luce, Rt Hon Richard
Lyell, Sir Nicholas
McCrindle, Robert
Macfarlane, Sir Neil
MacKay, Andrew *(E Berkshire)*
Maclean, David
McLoughlin, Patrick
McNair-Wilson, M. *(Newbury)*
McNair-Wilson, P. *(New Forest)*
Madel, David
Major, Rt Hon John
Malins, Humfrey
Mans, Keith
Maples, John
Mariand, Paul
Marlow, Tony
Martin, David *(Portsmouth S)*
Mates, Michael
Mawhinney, Dr Brian
Mayhew, Rt Hon Sir Patrick
Mellor, David
Miller, Hal
Mills, Iain
Miscampbell, Norman
Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)*
Mitchell, David *(Hants NW)*
Moate, Roger
Monro, Sir Hector
Montgomery, Sir Fergus
Moore, Rt Hon John
Morris, M *(N'hampton S)*
Morrison, Sir Charles *(Devizes)*
Moss, Malcolm
Mudd, David
Neale, Gerrard
Nelson, Anthony
Neubert, Michael
Newton, Rt Hon Tony
Nicholls, Patrick
Nicholson, David *(Taunton)*
Nicholson, Miss E. *(Devon W)*
Onslow, Rt Hon Cranley
Page, Richard
Paice, James
Parkinson, Rt Hon Cecil
Patten, Chris *(Bath)*
Patten, John *(Oxford W)*
Pattie, Rt Hon Sir Geoffrey
Pawsey, James
Peacock, Mrs Elizal
Porter, Barry *(Wirra*
Porter, David *(Wave*
Portillo, Michael
Price, Sir David
Raffan, Keith
Raison, Rt Hon Tim
Rathbone, Tim
Redwood, John
Renton, Tim
Rhodes James, Rob
Rhys Williams, Sir
Riddick, Graham
Rifkind, Rt Hon Mal
Roberts, Wyn *(Conw*
Roe, Mrs Marion
Rossi, Sir Hugh
Rost, Peter
Rowe, Andrew
Rumbold, Mrs Ange
Ryder, Richard
Sackville, Hon Tom
Sainsbury, Hon Tim
Sayeed, Jonathan
Scott, Nicholas
Shaw, David *(Dover)*
Shaw, Sir Giles *(Pud*
Shaw, Sir Michael *(*
Shelton, William *(Str*
Shephard, Mrs G. *(N*
Shepherd, Colin *(He*
Shepherd, Richard *(*
Shersby, Michael
Sims, Roger
Skeet, Sir Trevor
Smith, Sir Dudley *(W*
Smith, Tim *(Beacons*
Soames, Hon Nichol
Speed, Keith
Speller, Tony
Spicer, Sir Jim *(Dors*
Spicer, Michael *(S W*
Squire, Robin
Stanbrook, Ivor
Steen, Anthony
Stern, Michael
Stevens, Lewis
Stewart, Allan *(Easte*
Stewart, Andrew *(Sh*
Stokes, John
Stradling Thomas, S
Sumberg, David
Summerson, Hugo
Tapsell, Sir Peter
Taylor, Ian *(Esher)*
Taylor, John M *(Solih*
Taylor, Teddy *(S'end*
Tebbit, Rt Hon Norma
Temple-Morris, Peter
Thompson, D. *(Calde*
Thompson, Patrick *(N*
Thorne, Neil
Thornton, Malcolm
Thurnham, Peter
Townend, John *(Bridl*
Townsend, Cyril D. *(*
Tracey, Richard
Tredinnick, David
Trippier, David
Trotter, Neville
Twinn, Dr Ian
Vaughan, Sir Gerard
Waddington, Rt Hon D
Wakeham, Rt Hon Jo
Waldegrave, Hon Will
Walden, George
Walker, Bill *(T'side N*
Walker, Rt Hon P. *(W*
Waller, Gary

Walters, Dennis
Ward, John
Wardle, C. *(Bexhill)*
Warren, Kenneth
Watts, John
Wells, Bowen
Wheeler, John
Whitney, Ray
Widdecombe, Miss Ann
Wiggin, Jerry
Wilkinson, John
Wilshire, David
Winterton, Mrs Ann
Winterton, Nicholas
Wolfson, Mark
Wood, Timothy
Woodcock, Mike
Yeo, Tim
Young, Sir George *(Acton)*
Younger, Rt Hon George

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. Robert Boscawen and
Mr. Tristan Garel-Jones.

NOES

Abbott, Ms Diane
Adams, Allen *(Paisley N)*
Allen, Graham
Alton, David
Archer, Rt Hon Peter
Armstrong, Ms Hilary
Ashdown, Paddy
Ashley, Rt Hon Jack
Ashton, Joe
Banks, Tony *(Newham NW)*
Barnes, Harry *(Derbyshire NE)*
Barnes, Mrs Rosie *(Greenwich)*
Barron, Kevin
Battle, John
Beckett, Margaret
Beith, A. J.
Bell, Stuart
Benn, Rt Hon Tony
Bennett, A. F. *(D'nt'n & R'dish)*
Bermingham, Gerald
Bidwell, Sydney
Blair, Tony
Blunkett, David
Boyes, Roland
Bradley, Keith
Bray, Dr Jeremy
Brown, Gordon *(D'mline E)*
Brown, Nicholas *(Newcastle E)*
Brown, Ron *(Edinburgh Leith)*
Bruce, Malcolm *(Gordon)*
Buchan, Norman
Buckley, George
Caborn, Richard
Callaghan, Jim
Campbell, Ron *(Blyth Valley)*
Campbell-Savours, D. N.
Canavan, Dennis
Carlile, Alex *(Mont'g)*
Clark, Dr David *(S Shields)*
Clarke, Tom *(Monklands W)*
Clay, Bob
Clelland, David
Clwyd, Mrs Ann
Cohen, Harry
Coleman, Donald
Cook, Robin *(Livingston)*
Corbett, Robin
Corbyn, Jeremy
Cousins, Jim
Cox, Tom
Crowther, Stan
Cryer, Bob
Cummings, J.
Cunliffe, Lawrence
Dalyell, Tam
Darling, Alastair
Davies, Rt Hon Denzil *(Llanelli)*
Davies, Ron *(Caerphilly)*
Davis, Terry *(B'ham Hodge H'l)*
Dewar, Donald
Dixon, Don
Dobson, Frank
Doran, Frank
Douglas, Dick
Dunnachie, James
Dunwoody, Hon Mrs Gwyneth
Eadie, Alexander
Eastham, Ken
Evans, John *(St Helens N)*
Ewing, Harry *(Falkirk E)*
Ewing, Mrs Margaret *(Moray)*
Fatchett, Derek
Faulds, Andrew
Fearn, Ronald
Field, Frank *(Birkenhead)*
Fields, Terry *(L'pool B G'n)*
Fisher, Mark
Flannery, Martin
Flynn, Paul
Foot, Rt Hon Michael
Forsythe, Clifford *(Antrim S)*
Foster, Derek
Foulkes, George
Fraser, John
Fyfe, Ms Maria
Galbraith, Samuel
Galloway, George
Garrett, John *(Norwich South)*
Garrett, Ted *(Wallsend)*
George, Bruce
Gilbert, Rt Hon Dr John
Godman, Dr Norman A.
Golding, Mrs Llin
Gordon, Ms Mildred
Grant, Bernie *(Tottenham)*
Griffiths, Nigel *(Edinburgh S)*
Griffiths, Win *(Bridgend)*
Grocott, Bruce
Hardy, Peter
Harman, Ms Harriet
Hattersley, Rt Hon Roy
Haynes, Frank
Healey, Rt Hon Denis
Heffer, Eric S.
Hinchliffe, David
Hogg, N. *(C'nauld & Kilsyth)*
Holland, Stuart
Home Robertson, John
Hood, James
Howarth, George *(Knowsley N)*
Howell, Rt Hon D. *(S'heath)*
Howells, Geraint
Hoyle, Doug
Hughes, John *(Coventry NE)*
Hughes, Robert *(Aberdeen N)*
Hughes, Roy *(Newport E)*
Hughes, Simon *(Southwark)*
Illsley, Eric
Ingram, Adam
Janner, Greville
John, Brynmor
Jones, Barry *(Alyn & Deeside)*
Jones, Ieuan *(Ynys Môn)*
Jones, Martyn *(Clwyd S W)*
Kaufman, Rt Hon Gerald
Kilfedder, James
Kinnock, Rt Hon Neil
Kirkwood, Archy
Lambie, David
Lamond, James
Leadbitter, Ted
Leighton, Ron
Lestor, Miss Joan *(Eccles)*
Lewis, Terry
Litherland, Robert
Livingstone, Ken
Livsey, Richard
Lloyd, Tony *(Stretford)*
Lofthouse, Geoffrey
Loyden, Eddie
McAllion, John
McAvoy, Tom
McCartney, Ian
McCusker, Harold
Macdonald, Calum
McKelvey, William
McLeish, Henry
Maclennan, Robert
McNamara, Kevin
McTaggart, Bob
McWilliam, John
Madden, Max
Mahon, Mrs Alice
Marshall, David *(Shettleston)*
Marshall, Jim *(Leicester S)*
Martin, Michael *(Springburn)*
Martlew, Eric
Maxton, John
Meacher, Michael
Meale, Alan
Michael, Alun
Michie, Bill *(Sheffield Heeley)*
Millan, Rt Hon Bruce
Mitchell, Austin *(G't Grimsby)*
Molyneaux, Rt Hon James
Moonie, Dr Lewis
Morley, Elliott
Morris, Rt Hon A *(W'shawe)*
Morris, Rt Hon J *(Aberavon)*
Mowlam, Marjorie
Mullin, Chris
Nellist, Dave
Oakes, Rt Hon Gordon
O'Brien, William
Orme, Rt Hon Stanley
Patchett, Terry
Pendry, Tom
Pike, Peter
Powell, Ray *(Ogmore)*
Primarolo, Ms Dawn
Quin, Ms Joyce
Radice, Giles
Randall, Stuart
Redmond, Martin
Rees, Rt Hon Merlyn
Reid, John
Richardson, Ms Jo
Roberts, Allan *(Bootle)*
Robertson, George
Robinson, Geoffrey
Rooker, Jeff
Ross, Ernie *(Dundee W)*
Ross, William *(Londonderry E)*
Rowlands, Ted
Ruddock, Ms Joan
Salmond, Alex
Sedgemore, Brian
Sheerman, Barry
Sheldon, Rt Hon Robert
Shore, Rt Hon Peter
Short, Clare
Skinner, Dennis
Smith, Andrew *(Oxford E)*
Smith, C. *(Isl'ton & F'bury)*
Smith, Rt Hon J. *(Monk'ds E)*
Smyth, Rev Martin *(Belfast S)*
Snape, Peter
Soley, Clive
Spearing, Nigel
Steel, Rt Hon David
Steinberg, Gerald
Stott, Roger
Strang, Gavin
Straw, Jack
Taylor, Mrs Ann *(Dewsbury)*
Taylor, Matthew *(Truro)*
Thomas, Dafydd Elis
Thompson, Jack *(Wansbeck)*
Turner, Dennis
Vaz, Keith
Walker, A. Cecil *(Belfast N)*
Wall, Pat
Wallace, James
Walley, Ms Joan
Wardell, Gareth *(Gower)*
Wareing, Robert N.
Welsh, Andrew *(Angus E)*
Welsh, Michael *(Doncaster N)*
Wigley, Dafydd
Williams, Rt Hon A. J.
Williams, Alan W. *(Carm'then)*
Wilson, Brian
Winnick, David
Wise, Mrs Audrey
Worthington, Anthony
Young, David *(Bolton SE)*

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. Frank Cook and
Mr. Allen McKay.

Question accordingly agreed to.

MR. SPEAKER *forthwith declared the main Question, a amended, to be agreed to.*

Resolved,

That this House applauds the achievement of the Nation Health Service in providing a record level of patient care recognises that this achievement rests on the substantia additional funds from the taxpayer which a strong econom has made possible and which has supported the dedicate work of the National Health Service staff; and welcomes th Government's continued commitment to the most effectiv use of all the Service's growing resources to bring about further rise in the standard of health care, both in hospital and in the community.

Rating and Valuation (Scotland)

10.27 pm

Mr. Archy Kirkwood (Roxburgh and Berwickshire): I beg to move,

That an humble Address be presented to Her Majesty, praying that the Non-Domestic Rates and Community Charges (Timetable) (Scotland) Regulations 1987 (S.I., 1987, No. 2167), dated 15th December 1987, a copy of which was laid before this House on 17th December, be annulled.

With your permission, Mr. Speaker, I understand that it will be convenient for the House to deal with the second motion:

That an humble Address be presented to Her Majesty, praying that the Abolition of Domestic Rates (Domestic and Part Residential Subjects) (Scotland) Regulations 1987 (S.I., 1987, No. 2179), dated 16th December 1987, a copy of which was laid before this House on 18th December, be annulled.

The first statutory instrument deals with the timetable for the implementation of the poll tax and the second deals with domestic and part residential subjects. Because the abolition of the rating system does not extend to non-domestic rates, the valuation roll will have to be maintained for non-domestic premises. The regulations dealing with residential and part residential subjects address that problem.

The regulations are technical and fairly detailed. I confess that I had some difficulty making sense of the regulations on domestic and part residential subjects. It is perverse of the parliamentary draftsmen to produce regulations of this complexity. It is difficult to make sense of them. I am sure it must have been possible to use plainer English to explain what the regulations were setting out to do. The regulations are the first of their kind to be discussed on the Floor of the House, and it is in the interests of all hon. Members that the regulations to implement the community charge provisions are fully discussed, because, although they are detailed and technical, they are very important. There are no fewer than 70 matters in the primary legislation to be discussed and dealt with by way of regulations, and these are the first two sets—dealing with domestic and part residential subjects and the timetable dates for the enactment provisions.

There are a number of major regulations still outstanding. We have not yet even seen them in draft form. They include statutory instruments to deal with the question of how students are to be provided for under the community charge, registration and appeals, although we have seen a draft regulation on that, the collection procedures, the revenue support grant and the vital matter of the rebate system.

With regard to what we have been able to see and the extent of the preparations that the Government have made for the regulations and draft regulations, there is a fear that the Government will not be able legally to collect the charge on 1 April 1989.

Mr. John Home Robertson (East Lothian): That may be a good thing.

Mr. Kirkwood: Even if they are able to collect the charge, they may simply be pushing the hassle, confusion and chaos further down the line into the hands of local authorities, because, although the regulations may be in place, the Government are still unable to give local authorities and registration officers and those organising the appeal systems that must be put behin and secondary legislation a proper chance the system in a sensible and thought-out m

The reality of the background to these fi is that the Government are not at this s organised to implement the charge sensibly.

As I have already said, the abolition system does not extend to non-domestic valuation roll will have to be maintained for or commercial premises. Paragraphs 3 a Abolition of Domestic Rates (Domesti Residential Subjects) (Scotland) Regula exactly what will stay on the valuation therefore liable for non-domestic rates, and other hand, will be deleted from it, and therefore, liable for the poll tax.

In the main, the purpose of the dome residential subjects regulations is fairly str They remove from the roll private car ports, g and ancillary buildings to sheltered accomm a non-domestic basis, caravans and huts that as primary residences for the whole year are the valuation roll.

There are four or five questions to which the Minister to address his mind. First—I he is familiar with this point, because it was Scottish Council for Single Homeless—is th definitions. The view that is taken by those these matters closely north of the borde opportunity has been missed to revise comp host of definitions included in the regulation from the primary legislation on the commun . It is important to recognise that these provided an opportunity to update definition current thinking and practice. For exam regulations definitions of the words "h "residential care home" serve to reinforce the individual should be treated differently just b she happens to live in a certain category of tion by choice or necessity. The logic behind legislation is that when exemptions and ex being considered, the decision should be b individual's present circumstances rather tha property in which he or she lives.

It is surprising to hear the Department's new definitions had been adopted and this had been taken to clarify these matters an thinking up to date, it would have served matters. The evidence is to the contrary. T Development Department, the Housing Corp other authorities have begun to move traditional, old-fashioned definitions in their d and guidance to local authorities an associations.

Let me give the Minister an example of results. Under the definitions in the regulatio the best-supported accommodation provided associations would be defined as "hostels". W many hostels are well run and do a good jo that definition links accommodation schemes housing associations with the image of the ver of hostel. Similarly, community homes, satell ted, core and cluster housing could be classe I am not sure whether that is a sensible way and I believe that an important opportunity been missed.

The Minister will also be aware that a "residential care home" as defined in the regulations could be so small as to provide home for only two people. Indeed, I have had examples of this kind in my constituency. Such residents would be exempt from the poll tax under the existing regulations. I believe that that makes a mockery of the care in the community concept, because those residents will be treated differently, despite the fact that they are encouraged to be full, ordinary members of the community.

I seek an assurance from the Minister that we will have a proper and correct assessment of properties. The Minister should give us the commitment that guidance instructions will be given to registration officers to examine the individual circumstances of premises and residents to ensure that the recorded valuation will in fact be "non-domestic". Indeed, the officers should not necessarily assume that the existing recorded valuation is always correct. Blanket decisions about categories of properties should not be made given the variation in valuation and rating practices. The Minister will be aware that there is a widely different and inconsistent approach to discretionary rates relief taken in Scotland within the different regional areas. It is not good enough if the registration officers simply accept the definitions and classifications that have served the rating system in the past.

There is also much concern regarding communal areas in sheltered housing. I am sure that the Minister is aware of that concern because the Scottish Council for Single Homeless has also raised the matter with the Scottish Office. We recognise that the regulations have been changed from the earlier draft to ensure that common rooms in sheltered housing developments for the elderly are excluded from rates, and that is welcome. However, regulation 31*(c)* specifies that the provision applies only to sheltered housing for the elderly.

It is not clear whether all other types of sheltered homes and schemes, for example for the mentally handicapped, are covered by legislation such as the Rating (Disabled Persons) Act 1978. I believe that the whole question of shared facilities and other concepts related to sheltered housing should not simply refer to physical design features. I believe that the facilities could include a shared support worker. I believe that those matters should be clarified. Where communal areas are rated separately, residents would have to pay both the poll tax and the rates for that area.

Another concern that merits consideration is the question of live-in staff in residential accommodation. [HON. MEMBERS: "Oh!"] I am not surprised that this matter was anticipated, because the Labour party has followed it carefully. If the Oppostion start teasing me about what I may or may not be doing this evening, I may start teasing them about what they did or did not do to get this debate. *[Interruption.]* I expected the frisson of antipathy that is coming from the Labour Front Bench.

Mr. Home Robertson: Is the hon. Gentleman going to speak to the hon. Member for Caithness and Sutherland (Mr. Maclennan)?

Mr. Kirkwood: Do not tempt me.

The live-in staff in residential accommodation will be expected to pay the personal community charge. In certain circumstances that would be fairly simple to administ Many buildings have a separate warden's flat or house that flat or house would not be included in the rate value of the residential establishment. However, mat will be much more complicated in cases where one or staff share a house with two or three people with spe needs. Assessors should use objective criteria determining what proportion of the rateable value sho be deducted from the total when certain facilities shared. It would help if the Minister would clarify matter.

There is a real worry about the impact of regulations on voluntary organisations and chari which have enjoyed relief under the rating system. new provisions will have a serious effect on them. So voluntary or charitable institutions that benefit fr exemptions under the rating system will get clobbe under the poll tax because they will be expected to the community charge for each of their workers. T will significantly increase the costs of some charities run charitable homes to look after people who mentally handicapped or mentally ill. That runs cou to the Government's stated policy of trying to swi from the state to the voluntary sector and from tax charitable donations, which is part of the Governme political ambition. Many small charities doing v valuable work may be forced out of business by the ex on-cost of paying the community charge for memb of staff.

On the timetable provisions, the Minister owes House and local authorities an assurance that, if he is bring forward the timetable for the setting of the dates which they must achieve targets—for example, the d by which they must issue bills to enable people to pay community charge in 12 monthly instalments — Department will meet its own targets in time to allow th to meet those deadlines. The local authorities and rat authorities that collect and enforce the charge depend many decisions and announcements made by Minister's Department. Therefore, it is essential that assures us that, if the process is to be brought forward five weeks, he will ensure that his Department's work done in time to allow local authorities to make necessary decisions in proper order.

These are technical matters and it takes a lot of read and careful study to understand them. I have tried simplify them as much as I can. I think that the Minis will accept that the regulations are important. They are first of many, and it is right for the House to spend an ho making sure that the Government understand the fe and apprehensions of those north of the border who involved in these matters before the Minister gives Government's view on the operation of the regulation

10.43 pm

Mr. Allan Stewart (Eastwood): I agree with the h Member for Roxburgh and Berwickshire (Mr. Kirkwoo that these are important regulations, and I have no dou that my hon. Friend the Minister will answer the h Gentleman's detailed questions. The hon. Gentleman h undoubtedly done a considerable amount of research.

The prayer carries the names of a number of h Members, headed by the right hon. Member Tweeddale, Ettrick and Lauderdale (Mr. Steel), the lea of the Liberal party, and the hon. Member for Caithn and Sutherland (Mr. Maclennan), who were both pres

[Mr. Allan Stewart]

for the last vote. It is a disgrace and an insult to the people of Scotland that hon. Members should put their names at the top of a prayer on a matter of importance to the people of Scotland and, having been present for our proceedings before this debate, should not even have the courtesy to stay for a few minutes to listen to the hon. Member for Roxburgh and Berwickshire.

It would have been of assistance for the House to know whether this was one subject on which the Social Democratic party and the Liberal party agreed. I hope that this short debate will also enable the Scottish National party and the Labour party—in addition to answering detailed questions about the regulations—to make their policies clear on the implementation of the community charge.

The House may have been puzzled to see early-day motion 503, in the names of several Opposition Members, which states:

"That this House condemns the Scottish National Party for calling for a campaign of non-registration for, and non-payment of, the poll tax".

That has been amended by the hon. Members for Angus, East (Mr. Welsh) and for Banff and Buchan (Mr. Salmond). I think that is the first time that two thirds of the parliamentary representatives of that party have condemned that party on the Order Paper.

As I understood it, that was the policy of the Labour party, or at least of a substantial number of people who are leading spokesmen of that party, such as Mr. Michael Conochie, and others. However, I appreciate that that might not necessarily be the policy of the hon. Member for Glasgow, Garscadden (Mr. Dewar). This debate therefore gives him an opportunity to clarify his position.

Turning in detail to the regulations, I should like to ask the Minister a question about regulation 4 of statutory instrument No. 145, which specifies the date by which district councils must give certain information to regional councils. What will happen if, regrettably, they do not? My hon. Friend will be aware that several Labour-controlled district councils have intimated that they will not co-operate with the community charge legislation. One hopes that common sense will eventually prevail in those district councils, but that may not be the case. What happens if they do not co-operate with these and other regulations? I put forward the fairly simple suggestion that my hon. Friend should ensure that they do not receive revenue from the community charge unless they co-operate. The revenue could be held by the regional councils until they do co-operate. That seems a fairly simple financial incentive, which would doubtless be effective.

Finally, I welcome the regulations for another reason. They show that, despite some disinformation to the contrary, the programme for the implementation of the community charge in Scotland is on target. There is no doubt that many people are trying to confuse the people of Scotland by suggesting that in some way or another the community charge will not replace domestic rates on the timetable as laid down in the Abolition of Domestic Rates Etc. (Scotland) Act 1987. As the House knows, it is of considerable importance to the Eastwood constituency that the domestic rating system is abolished and replaced by the community charge. I congratulate my hon. Friend on sticking to the timetable.

10.48 pm

Mr. Donald Dewar (Glasgow, Gars considering two instruments tonight wh poll tax. That gives them a certain reflected notoriety. They are highly techn matters of substance.

The first is the timetable for imple perhaps a reminder of the complexity of that lies behind what the Government al a simple concept—a flat-rate personal to forget the joys of the water rate, t sewage rate—the collective standard a tax—all of which will remain to pl create administrative difficulties. When State is dead and gone—I am talki political death—few will shower b memory.

It is a difficult first year for local go timetable is to be held to, a great deal of crammed into a very short space of tim that famous exercise that takes us from do and relentlessly, through the streets of understand, due to start on 1 April, and by 1 October. It is a bit difficult to kno work, because we have not the necessar which the details are laid out—which coming from a Government who are alwa the need to make haste. What we do kn that ratepayers and taxpayers are being considerable additional burdens as they computers and organise all the paraphern Oppression, I fear, is built into the very

The order lays down that poll tax bill 31 March in any year. That will start a ma the like of which we have seldom seen in I believe, the report by the Chartered In Finance and Accountancy that suggested was organised by the normal instalment mean some 47 million bills anually being that is not too inelegant a phrase—by th machine.

I recognise that there will be a lengthe this ridiculous tax is forced through. Peop instalments, rather than the 10 that are under the rating system. There seems litt dates that have been set out. If mishap occur, or, indeed, if it is not possible to g time, the whole system will be in real dif

I am a little curious about one point. W that bills must be out by 31 March: the here and deadlines there for unfortunat ment. There are, however, few signs of d Secretary of State, I gather, for examp declined a pressing invitation to set a dead by which he must produce the rate settlement—which, after all, is an essentia for those who must calculate the poll tax. Secretary of State seems to be takin "Prussian corporal" approach to the activities of local government, while rema himself. That, I fear, is all too typical.

The second instrument is, perhaps, mo is certainly more recherché. A fine administrative nit-picking, it will delight substantial number of barrack-room law

usually be found in parliamentary or other company. Indeed, when I come to think of it, not just barrack-room lawyers, but professional lawyers as well will obtain considerable entertainment from the prospects.

I thought that the hon. Member for Roxburgh and Berwickshire (Mr. Kirkwood) handled the complexities remarkably smoothly; however, it may be that in recent days he has had plenty of experience of obscure and Delphic documents, and I have some sympathy with him. My fear is that people will be invited to plunge into a jungle—a jungle in which many an administrator will disappear without trace.

Let me say in passing that I see with a certain sadness that all the work about which we heard — all the arguments about the definitions of a bicycle, and whether four wheels were good but two wheels were better—has come to naught. There has been a masterly compromise: we need not decide on the number of wheels, because in the regulations the bicycle has become a cycle. I suppose that that shows a certain amount of mental agility. Indeed, it is probably the most useful thing that the Minister of State has done in the past three months.

In any event, I predict that the regulations will be an outing for the vexatious litigant. Some points have already been raised by the hon. Member for Roxburgh and Berwickshire. He was using, as I have used, some very useful briefing material that came from COSLA and from the Scottish Council for Single Homeless. It points to many of the difficulties. They are marginal difficulties. Many people may not bother to chase up these points; they will shrug their shoulders and accept the broad brush approach. But if I remember the obsessive interest in rating law that has always been shown by the most unlikely people, I suspect that that is an unsafe assumption.

It is perfectly straightforward that a garage which is detached from a domestic property, a lock-up perhaps some distance away, may still be treated as domestic and therefore outside the rating system when it is merely used to house the family car or the legendary cycle. But without expending much ingenuity, one can think of many difficult halfway—I was about to say "houses" but I suppose a better word would be "garages". Let us say that it is used, for example, for a taxi or to garage a delivery van. I know many people who have a vehicle which they use at their work to deliver goods; then they take it home and run it into the family garage at the end of the working day. Let us assume that a driving instructor uses the family car on a part-time basis for his trade and garages it in a detached lock-up garage. Is that part of the domestic hereditament, or is it commercial, in which case it would remain in the rating system and ought to be rated? I do not know whether there will be a great deal of litigation on such questions, but the possibilities are almost endless.

Then we have the whole question of the huts, the bothies and the doocots which the House will remember remain commercial properties, which are not considered to be domestic and which are therefore rated. In paragraph 4 *(c)* of the abolition regulations, caravans are not to be classed as domestic and within the ambit of the poll tax if they are

"not allowed to be used for human habitation throughout the whole year".

I am not sure what "throughout the whole year" means. What happens if the caravan is used throughout the whole year even if it is not technically allowed to be so used? At that point, does the caravan become domestic and to poll tax? Perhaps the Minister could say a wo whether caravans will be rateable properties.

Mr. Geoffrey Dickens (Littleborough Saddleworth): I understood that the local authori have control over the rating of caravans in its area if a caravan was used only for holidays, weekend on, it could be charged up to two whole co charges. The likelihood is that it would be community charge. Clearly, if somebody is li whole year in a caravan, that is his home and it i for the community charge to be levied. That seems to me.

Mr. Dewar: I have every sympathy with t Member. His confusion on this occasion understandable than it is on others. If he reads pa 4 of the abolition regulations he will see that cara not treated as a homogeneous mass but that there species of caravan in the world of the poll tax. It is sometimes to know what one is looking at. One a box upon wheels. Would the hon. Gentleman k difference between caravans which are on a fixed on which the dwellers will have to pay a poll caravans accepted under regulation 4, which

"in accordance with any licence or planning permiss are not allowed to be used for human habitation thr the whole year"?

If a person lives in one of those, he is not subjec poll tax, but presumably the caravan is liable for

So the song goes on endlessly. It will be nightmare from which you, Mr. Deputy Speake would run away and pass by on the other side, b lived in such a caravan we would have problems. T matter illustrates the problems which will be shortly to the constituency of the hon. Mem Littleborough and Saddleworth (Mr. Dickens) if not do something about it in the course of the legislation.

I also draw the attention of the House to the p of communal dwellings, which are rated and wh within the domestic sector and not rated. Th Member for Roxburgh and Berwickshire very fair attention to some problems, and I have much sy with the points that were made originally by the S Council for Single Homeless about hostels, lodging and refuges. They will be liable to the community There is also a plethora of other types of residential that will be classed for rating purposes.

Mr. Alistair Darling (Edinburgh, Central): I whether, in considering this dog's breakfast of an my hon. Friend will speculate on what are subst different facilities when considering sheltered h premises? Will he not agree with me that thi breakfast legislation will benefit only lawyers? Perh right hon. and learned Secretary of State for Scotla the hon. and perhaps not quite so learned Mem Edinburgh, West (Lord James Douglas-Hamilto anticipating a return to practice in 1990 or 1991, wh will have to get to grips with this legislation.

Mr. Dewar: In the presence of learned counsel, I not disagree with any of those propositions. It is point that there are great problems with definition, position will be confused and ambiguous at times

[Mr. Dewar]

I shall remind the House of what was said by the Scottish Council for Single Homeless, which has much experience. In its view, the regulations

"will lead to distress for individual payees, more appeals to the courts, greater difficulty in implementing the legislation and inevitable amendments to the regulations, and possibly the Act in the very near future, at considerable expense and bureaucratic hassle for all concerned."

That is an excellent phrase that we might take into the parliamentary vocabulary—"bureaucratic hassle". The case has been well made out.

Regulation 3(1)*(c)* deals with communal sheltered houses, and lists a series of sheltered houses with communal facilities such as a lounge or dining facility used in common; they will not be rated, but the occupants will pay a poll tax on the dwelling house part of the complex. That is sensible and is welcomed by everyone. But the point has been made, and I want to stress it—the hon. Member for Roxburgh and Berwickshire mentioned it in passing—that the concession is tied, or appears to be tied, to sheltered housing premises for the elderly.

There is also sheltered housing for the mentally handicapped. In my constituency, there is a special complex of scatter flats for the young single homeless. It is a series of individual dwellings with communal lounges and social facilities attached. If one takes the restriction to sheltered housing to refer to the elderly, one might well envisage a situation where other groups pay poll tax individually as occupants of the properties and are also responsible on some basis for the rates levied on the common parts.

Paragraph 3(1)*(d)* provides that staff houses attached to residential accommodation are to be treated as domestic premises, and the inmate will pay a poll tax. The staff house will not be rated in the same way as the rest of the premises. That is simple enough in relation to a warden's flat where the warden will pay poll tax in the way that I have described. It is self-evidently complicated, and perhaps on the margins of the debate, but it might become important.

What happens when a group of, say, handicapped people is living communally with staff who are helping them and giving them support—living in a room but sharing their communal facilities? There might be a kitchen that clearly has to be rated because it is part of a residential home that is regarded as being outwith the poll tax system. The warden, who is paying a poll tax, uses that kitchen. Will the kitchen's rateable value be reduced to take account of the use of that kitchen by the warden? How will that apportionment be made, and what criteria will be applied? No doubt the Minister will be glad to comment on that kind of important point when he sums up.

I have been dealing with some detailed points, but sometimes principles of importance lurk behind even detailed points. We are talking about homes for the elderly—nursing homes—and the fact that these are going to be rated under the new system. What has come out of that is the much commented on, and rightly commented on, extraordinary distortion whereby, if an elderly person is living at home, he or she will pay the poll tax, while if he or she is living in a nursing home or a home for the elderly, he or she will not have to pay the poll tax.

The present system is neutral. There is no penalty for offering shelter and succour. But now we are building a disincentive into the system. I would n suggesting that that disincentive is like who has a feeling of duty towards an el that duty, but it means that the re financial reason for hesitating. The fa to bear an additional financial burden t to pay under the rating system. Th consequence that cannot be easily shru

I am aware that there has been corr issue. I have here a letter from the Sc 18 December 1987, from a Mr. Muir R the Convention of Scottish Local A with exemptions, he says that any other present flat-rate approach

"would weaken the concept of the com personal tax levied on all adults over t justification for exempting residents residential care homes, and hostels prov level of care is that they are by reason mental frailty unable to take an activ community, to the extent that the argume personal community charge as a means accountability does not apply."

But exactly the same sort of people to go into a residential home but are b home, with exactly the same degree of same mental and physical difficulties, asked to pay the poll tax. It does seem a quite miserable anomaly, and one of should not be proud.

We have built into the system, as the knows, for example, a method of ce severely mentally handicapped. I do n many of us like it, but at least there is t when a doctor is prepared to certify that exists in regard to his patient. I would that it would be beyond the bounds of p that to those who are frail, who have and are being maintained, often at e sacrifice, by their families. *[Interruptio*

My hon. Friend the Member for Ja says that that is not a good road to go al prepared to have a debate, but I think th with me that, whether or not that is the ought to be found. On that I think the unanimity. The present anomaly, wh asked to pay because they remain w although they may be physically in the those who are in a home and have been e unsatisfactory.

I will leave it there, because one o Members will obviously wish to speak. is an unpleasant series of regulations. unjust and unacceptable. It is part of implementation of the poll tax, which w high-cost, totally unwanted tax. In the l Secretary of State has been saying a gr virtues of listening to public opinion. H in education he listened to the condemnation and rightly—he makes abandoned most of the plans that he ha for discussion.

I am prepared to give the right h Gentleman credit for that, if he promis precedent. I suggest to him that there condemnation is more universal or widespread than that of the poll tax. We

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pose it root and

branch. We believe that he is becoming increasingly isolated and alienated. In debates such as this, we will continue our attempt at least to make contact with the beleaguered garrison in the Scottish Office. I believe, and I think that I speak for most people in Scotland, that the whole miserable and misguided exercise should be abandoned.

11.9 pm

Mr. Alex Salmond (Banff and Buchan): The statutory instruments should be rejected, not because they are technically incorrect but because they are democratically indefensible.

The debate takes place against the backcloth of the complete rejection of the poll tax by the Scottish population. In the last Parliament the vast majority of Scottish Members of Parliament voted against the legislation. If these statutory instruments are voted on tonight, an even larger majority of Scottish Members of Parliament will vote for their annulment. The issue has been tested in Scotland at the general election and the Conservative party's case in favour of the poll tax was found wanting.

It is possible to implement the poll tax. It is clumsy, convoluted and expensive. It will cost about an additional £25 million, twice the extra resources given to the Scottish Health Service at the end of last year. It is possible to implement the poll tax, but that does not make it right, nor does it make it certain.

There will be a large measure of support for a campaign of non-payment against the poll tax. I was interested in a BBC television programme on Friday night, where, despite the joint efforts of the hon. Member for Stirling (Mr. Forsyth) and the right hon. and learned Member for Monklands, East (Mr. Smith) in arguing for payment of the poll tax, some 50 per cent. of the audience said that they were prepared to consider non-payment.

There will be a campaign of non-payment against the poll tax. The only question is whether it will be organised and effective or isolated and then suppressed.

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Mr. Harold Walker): Order. The hon. Gentleman is taking the debate very wide of the regulations before the House. We cannot have a general debate about the community charge. I hope that he will address his remarks to the regulations.

Mr. Salmond: I was arguing that the statutory instruments should be annulled because democratically they are in question.

Mr. Harry Ewing (Falkirk, East): Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Salmond: I shall extend to the hon. Gentleman the courtesy that he did not extend to me last week in the debate on the Select Committee on Scottish Affairs.

Mr. Ewing: I did not do too badly last week. I extended the courtesy to two or three Members, and that is not bad going on any terms.

The hon. Gentleman is arguing that there should be a campaign of non-payment of the community charge. If that is the advice that he is giving to the people of Scotland, is he committing Gordon Wilson, the chairman of the Scottish National party and a lawyer, and any other lawyer in the SNP, to give their services free of charge to any person in Scotland who accepts the advice to break the law and then finds himself in court?

Mr. Salmond: If the hon. Gentleman serv
legislation, he will find that one of the great pro
it is that there is no defence. The SNP is co
providing a spearhead and leadership.

The question is not whether there will be a
of non-payment; it is whether it will be organi

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. That may w
question, but not for our proceedings at this tim
The hon. Gentleman should address his rem
closely to the regulations.

Mr. Salmond: It is legitimate to argue a
statutory instruments because they are democ
question.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. It is in order
against the statutory instruments as long as
Gentleman confines his arguments to their con
is what he is not doing, and I hope that he wil

Mr. Salmond: I am arguing reasonably
statutory instruments should be annulled becau
democratically in question. I am seeking to buil
to show why they are democratically in qu
Scotland.

To answer the hon. Member for Falkirk,
Ewing), the Scottish National party has argu
campaign must be waged against the poll tax. W
the leadership of such a campaign to COSLA
STUC. The response that we received fro
organisations was less than favourable, al
understand that the STUC's position is now ch

There are two requirements for such a campa
successful. First, it must be organised. There is
to believe——

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. The hon. Gen
paying no regard to the advice that I have offi
Either he must return to the substance of the re
or I must ask him to resume his seat.

Mr. Salmond: Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speak
I close my remarks by saying that the campa
be organised effectively. Secondly, there must b

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. The hon. Gen
clearly completely disregarding my advice.
therefore advise him to resume his seat. I call
Member for Tayside, North (Mr. Walker.)

Mr. Salmond *rose*——

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. The hon. Gentlem
not challenge my ruling. I have instructed him t
his seat, and that he must now do.

Mr. Salmond *rose*——

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. I ordered
Gentleman to resume his seat when I was on m
he does not respond to the instruction that I ha
him, I shall have no alternative but to exer
disciplinary powers.

11.18 pm

Mr. Bill Walker (Tayside, North): The hon.
for Glasgow, Garscadden (Mr. Dewar) properly
House's attention to the fact that barrack-room
might well emerge. What has already happen
today shows that in Scottish affairs we have
barrack-room lawyers but people who are deter
destroy any sort of objective debate—whatever

[Mr. Bill Walker]

The speech by the hon. Member for Roxburgh and Berwickshire (Mr. Kirkwood) was fascinating. The House will certainly feel that we were fortunate that the Liberals were not responsible for drawing up the regulations. The hon. Gentleman said that definitions give them problems. We know that the Liberals and their SDP colleagues—they are noticeable by their absence this evening, and they were absent for yesterday's debate, too—find difficulty in reaching any kind of agreement. The hon. Gentleman's speech clearly showed that if they were ever given the opportunity to bring forward regulations, in the House or anywhere else, they would spend all their time talking about their disagreements and get nowhere.

The regulations are essential. They are part of the programme that we need if we are to move towards getting the community charge into operation by the given date. The hon. Member for Garscadden rightly drew attention to areas that he believed needed to be clarified, which is what the debate should be about.

The hon. Member for Garscadden was right, too, to draw attention to the problems of caravans. Their position must be clarified. But the hon. Gentleman knows only too well that, in the past two Parliaments, we have had to deal with and amend caravan legislation brought in by the Labour Government. Caravans have always caused problems of clear definition in matters of rating.

I welcome the timetable, which clearly shows by what date and by whom things must be done. It will make it possible for local authorities to plan properly and meet the deadlines. No one has ever suggested that the transition from the rates to the community charge would be easy. Substantial changes such as this are never easy. Therefore, it is right to include the timetable in the regulations.

I welcome the regulations, because the community charge will give the country a real opportunity, based on the regulations and the timetable, to introduce a measure that will be seen to be fair, just and preferable for Scotland.

11.20 pm

The Minister of State, Scottish Office (Mr. Ian Lang): We are all in the debt of the Liberal party for initiating the debate. It is appropriate that Liberal Members should take such a close interest in praying at a time such as this. Of course, I had hoped that they might favour us by revealing a policy. I recall that, throughout the consideration of the Bill in Committee — the hon. Member for Glasgow, Cathcart (Mr. Maxton) will remember this vividly—in 125 hours the hon. Member for Caithness and Sutherland (Mr. Maclennan), who is not in his place, utterly failed to deliver even the tiniest nuance of what his policies would be. He said that he could do business with me. That was a greater compliment than I knew at the time. He has now revealed that he can do business with almost nobody else.

It has been an interesting debate, if only to reveal the fact that the hon. Member for Banff and Buchan (Mr. Salmond), who wants the people of Scotland to break the law on the community charge, is not prepared to contemplate breaking the laws of the House.

The regulations are an important although essentially technical part of the process of implementing the community charge in Scotland. As the hon. Member for Roxburgh and Berwickshire (Mr. Kirkwood) said, they are complicated. I shall try to simplify them.

It was indeed a pleasure to hear the subtlety of r that the hon. Member for Glasgow, Garscadden Dewar) deployed on this occasion. It gave us a tantali glimpse of what we might have enjoyed in those 125 h in Committee had he joined us. He mentioned a cer obsession with doocots. I hope that he is contemplating paying his community charge in piece eight. If time permits, I shall try to cover some of the o points that he raised.

It may be helpful if I explain the policy backgroun the two sets of regulations. In doing so, I shall try to with the technical measures that have been raised regard to the domestic and part residential sub regulations, from 1 April next year the valuation roll not include domestic subjects, and rates will no longe paid on them. The basic definition of domestic subje which is set out in section 2 of the Abolition of Dome Rates Etc. (Scotland) Act 1987, is dwelling houses. Th is provision in that section for additions and exception the definition, and the main purpose of the dome subjects regulations is to set out such additions exceptions in detail.

A particularly important effect of the regulations i provide exemption from liability to pay a perso community charge for residents — other than resid members of staff—of private hospitals, nursing hon residential care homes, and certain hostels providing equivalent level of care. That is achieved by ensuring t the subjects, other than the accommodation used resident staff, remain within the rating system so th under section 8 of the 1987 Act, personal commu charge liability does not arise. The regulations ensure t certain properties, such as beach chalets and holi caravans, remain within the rating system to avoid liabi to the standard community charge.

Many changes were made to the draft regulations in light of responses to the consultation exercise, wh involved bodies such has the Scottish Assess Association, COSLA, the Royal Institution of Charte Surveyors, the Law Society of Scotland, and many oth Most of the changes were of a technical nature. I draw attention of the House to one substantive addition. T regulations, as made, provide for the removal from rat of the communal parts of sheltered housing developmer That point was raised by the hon. Member for Roxbu and Berwickshire. He inquired whether that change wo apply only to sheltered housing for the elderly. That what the representations sought.

That removal was in response to a representation fr the Scottish Federation of Housing Associations. argument was that, if individual sheltered housing un were to be removed from rating because they fell with the category of dwellinghouses, it would be inconsistent leave within rating the communal areas — typica comprising laundries, common rooms, and guest roo — since, for all practical purposes, such ancill accommodation forms an integral part of the everyd living space available to residents for their exclusive u That argument seemed to us to be entirely reasonable, a the regulations now give effect to the point in paragra 1(c) of regulation 3.

Any comparison between the draft of the regulatio and the regulations in the form as now made provid ample evidence that the consultation process was entire genuine.

The regulations are also consistent with the explanations that we gave during the passage of the Abolition of Domestic Rates Etc. (Scotland) Bill last year of the intentions underlying the powers of prescription in clause 2 of the Bill, and also with the commitment that the Government gave that residents of nursing homes, residential care homes and similar establishments were to be exempted from having to pay the personal community charge through the mechanism of leaving such property subject to non-domestic rates.

The provisions of the timetable regulations are also essentially technical.

Mr. Dick Douglas (Dunfermline, West): How can the Minister possibly justify the fact that if somebody is severely mentally handicapped and is in hospital he will be exempt from the personal community charge but that if a similar individual lives in the family home within the community he will have to go through the paraphernalia of vexatious and disturbing information-gathering in order to gain a similar exemption?

Mr. Lang: The hon. Gentleman attempts to clothe his point with an emotional coating by referring to the severely mentally handicapped. That is outwith the regulations. If somebody leaves hospital and returns home, he will be liable to rating.

As I have already said, the provisions of the timetable regulations are essentially technical. Their main importance lies in defining for local authorities the capability which needs to be built into the computer systems they are designing in terms of handling the information necessary for the setting of non-domestic rates and community charges, the issue of demand notices and so on.

The timetable contained in these regulations differs in detail from the corresponding requirements under the rating system. The main reason for this is that the normal method of payment of community charge will be 12 monthly instalments beginning in April each year, rather than the 10 monthly instalments beginning in May by which rates are payable. This means that decisions have to be taken and demand notices issued before the start of the financial year, so the process has to start somewhat earlier.

Our proposals were issued for consultation in mid-September last year. A number of detailed comments were made about relatively minor parts of the timetable, and account has been taken of these in the final version of the regulations.

Mr. John Maxton (Glasgow, Cathcart): I understand what the Minister is saying about the timetable and the programme, but how can local authorities or anybody else decide the billing processes and the computer systems when they have no idea about the particular rebate scheme that will govern the collection system? Does the Minister intend to make an announcement about that in the near future?

Mr. Lang: I assure the hon. Gentleman that we are in no way departing from the critical path for implementation of the regulations and provisions in the Abolition of Domestic Rates Etc. (Scotland) Act 1987. The programme allows plenty of time to deal with all those matters. The hon. Gentleman should bear in mind that the broad thrust of the system will not be so different from the broad thrust of the administration of domestic rates.

The only significant concern expressed related to the proposal in the consultation draft that there should be a cut-off date in March for the issue of demand notices. Some of those consulted were concerned that this requirement would leave insufficient time for the work to be done, bearing in mind that there will be twice as many community charge payers as domestic ratepayers—hence the explanation of the increase in cost to which the hon. Member for Banff and Buchan referred.

In the final version of the regulations, the deadline was put back to 31 March, so that there are now two clear months to issue demand notices after the determination of the non-domestic rate and the community charges. I cannot believe that this provides insufficient time for local authorities to get the job done. We have, as I have already made clear, provided substantial additional resources for local authorities to acquire and install the necessary equipment to handle community charge registration, billing and collection and it is up to authorities to design systems which can meet the requirements of the new system in this as in other respects.

Last night the House debated the Rate Support Grant (Scotland) (No. 3) Order and approved the generous grant settlement for local authorities for 1988-89. During that debate there were calls for the abolition of guidelines and for the abolition of grant penalty—both inventions of previous Labour Governments. The introduction of the community charge will achieve both those objectives. It will introduce a system that will be fairer and that will create greater accountability between local authorities and the residents in their areas. It will force local authorities into the open and make them justify their spending levels to the electors who will have to pay them. That will create a new realism and responsibility, and that cannot come too soon.

We are well down the path, through the process of consultation, towards the smooth, orderly implementation of the community charge, on target and on time. The local authorities are quietly and competently getting on with the job of preparation. These two sets of regulations are two more milestones along that road, and I commend them to the House.

Mr. Kirkwood: I judge that the House would like to vote on this issue. I move therefore that the two instruments that we have been discussing be annulled, and I invite hon. Members to vote accordingly.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. The House can vote on only one, and that is the first one on the Order Paper.

Question put:—

The House divided: Ayes 218, Noes 271.

Division No. 146] **[11.30 pm**

AYES

Abbott, Ms Diane	Bermingham, Gerald
Adams, Allen *(Paisley N)*	Bidwell, Sydney
Allen, Graham	Blair, Tony
Archer, Rt Hon Peter	Blunkett, David
Armstrong, Ms Hilary	Boyes, Roland
Ashdown, Paddy	Bradley, Keith
Ashley, Rt Hon Jack	Bray, Dr Jeremy
Ashton, Joe	Brown, Gordon *(D'mline E)*
Banks, Tony *(Newham NW)*	Brown, Nicholas *(Newcastle E)*
Barnes, Harry *(Derbyshire NE)*	Brown, Ron *(Edinburgh Leith)*
Barron, Kevin	Buchan, Norman
Battle, John	Buckley, George
Beckett, Margaret	Caborn, Richard
Beith, A. J.	Callaghan, Jim
Bell, Stuart	Campbell, Ron *(Blyth Valley)*
Benn, Rt Hon Tony	Campbell-Savours, D. N.
Bennett, A. F. *(D'nt'n & R'dish)*	Canavan, Dennis

Carlile, Alex *(Mont'g)*
Clark, Dr David *(S Shields)*
Clarke, Tom *(Monklands W)*
Clay, Bob
Clelland, David
Clwyd, Mrs Ann
Cohen, Harry
Coleman, Donald
Cook, Frank *(Stockton N)*
Cook, Robin *(Livingston)*
Corbett, Robin
Corbyn, Jeremy
Cousins, Jim
Cox, Tom
Crowther, Stan
Cryer, Bob
Cummings, J.
Cunliffe, Lawrence
Dalyell, Tam
Darling, Alastair
Davies, Rt Hon Denzil *(Llanelli)*
Davies, Ron *(Caerphilly)*
Davis, Terry *(B'ham Hodge H'l)*
Dewar, Donald
Dixon, Don
Dobson, Frank
Doran, Frank
Douglas, Dick
Dunnachie, James
Dunwoody, Hon Mrs Gwyneth
Eadie, Alexander
Eastham, Ken
Evans, John *(St Helens N)*
Ewing, Harry *(Falkirk E)*
Ewing, Mrs Margaret *(Moray)*
Fatchett, Derek
Faulds, Andrew
Fearn, Ronald
Field, Frank *(Birkenhead)*
Fields, Terry *(L'pool B G'n)*
Fisher, Mark
Flannery, Martin
Foot, Rt Hon Michael
Foster, Derek
Foulkes, George
Fraser, John
Fyfe, Mrs Maria
Galbraith, Samuel
Galloway, George
Garrett, John *(Norwich South)*
Garrett, Ted *(Wallsend)*
George, Bruce
Gilbert, Rt Hon Dr John
Godman, Dr Norman A.
Golding, Mrs Llin
Gordon, Ms Mildred
Grant, Bernie *(Tottenham)*
Griffiths, Nigel *(Edinburgh S)*
Griffiths, Win *(Bridgend)*
Grocott, Bruce
Hardy, Peter
Harman, Ms Harriet
Hattersley, Rt Hon Roy
Haynes, Frank
Healey, Rt Hon Denis
Heffer, Eric S.
Hinchliffe, David
Hogg, N. *(C'nauld & Kilsyth)*
Holland, Stuart
Home Robertson, John
Howarth, George *(Knowsley N)*
Howells, Geraint
Hoyle, Doug
Hughes, John *(Coventry NE)*
Hughes, Robert *(Aberdeen N)*
Hughes, Roy *(Newport E)*
Hughes, Simon *(Southwark)*
Illsley, Eric
Ingram, Adam
Janner, Greville
John, Brynmor
Johnston, Sir Russell
Jones, Barry *(Alyn & Deeside)*
Jones, Martyn *(Clwyd S W)*
Kaufman, Rt Hon Gerald
Kennedy, Charles
Kirkwood, Archy
Lambie, David
Lamond, James
Leadbitter, Ted
Leighton, Ron
Lestor, Miss Joan *(Eccles)*
Lewis, Terry
Litherland, Robert
Livingstone, Ken
Livsey, Richard
Lloyd, Tony *(Stretford)*
Lofthouse, Geoffrey
Loyden, Eddie
McAllion, John
McAvoy, Tom
McCartney, Ian
Macdonald, Calum
McKay, Allen *(Penistone)*
McKelvey, William
McLeish, Henry
McNamara, Kevin
McTaggart, Bob
McWilliam, John
Madden, Max
Mahon, Mrs Alice
Marshall, David *(Shettleston)*
Marshall, Jim *(Leicester S)*
Martin, Michael *(Springburn)*
Martlew, Eric
Maxton, John
Meacher, Michael
Michael, Alun
Michie, Bill *(Sheffield Heeley)*
Millan, Rt Hon Bruce
Mitchell, Austin *(G't Grimsby)*
Moonie, Dr Lewis
Morley, Elliott
Morris, Rt Hon A *(W'shawe)*
Morris, Rt Hon J *(Aberavon)*
Mowlam, Marjorie
Mullin, Chris
Nellist, Dave
Oakes, Rt Hon Gordon
O'Brien, William
Orme, Rt Hon Stanley
Patchett, Terry
Pendry, Tom
Pike, Peter
Powell, Ray *(Ogmore)*
Primarolo, Ms Dawn
Quin, Ms Joyce
Radice, Giles
Randall, Stuart
Redmond, Martin
Rees, Rt Hon Merlyn
Reid, John
Richardson, Ms Jo
Roberts, Allan *(Bootle)*
Robertson, George
Robinson, Geoffrey
Rooker, Jeff
Ross, Ernie *(Dundee W)*
Rowlands, Ted
Ruddock, Ms Joan
Salmond, Alex
Sedgemore, Brian
Shore, Rt Hon Peter
Short, Clare
Skinner, Dennis
Smith, Andrew *(Oxford E)*
Smith, C. *(Isl'ton & F'bury)*
Smith, Rt Hon J. *(Monk'ds E)*
Snape, Peter
Soley, Clive
Spearing, Nigel
Steinberg, Gerald
Stott, Roger
Strang, Gavin
Straw, Jack
Taylor, Mrs Ann *(Dewsbury)*
Taylor, Matthew *(Truro)*
Thomas, Dafydd Elis
Thompson, Jack *(Wansbeck)*
Turner, Dennis
Walker, A. Cecil *(Belfast N)*
Wall, Pat
Walley, Ms Joan
Wardell, Gareth *(Gower)*
Wareing, Robert N.
Welsh, Andrew *(Angus E)*
Welsh, Michael *(Doncas*
Williams, Rt Hon A. J.
Williams, Alan W. *(Carm*
Wilson, Brian
Winnick, David
Wise, Mrs Audrey
Worthington, Anthony
Young, David *(Bolton SE*

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. James Wallace and
Mr. Malcolm Bruce.

NOES

Aitken, Jonathan
Alexander, Richard
Alison, Rt Hon Michael
Allason, Rupert
Amos, Alan
Arbuthnot, James
Arnold, Tom *(Hazel Grove)*
Ashby, David
Aspinwall, Jack
Atkins, Robert
Atkinson, David
Baker, Rt Hon K. *(Mole Valley)*
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Baldry, Tony
Batiste, Spencer
Beaumont-Dark, Anthony
Bellingham, Henry
Bendall, Vivian
Bennett, Nicholas *(Pembroke)*
Bevan, David Gilroy
Blackburn, Dr John G.
Blaker, Rt Hon Sir Peter
Body, Sir Richard
Bonsor, Sir Nicholas
Boscawen, Hon Robert
Boswell, Tim
Bottomley, Peter
Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Bowden, A *(Brighton K'pto'n)*
Bowden, Gerald *(Dulwich)*
Bowis, John
Boyson, Rt Hon Dr Sir Rhodes
Brandon-Bravo, Martin
Brazier, Julian
Bright, Graham
Brittan, Rt Hon Leon
Brooke, Rt Hon Peter
Brown, Michael *(Brigg & Cl't's)*
Browne, John *(Winchester)*
Bruce, Ian *(Dorset South)*
Buchanan-Smith, Rt Hon Alick
Buck, Sir Antony
Budgen, Nicholas
Burns, Simon
Burt, Alistair
Butcher, John
Butterfill, John
Carlisle, John, *(Luton N)*
Carlisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Carrington, Matthew
Carttiss, Michael
Cash, William
Channon, Rt Hon Paul
Chapman, Sydney
Chope, Christopher
Clark, Sir W. *(Croydon S)*
Clarke, Rt Hon K. *(Rushcliffe)*
Colvin, Michael
Conway, Derek
Coombs, Anthony *(Wyre F'rest)*
Coombs, Simon *(Swindon)*
Cope, John
Couchman, James
Cran, James
Curry, David
Davies, Q. *(Stamf'd & Sp*
Davis, David *(Boothferry*
Day, Stephen
Devlin, Tim
Dickens, Geoffrey
Dicks, Terry
Dorrell, Stephen
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord
Dover, Den
Dunn, Bob
Durant, Tony
Eggar, Tim
Emery, Sir Peter
Evans, David *(Welwyn H*
Evennett, David
Fallon, Michael
Favell, Tony
Fenner, Dame Peggy
Field, Barry *(Isle of Wigh*
Finsberg, Sir Geoffrey
Forman, Nigel
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling*
Forth, Eric
Fowler, Rt Hon Norman
Franks, Cecil
Freeman, Roger
French, Douglas
Fry, Peter
Gale, Roger
Gardiner, George
Garel-Jones, Tristan
Gill, Christopher
Glyn, Dr Alan
Goodlad, Alastair
Goodson-Wickes, Dr Cha
Gorman, Mrs Teresa
Gorst, John
Gow, Ian
Grant, Sir Anthony *(Cam*
Greenway, Harry *(Ealing*
Greenway, John *(Rydale)*
Gregory, Conal
Griffiths, Sir Eldon *(Bury*
Griffiths, Peter *(Portsmou*
Ground, Patrick
Grylls, Michael
Hamilton, Neil *(Tatton)*
Hampson, Dr Keith
Hanley, Jeremy
Hannam, John
Hargreaves, A. *(B'ham H*
Hargreaves, Ken *(Hyndbu*
Harris, David
Haselhurst, Alan
Hawkins, Christopher
Hayes, Jerry
Hayhoe, Rt Hon Sir Barne
Hayward, Robert
Heathcoat-Amory, David
Heddle, John
Heseltine, Rt Hon Michael
Hicks, Mrs Maureen *(Wol*
Hicks, Robert *(Cornwall S*

Higgins, Rt Hon Terence L.
Hill, James
Hind, Kenneth
Hogg, Hon Douglas *(Gr'th'm)*
Holt, Richard
Hordern, Sir Peter
Howard, Michael
Howarth, Alan *(Strat'd-on-A)*
Howarth, G. *(Cannock & B'wd)*
Howell, Ralph *(North Norfolk)*
Hunt, David *(Wirral W)*
Hunt, John *(Ravensbourne)*
Hunter, Andrew
Hurd, Rt Hon Douglas
Irvine, Michael
Jack, Michael
Jackson, Robert
Janman, Timothy
Jessel, Toby
Johnson Smith, Sir Geoffrey
Jones, Gwilym *(Cardiff N)*
Jones, Robert B *(Herts W)*
Kellett-Bowman, Mrs Elaine
Key, Robert
King, Roger *(B'ham N'thfield)*
Kirkhope, Timothy
Knapman, Roger
Knight, Greg *(Derby North)*
Knight, Dame Jill *(Edgbaston)*
Knowles, Michael
Knox, David
Lamont, Rt Hon Norman
Lang, Ian
Latham, Michael
Lawrence, Ivan
Lee, John *(Pendle)*
Leigh, Edward *(Gainsbor'gh)*
Lennox-Boyd, Hon Mark
Lilley, Peter
Lloyd, Sir Ian *(Havant)*
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
Lord, Michael
Luce, Rt Hon Richard
Lyell, Sir Nicholas
Macfarlane, Sir Neil
MacKay, Andrew *(E Berkshire)*
McLoughlin, Patrick
McNair-Wilson, M. *(Newbury)*
McNair-Wilson, P. *(New Forest)*
Madel, David
Mans, Keith
Maples, John
Marland, Paul
Martin, David *(Portsmouth S)*
Mates, Michael
Mawhinney, Dr Brian
Maxwell-Hyslop, Robin
Mayhew, Rt Hon Sir Patrick
Miller, Hal
Mills, Iain
Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)*
Mitchell, David *(Hants NW)*
Moate, Roger
Monro, Sir Hector
Morris, M *(N'hampton S)*
Moss, Malcolm
Neale, Gerrard
Nelson, Anthony
Neubert, Michael
Newton, Rt Hon Tony
Nicholls, Patrick
Nicholson, David *(Taunton)*
Nicholson, Miss E. *(Devon W)*
Onslow, Rt Hon Cranley
Page, Richard
Paice, James
Parkinson, Rt Hon Cecil
Patnick, Irvine
Patten, Chris *(Bath)*
Patten, John *(Oxford W)*
Pawsey, James
Peacock, Mrs Elizabeth
Porter, Barry *(Wirral S)*
Porter, David *(Waveney)*
Portillo, Michael
Price, Sir David
Raffan, Keith
Raison, Rt Hon Timothy
Rathbone, Tim
Redwood, John
Renton, Tim
Rhodes James, Robert
Rhys Williams, Sir Brandon
Riddick, Graham
Ridley, Rt Hon Nicholas
Rifkind, Rt Hon Malcolm
Roberts, Wyn *(Conwy)*
Roe, Mrs Marion
Rossi, Sir Hugh
Rost, Peter
Rowe, Andrew
Rumbold, Mrs Angela
Ryder, Richard
Sackville, Hon Tom
Sainsbury, Hon Tim
Sayeed, Jonathan
Shaw, David *(Dover)*
Shaw, Sir Giles *(Pudsey)*
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Shelton, William *(Streatham)*
Shephard, Mrs G. *(Norfolk SW)*
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Shersby, Michael
Sims, Roger
Skeet, Sir Trevor
Smith, Sir Dudley *(Warwick)*
Smith, Tim *(Beaconsfield)*
Speed, Keith
Speller, Tony
Spicer, Sir Jim *(Dorset W)*
Spicer, Michael *(S Worcs)*
Steen, Anthony
Stern, Michael
Stewart, Allan *(Eastwood)*
Stradling Thomas, Sir John
Summerson, Hugo
Taylor, Ian *(Esher)*
Thorne, Neil
Thurnham, Peter
Tracey, Richard
Trippier, David
Trotter, Neville
Twinn, Dr Ian
Vaughan, Sir Gerard
Waddington, Rt Hon David
Waldegrave, Hon William
Walker, Bill *(T'side North)*
Waller, Gary
Wells, Bowen
Wheeler, John
Widdecombe, Miss Ann
Wiggin, Jerry
Wolfson, Mark

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. David Lightbown and
Mr. David Maclean.

Question accordingly negatived.

PETITIONS

Rating Reform (Scotland)

11.40 pm

Mr. John Home Robertson (East Lothian): I
grateful for the opportunity to present a petition on beh
of my constituents against the Government's threat
impose a poll tax in Scotland. It is appropriate tha
should have the opportunity to do so immediately after
Government have once again used their English major
to force through an instrument associated with th
legislation.

The petition is signed by 457 residents of
neighbourhood of the royal burgh of Haddington whi
is the county town of East Lothian. They recognise th
the crisis in the rating system has been caused by success
Government cuts in rate support grant and the gr
unfairness of a poll tax that is likely to be set at £361
head in East Lothian.

Under such a medieval taxation system, many peo
on modest means will have their local taxation burd
doubled, while prosperous citizens will bene
spectacularly.

The poll tax legislation is unfair, undemocratic a
unworkable. It is an insult to the nation of Scotland a
I wholeheartedly support my constituents in Haddingt
in their petition to the House to repeal this vicio
legislation.

To lie upon the Table.

Birmingham Children's Hospital

Mr. Jeff Rooker (Birmingham, Perry Barr): I, wi
some anger and a good deal of bitterness, present
petition of 2,500 signatures from the patients, parents a
friends of Birmingham children's hospital to draw to t
attention of this honourable House the crisis in treatme
—or lack of it—there.

My constituents know that those children ha
treatable conditions that are not being treated. They s
to the House — they have been refused access to t
Prime Minister — that we should do everything in o
power, which we have not done so far, to suppo
improvements in staff and equipment to make treatme
available for those who need it at the time that they nee
it.

It was with some sadness and bitterness that paren
came to the House yesterday and presented a petition
40,000 signatures to 16 hon. Members who met ther
They expect some answer from the House, and they wil n
take silence from the Government or the House a
longer.

To lie upon the Table.

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Mr. Harold Walker): Before I ca
the next hon. Member to present a petition, it may hel
hon. Members if I remind them of what our manual
procedure says about the presentation of petitions:

"If a Member rises in his place to present a petition, h
must confine himself to a statement of the persons from whos
the petition comes, the number of signatures attached to
and the material allegations contained in it, and to reading th
prayer of the petition."

I hope that hon. Members will bear that in mind.

Mr. Robin Corbett (Birmingham, Erdington): In common with my hon. Friend the Member for Birmingham, Perry Barr (Mr. Rooker), I rise in sadness to present a petition from 2,500 people in Birmingham and the west midlands who are concerned about the lack of facilities at the Birmingham children's hospital that serves the regional needs of the people of the west midlands.

It must be a shame on all of us in the House that parents with children who need treatment at that hospital are denied it. The petitioners say that the Birmingham children's hospital has

insufficient resources to give the treatment required to treatable conditions in young patients from Birmingham and the West Midlands.

The petitioners pray that we will all do all in our power to

support improvement in staff and equipment so as to make treatment available to those who need it at the time they need it.

If the House does nothing else today, I hope that it will respond to this petition.

To lie upon the Table.

Mr. Dennis Turner (Wolverhampton, South-East): I rise to present a petition on behalf of 2,500 people who request that our honourable House should do everything in its power to support improvements in staff and equipment so as to make treatment available at Birmingham children's hospital for those who need it and at the time they need it.

To lie upon the Table.

Mr. Bruce Grocott (The Wrekin): On behalf of 2,500 people from the west midlands, I rise to present a petition on behalf of Birmingham's children's hospital. Although the hospital is called Birmingham children's hospital, I must emphasise that people across the west midlands region are dependent upon the services provided by the hospital.

The petition includes signatories from all parts of my constituency of the Wrekin — people from Hadley, Oakengates, Ketley, Dawley, Madeley, Donnington and Wellington. It also includes people who were represented yesterday by a delegation which came to London, but which was unable to see the Prime Minister. Indeed, many of them had great difficulty in getting access to Downing street.

I present the petition on behalf of the people who are making a simple request, which can be met by the Government, to see that the funds are properly made available for children desperately needing treatment.

To lie upon the Table.

Mr. Peter Snape (West Bromwich, East): I rise to present a petition on behalf of the 2,500 patients and friends of the Birmingham children's hospital.

That hospital provides a service both in Birmingham and to my constituency. The petitioners plead that hon. Members do everything in their power to ensure that patients of the hospital and others in the west midlands have the treatment that they need, when that treatment is needed, carried out by a surgeon who has been treating them at a hospital at which they have been treated and at a time that they feel that treatment is necessary.

The petitioners believe that that right should be extended to patients of the Birmingham children's hospital and to others in the west midlands. Surely it is the duty of hon. Members to represent the pleas of sick people either in our constituencies or in others.

To lie upon the Table.

Ms. Clare Short (Birmingham, Ladywood): I present a petition on behalf of 2,500 people throughout the west midlands who ask th Birmingham children's hospital, which is constituency, but which serves children from thro the region, should have sufficient resources t treatment required for

treatable conditions in young patients from Birmingh the West Midlands.

The hospital is loved and respected by throughout the west midlands because of the qu care that it provides for our children. What is goin the hospital and the harm that is being done to c is an outrage and disgrace that makes people thro the region, of all backgrounds and political persu furious.

The view in Birmingham is that the package t recently been put together by the regional health a to pretend to deal with the problem is too late inadequate. People are not satisfied that children be sent to other hospitals or sent to the private sec want resources for our hospital, so that our child be treated by the doctors who know them and hospital that they love.

To lie upon the Table.

Mr. David Winnick (Walsall, North): I rise on b those in the west midlands who believe that it wrong for children such as Matthew Collier to hav a long time for the urgent operations that they They believe that it is right and proper that ther be far less delay. It is appropriate that this petitio be presented following today's debate on the Health Service and my Adjournment debate last F the difficulties created by the fact that there are ins nurses in the intensive care unit at Birmingham c hospital.

The parents and children who came to Londo the Prime Minister yesterday—but whom she w see—should know that we shall continue to r matter and the problems of the hospital opportunity——

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. I hope that Gentleman will bear in mind what I said to th earlier.

Mr. Winnick: We shall raise the matter opportunity—through debates, questions and — until the children's hospital in Birmingh sufficient resources to prevent delays such as the Matthew Collier had to endure.

To lie upon the Table.

Mr. Anthony Beaumont-Dark (Birmingha Oak): It is not without significance for me that ago next month the Birmingham children's hosp my life. It is good, if sad, to be able to present on behalf of Birmingham children's hospital and who go to it, as I did, for treatment. The petition the hospital has insufficient resources to give the that I had then, which remains necessary to th hope that it will be noted in the circles that ma in Government that I am proud to argue th resources should be made available so that peop cured.

To lie upon the Table.

Mr. Dave Nellist (Coventry, South-East): The House is already aware of the case of my constituent, seven-year-old Adrian Woolford, who has been repeatedly denied heart operations at the Birmingham children's hospital. I am having to present this petition, carrying the signatures of 2,500 citizens of the west midlands, because the Prime Minister refused to meet children and parents and accept it from them herself yesterday. It is about the 90 Adrians in our region who have been denied life-saving operations because of under-funding in the National Health Service.

The petition says:

the Birmingham Children's Hospital has insufficient resources to give the treatment required to treatable conditions in young patients from Birmingham and the West Midlands. Your petitioners pray that your . . . House will do everything in its power to support improvement in staff and equipment so as to make treatment available to those who need it at the time they need it.

It is with anger, weeks after the announcement that £38 million had been spent on the refurbishment of the DHSS headquarters in Whitehall, with its walk-in jacuzzis and crystal chandeliers, that I note that the Birmingham children's hospital has still been given insufficient funds. We need that money for the hospitals that serve our people.

To lie upon the Table.

Mr. John Hughes (Coventry, North East): I rise to present a petition on behalf of 2,500 patients, parents and friends of the Birmingham children's hospital. Unlike the childhood of the petitioners' children, mine was blessed with good health. Like every child, I read my fairy tales. I can recall only one woman as cold as the Prime Minister, who treats lightly the chronic condition of Matthew Mulhall while selfishly demanding instant surgery for her minor complaint. That woman was Hans Andersen's snow queen, whose domain was melted by the warmth of a child's tear. I desperately pray that the warmth of the petitioners' children's innocent tears will have the same effect on the domain of the Commons snow queen.

To lie upon the Table.

Mr. Roy Hattersley (Birmingham, Sparkbrook): I rise to present a humble petition on behalf of 2,500 patients parents and friends of Birmingham children's hospital, calling on this honourable House to take note of the gross inadequacy of resources available to the hospital. It calls on the House to do all in its power to provide sufficient resources to end the suffering and the anguish that the shortage of resources is now causing.

The petitioners are aware of the devoted service that is being rendered to the children of the entire region by the staff who are employed in the Birmingham children's hospital, but they are equally conscious that the hospital is desperately under-staffed and that the nurses, doctors, ancillary staff and all the others who are employed there are unable to meet the demands on their time. The petitioners are particularly conscious of the position in the intensive care unit where there are spaces where there should be beds, and beds vacant that should be occupied by children receiving necessary surgery.

We offer this humble petition in the hope that pressure can be brought on the Government to bring what is no more than justice to those suffering children and to end a desperate need.

To lie upon the Table.

Mrs. Llin Golding (Newcastle-under-Lyme): I rise to present to the House a petition on behalf of 2,500 patients, parents and friends of Birmingham children's hospit wish to bring a simple plea to the House — that death of baby Barber, who lived in my constitue should not have been in vain.

To lie upon the Table.

Ms. Joan Walley (Stoke-on-Trent, North): I rise behalf of 2,500 constituents in the west midlands, man them from north Staffordshire, who pray that this Ho will recognise the need to provide proper resources for Birmingham children's hospital.

I gave my pledge to the parents of Claire Wise th would do everything in my power, as would any par to make sure that those operations and treatments co be available when needed. Therefore, I pray that we s do everything in our power to support improvemen staff and equipment to make treatment available to th who need it at the time they need it.

To lie upon the Table.

Mr. Jack Ashley (Stoke-on-Trent, South): I beg support the petition with one signed by 2,500 people. petition is both a plea and a condemnation. It is a plea more money for the Birmingham heart hospital children. It is a plea for cash for that hospital to pro resources, facilities and treatment. It is a condemnatio the Government for failing to provide that.

The petition is staggering in so far as in 1988 we h to plead for life-saving treatment for children. I there offer the petition because those children are in urgent n of treatment.

To lie upon the Table.

Mr. Mark Fisher (Stoke-on-Trent, Central): I ris present a petition on behalf of 2,500 parents, patients friends of the Birmingham children's hospital, many fr Stoke-on-Trent and north Staffordshire, who are appa by the insufficient resources at that hospital and inability of the hospital to respond to the needs of th children, especially in the cardiac surgery and inten care units. Although the hospital has sufficient surge and theatre time, it is unable to treat the children could be treated in the way that they need because of l of room in the intensive care unit.

The petitioners, my constituents, cannot underst how children like Michelle Knight of Bentilee and J Ball, who is still waiting for heart surgery after weeks weeks in Abbey Hulton, cannot be treated. The peopl Stoke-on-Trent are amazed that the Government can and will not respond to the pleas of those parents, pati and friends of the hospital.

To lie upon the Table.

Mr. Terry Davis (Birmingham, Hodge Hill): I too w to present a petition from 2,500 parents and friends Birmingham children's hospital. The signatories incl several people who live in my constituency, and in ot parts of the city of Birmingham. It also includes pe who live in other metropolitan districts in the w midlands, and in an area stretching from Telford Coventry.

As a father whose daughter's life was saved by operation at the age of four, I understand and share feelings of my constituents and the other signatories of petition. I commend it to the House, on the very even on which I am told that the Central Birmingham he authority has decided to consider closure of Birmingh

[Mr. Terry Davis]

general hospital, and of the medical school at Queen Elizabeth hospital—proposals which, if put into effect, will only exacerbate the problems at the Birmingham children's hospital.

To be upon the Table.

Young Domestic Workers

Motion made, and Question proposed, That do now adjourn.—*[Mr. Peter Lloyd.]*

12.1 am

Mr. Peter Hardy (Wentworth): Young peo taught at school that slavery was abolished British empire a century and a half or more major step was largely credited to the effort Yorkshire's most celebrated Members, Wilberforce, who represented our county be and 1812.

Unfortunately, there are still parts of the w slavery is practised, and it is saddening developments in our own country seem litt from those inhumanities of the past. The exper constituent Miss Ellen O'Neil, of Thryb Rotherham, should be seen as an example o unsatisfactory position and as a warning that f this debate.

Like the majority of our young people, Miss little prospect of suitable or normal employme for our economic position is very grave. Vigor and keen determination are displayed in persis to create jobs, but each step forward seems to by rearward strides.

It is sad that, in our schools, young peo decent education but see little opportunity. Tha at Thrybergh school, which Ellen attended. But of my constituency schools—a good school, just 8 per cent. of last year's leavers secured n last year. Since then we have seen an announc Kilnhurst colliery has come to the end of the Friday I received the news that Canning Tow my constituency, is to close in April. That closu nearly 480 jobs. The point is made to establish of Ellen's experience, but it also illustr unreasonable conduct on the part not only of t employer, but of a substantial British compan

The Canning Town Glass closure has been despite full assurances given to me on behalf o at the time of the takeover in 1985, and expre letters by the then chief executive. Becaus assurances, I did not seek to join the campaign matter to the Monopolies and Mergers Comm I known then what I know now—that the were worthless—I, and perhaps my hon. Frie have joined in that demand.

I am glad that my hon. Friends the Membe Valley (Mr. Redmond) and for Rother V Barron) are here. One of my hon. Friends accor on a visit to the Under-Secretary of State for In morning. I hope that the Government will honourable conduct is required; otherwise, demonstrating that, in relation to the direct commerce and industry, an Englishman's w longer his bond. That lack of reliability and t for distrust are particularly shocking whe people are concerned. Miss O'Neil's case illu position dreadfully.

My constituent wished, and still wishes, to children. Some time before her experience M studied at Rockingham college of further ed Wath-upon-Dearne where I live. It is a establishment which seeks to serve local comm

considered relevance and to meet the developing needs. A course, sometimes called a nanny course, is run effectively at the college. A number of young ladies have been equipped to work as nannies, and I believe that many of them have had satisfactory experiences. The course is a proper one, although I do not care for the implications for my area. I accept that the girls have had relevant training and that some of them have secured work which is not available in the locality.

Ellen saw an advertisement in the local newspaper, the *Rotherham and South Yorkshire Advertiser*. It sought a mother's help to care for a family with three children in Surrey. Ellen applied and was appointed, commencing work on 16 January last year. She was to live in and work from 7.30 in the morning until the parents, her employers, returned home from their work or from their dinner engagements. Ellen stayed just under six weeks and she tells me that the parents stayed at home only about five evenings. That meant that my constituent bore substantial responsibility for long hours from early in the morning usually until very late in the evening. The three children were 6, 9 and 14 years of age. I gather they attended primary day schools, returning home at 3.30 and 4.30 pm.

Ellen was due to be paid £25 per week for those long hours. During the first week her employers borrowed £13·79 from her. Despite Ellen's requests, that debt was not repaid, although her employers were always just about to do so. At first Ellen was to be paid monthly. Then her employers said that they would pay her weekly. She received £25 on 30 January. There was no wage slip or wage packet; perhaps that point could be considered by the Minister.

During her period of work Ellen had just one day and one weekend off, during which she returned home. After further absence of payment and further lack of repayment of debt, she returned home on 24 February. Ellen tells me that she is owed £105·45. Her employers said that they would send the sum on by post. They did not. In March Ellen telephoned her former employers to ask about the money due and was told that it was in the post. Ellen did not receive it.

Ellen consulted a local solicitor who acted properly. The case was heard in Reigate court and was successful. However, on 14 October Ellen was told, almost incredibly, given her experience, that her former employers possessed nothing of sufficient value to cover the costs of removal and sale. So Ellen has not received any of the outstanding sum.

Ellen returned to Thrybergh. Not surprisingly, she has not been able to find another job, so she became dependent upon state benefits, like thousands of my constituents. This is a major point to which I hope the Minister will attend; under the rules, she was assumed voluntarily to have surrendered her employment, so benefit was suspended for six weeks.

Ellen did not come to see me immediately. Perhaps she hoped that the court would secure justice for her. Perhaps she felt that her former employers would act honourably. She exercised a gentle patience, for she has not an aggressive or unpleasant personality. After I had heard Ellen's story in November, I wrote to her former employers. There was no reply. I heard other similar stories and felt that I should seek a debate. I wrote to the employers again on 29 December. There has been no reply to either letter.

There has been not a word in response, not explanation, not a word of regret for o treatment. The people may have difficulties; know. They could have said so, but they did n assume that they have acted in a disreput scandalous manner. They did not respond to th official inquiry made after Ellen had left. They c done; that would have eased the difficu experienced.

That leads to another major point. We oug structure our social arrangements so that pen placed upon an employee who can no longe utterly unreasonable conduct from an employe this case cannot even be bothered to respond questions.

Ellen was told that the outstanding sum and h form would be sent to her. They were not. What taken against negligent employers who m difficulty to their employees by failing to provide information to official sources? The Ministe consider that.

We have a good careers office in our area, whi the best of an astonishing and difficult task corresponded with the principal officer, Mr. Pap is an able and most experienced official. He conf when a local domestic position is notified it is ch his service. However, increasingly these jobs offered through the careers service or even thr more reputable agencies. The result of private is, I fear, that we may have far more serious cases

The careers service takes the view that thes people are vulnerable and that the paucity of l creates a need for information and guidance. O our local careers service can help in South Yorks it is largely powerless in the southern counties.

I understand that the Government are keen t young people entering the service sector, domestic service. This situation was a frequent e in the days portrayed in the television series "Downstairs". However, if this change devel Minister should accept that not all such emplo likely to be honourable, as Ellen's case demo Perhaps the recipient areas should provide a careers service to assist incoming young workers

I have always viewed the privileges of Parliam essential right that should be exercised after delib To use privilege lightly is wrong. However, I bel I am wholly right to use it now. Ellen's employ borrowed from her but did not repay, and who e her but did not provide her with the salary t promised, ought to be the subject of the exercis right. Ellen's employers agreed to pay her £25 They paid her that sum once, and no more. employers were seeking domestic service at a d low wage, given the long hours that she was req work. It seems that they required her to be on du they were at work, and in the evenings, which th enjoyed.

Clearly, Ellen worked for very long hours, prob much longer than her employers. I suspect th incomes were very much higher than Ellen co dream of securing. Her employers failed to discha responsibilities. I do not yet know whether they employer's national insurance contributions. I und that two other local girls, who returned from a experience, found that their employers had failed

[Mr. Peter Hardy]

those contributions. I shall be interested to learn, in due course, whether the contributions have been paid in Ellen's case, and what action will be taken if there has been any employer's negligence.

Does the Minister consider that such negligence should apparently pass without remark or penalty? Ellen's employers were due to pay her £25 a week; they paid her once, and they owe her more. I do not know how much they were paid while they failed to pay her. Her employers were Mr. and Mrs. Atkinson of Field road, Charlwood, Surrey. They have not replied to my letters, although Ellen tells me that Mr. Atkinson is a professional surveyor. I wonder whether that profession really considers £25 to be reasonable payment for a very long week, or whether the relevant professional body has grounds for pride in its member.

I am told that Mrs. Atkinson was employed by Dan-Air, a reputable airline. I wonder whether that or any other reputable airline would regard £25 a week as reasonable pay. Perhaps it should consider that one of its employees obviously considers £25 a week to be a reasonable, fair wage. Of course, wages in Surrey are more than £60 a week higher than they are in South Yorkshire, so presumably the employers thought that they were doing Ellen a favour.

Wentworth is now grievously hurt by economic change, which may be rather welcome in Charlwood, Surrey. Perhaps people there have become so materialistic that they even feel pride and approval that among their number are people who behave as these employers did. I do not know. But once upon a time people, even in such areas, subscribed to the view that we were one nation. We may have been; we are not now. The economic condition of South Yorkshire and Ellen O'Neil's experience demonstrate that.

In this case and in others, the Government and society seem eager and swift to punish or penalise our young people, who give up work, even when they have good reasons for doing so, as Ellen's case reveals.

Am I not entitled to ask the Government to provide a rather better balance in our social arrangements and to respond much more effectively to negligent or disreputable employers? There have been substantial changes in industrial relations law since 1980. More obligation is being placed upon workers and their organisations. Such cases as Ellen's show that there is now an obvious need for action in regard to the defaulting and irresponsible employer. Ellen did not receive her pay. Other girls were not credited with appropriate insurance contributions. There had been no contract of employment, no readily available advice, no wage packet, no proper documentation. Yet, when she gave up her job, there was immediate application of penalty.

I know that good organisations such as our careers service, and good establishments such as the Rockingham college, advise young people to secure an employment contract. But young people desperate for work, operating in isolated conditions, may not feel able to insist upon that provision. Perhaps the Government should do so on their behalf.

Ellen and others of her generation may already have had to tolerate far too much. But it seems that society is determined that they should continue to do so. I find this insistence deplorable, especially when it seems that some of the yuppies and people like them in our community are prepared to allow regional imbalance outrageous levels which we now face. Thes intolerable burden not least upon our yo I must ask the Minister whether he would one is justified in suggesting that Britain h a pass that justice and morality must no mercy of market forces, as they appear Ellen's case.

12.16 am

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary Employment (Mr. John Lee): I should l commending the hon. Member for W Hardy) quite genuinely on his success in g raised on the Adjournment. The case of Miss O'Neil, which has prompted him to issue of young domestic workers, is inde distressing one. On the facts presented, M employers have behaved in a disgrace unacceptable fashion. But I do not be behaviour is typical of the majority of emp on nannies or mothers' helps. In m employers behave honourably towards and many go so far as to treat them as pa But, sadly, there is a small minority of bad Miss O'Neil had the misfortune to come such a one.

Before I go into the detail of Miss should like to say a few words about the general approach to contract of employm a well-established principle that terms an employment, including rates of pay and are, in general, matters for agreemen employer and the employee concern representatives. This enables them to agre contract of employment to suit the job i their particular circumstances and preferen neither right nor practicable for the intervene in this area. This flexibility give employee a chance to consider, for examp hours he or she is going to have to work acceptable.

A contract of employment does not ha down: by starting work the employee ac and conditions offered and there is an im But within 13 weeks of starting work a entitled by law to be given a written statem terms and conditions of work by his or h the employer fails to provide such a written employee concerned may apply to have heard by an industrial tribunal.

In addition, most employees are entitled itemised pay statement by their employer time of payment. This has to include deta amount paid and a note of the deductions w made. Again, failure by the employer to statement may result in a case before tribunal.

The main employment protection measu the right not to be unfairly dismissed, and, whom this right applies may take their case tribunal. There is a qualifying period employment for this right: those who work hours per week qualify after two yea employment; and for those who work less per week but more than eight the qualifyin

years. A qualifying period is necessary to give employers a chance to test whether the person concerned is right for the job and to demonstrate the employee's commitment to the employer. Without such a qualifying period, employers would be reluctant to take on new staff because of the possibility of having to defend an unnecessary tribunal case.

An employee who believes that he is being treated so badly by his employer as to amount to a fundamental breach of contract, and providing he has the appropriate qualifying service, may resign and claim constructive unfair dismissal before a tribunal.

The argument that there is insufficient employment protection is regularly advanced by Opposition Members, but we regularly receive correspondence from employers and others complaining that there is so much employment protection regulation that it puts them off recruiting new employees. Indeed, that complaint has been substantiated by evidence from a number of research projects, and we have some sympathy with it.

Our strategy of deregulation is designed to create the conditions in which enterprise and initiative may flourish and to reduce red tape wherever possible and where it makes sense to do so. That does not mean that we intend to sweep away all employment protection measures; far from it. But we are concerned that we should strike the right balance between the need to protect employees from the most unscrupulous employers and the need to avoid excessive burdens on employers. This will encourage the creation of more jobs and help to tackle the problem of high unemployment to which the hon. Gentleman referred. The consistent fall in the level of unemployment in recent months is evidence of the success of the Government's policy in this area.

Some might suggest that a contribution to the improvement of the terms and conditions of those employed as nannies or mothers' helps would be the introduction of a statutory national minimum wage. However, the Government's view is that such a move would not help the position of domestic workers or the low paid generally.

There are a number of reasons for that. First, it would directly raise the wages of those below the statutory minimum without any change in output. This would not only add to employers' costs and reduce competitiveness, but lead to a loss of jobs, as the rate of pay fixed might be more than some employers could afford. My officials estimate that a national minimum wage of £80 a week could result in job losses ranging between 60,000 and 600,000 over a period of time.

In addition, all experience shows that pay differentials cannot be artificially compressed. As soon as the wages of the low paid are raised, attempts are made by workers with higher rates of pay to press for similar increases to maintain pay differentials, leaving the less well off in the same relative position as before. The pressure to restore differentials would itself add to general wage costs and erode competitiveness. We see no signs that the higher-paid workers are prepared to hold back their claims to help the low paid.

Moreover, a national minimum wage would be inconsistent with our firmly held view that pay is a matter for determination by employers and employees or their representatives. They are in the best position to decide what enterprises can afford or need to recrui staff with the right skills and experience. The do not intervene.

The specific case of Miss O'Neil has alrea subject of correspondence between the hon. and my hon. Friend the Under-Secretary o Member for Teignbridge (Mr. Nicholls).

I have already explained at some length th of employment are matters for negotiation an between the parties concerned and that it is in for the Government to interfere. It follows fro should either party decide subsequently th unhappy with the terms of the contract as ag to them to take the necessary action to ter contract.

That, I believe, is precisely what Miss Moreover, when, as it turned out, her former e not pay her the wages which were due to h properly took a case in the small claims se county court. I must congratulate Miss O' determination in sorting out her predicamen that many other people in a similar situation given up at that point. But she continued to rights and obtained a county court judgment former employer. That covered not only wage which had not been paid, but money borrow by her employer and not repaid, as well as the incurred in travelling from her home in th England to Reigate to attend the court heari

I should say a word here about the unfo that, although she has obtained a county cou against her former employer, Miss O'Neil has so far to recover what is owed to her. I Members of this House will sympathise with in which Miss O'Neil finds herself. She may in mind that in addition to a warrant of execu she has already tried, there are other means of e open to her. If she approaches the court in obtained the judgment, she will be able t booklet, produced by the Lord Chancellor's D entitled "Enforcing Money Judgments in Court", which gives details of various alternati of enforcement. At the risk of stating the obvio I should add that no method of enforcement ca payment of a debt from a debtor who does n means to pay.

I come now to the unemployment benefit Miss O'Neil. Unemployment benefit is, of cour for those people who become unemployed fault of their own and remain so throughout t their claim. It is a long-established principle th a person who leaves his employment voluntar just cause, or loses his job because of miscondu his entitlement to benefit, currently for up to

The question whether a person had just leaving his job voluntarily is a matter for the i adjudicating authorities to consider in the light over the years. The independent adjudicating specially appointed for this purpose under Security Act 1975 are the adjudication officer instance; on appeal, the social security appe and there is a further right of appeal, circumstances, to the social security commissi

I understand that Miss O'Neil first claimed ment benefit at the beginning of March Entitlement to unemployment benefit depends

[Mr. John Lee]

on the satisfaction of two contribution conditions. The first is that class 1 national insurance contributions must have been paid on earnings of at least 25 times the weekly lower earnings limit—currently £39—in any one tax year since 6 April 1975.

The second condition is that class 1 national insurance contributions must have been paid or credited on earnings of at least 50 times the weekly lower earnings limit in the last complete income tax year before the benefit year in which the spell of unemployment begins. The benefit year starts on the first Sunday in January and ends on the first Saturday of the following year. Claims made during 1987 are therefore based on contributions paid during the 1985-86 income tax year. Since Miss O'Neil's employment in Reigate was her first employment, she had not paid sufficient contributions to become entitled to unemployment benefit. I understand, however, that she has been receiving supplementary benefit since the end of March last year.

I have already explained the circumstances in which unemployment benefit may be suspended. When a doubt arises on a person's claim for unemployment benefit, the Department is obliged to seek confirmation from the employer of the reason why the employment ended. In cases in which the employer fails, after reminders, to respond to inquiries about the reasons why the claimant left his employ, consideration is given to lifting the suspension. In such a case, when the suspension is lifted, payment would be made from the date of claim.

I understand that in Miss O'Neil's case her employer failed to return the form sent to establish the circumstances in which her employment had ended. As a result, disqualification of unemployment benefit or contribution credits because she had voluntarily left her employment or had lost it because of misconduct was not considered.

Although I am not aware that in Miss O'Neil's case there was a failure on the part of the employer to pay national insurance contributions, the hon. Gentleman has suggested that that has arisen in other cases that he knows about. I understand from the DHSS, which is, of course, responsible in this area, that it has seen little evidence of any national problem in relation to
of the Inland Revenue that nan
employment. An individual who ha
this should go to his or her local
which will of course investigate the

Finally, I should like to refer
underlying the matters that we h
tonight—unemployment. Despite t
in recent months, it remains a seri
Government are making a signifi
overcoming the problem by fosterin
which enterprise and initiative may f
the creation of new jobs, by helpi
enough to be unemployed to relearn
a spell on a training course or a
designed to help the unemployed ba

I am particularly pleased to see tha
has been a decrease of almost 13
numbers of unemployed in the 12
1987. It is therefore all the more sad
hear of the impending closure of Ca
which the hon. Gentleman referre
emphasise that the full facilities of th
the Manpower Services Commission
redundant people to find new jobs,
businesses of their own, and those fac
to the attention of those involved.

In concluding, perhaps I might
started and the particular case o
anything be done to prevent that so
again? However much we legislate,
be able to eradicate the sort of behav
had the misfortune to experience
unscrupulous employers in this cou
unfortunate fact of life. Individuals c
with unfavourable working conc
committing themselves to a particula
to be satisfied that the conditions on
When it is only after starting the jo
realises that it is not suitable, then,
remedies are available.

Question put and agreed to.

Adjourned accordingly at twent
Twelve o'clock.

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House of Commons

Wednesday 20 January 1988

The House met at half-past Two o'clock

PRAYERS

[MR. SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

Oral Answers to Questions

ENVIRONMENT

Hazardous Waste

1. **Mr. Litherland:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will indicate the extent of the importation of hazardous wastes into Greater Manchester for treatment or disposal in the last two years, and the routes used for the movements of these wastes.

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Environment (Mr. Colin Moynihan): Details of hazardous waste imported into the United Kingdom are not held centrally. However, I am advised by the Greater Manchester waste disposal authority that the total amount of foreign waste imported into its area was 7,770 tonnes in 1985 and 11,937 tonnes in 1986. Figures for 1987 are not yet available.

The authority records the point of entry into the United Kingdom and the final destination of each consignment, but not the route taken.

Mr. Litherland: Is the Minister aware that because other European countries are placing restrictions on the import of hazardous waste materials the United Kingdom in general, and Greater Manchester in particular, are expressing concern that we are becoming the dustbin of Europe? With this extra workload the site operatives may well be flouting the rules and regulations that apply to waste disposal.

Mr. Moynihan: The hon. Gentleman will be aware that waste imports amount to a small percentage of the total waste disposal in the United Kingdom—0·5 per cent. annually. He will also agree that the critical factor is that we should have the right facilities and the capacity to handle hazardous wastes. I hope that he will welcome the directive on trans-frontier shipment of hazardous waste, to which we are hoping to adhere as soon as possible. It will increase the amount of information that is available across boundaries and thus help to ensure safe handling and the effectiveness of the regulations that are currently in force.

Mrs. Peacock: Is my hon. Friend examining ways in which to improve controls over the handling of hazardous wastes?

Mr. Moynihan: We are looking at ways of improving controls; for example, by extending the special waste regulations to cover all pollution risks, improving the consignment note procedure and intro
code of practice to put greater resp
producers of waste to ensure its safe
examining the possibility of registering
extending the powers of licensing autho
ways of improving control, and deep
being given to every one of them.

Mr. Allan Roberts: Is the Minist
answers will be thought amazingly con
we importing any hazardous waste into
we have enough of our own to dispose
told me in a parliamentary answer
imported 14,824 tonnes of hazardous w
By 1986 that had escalated to 53,000
escalation continued? Why does the
Department not know what happens to
arrives in this country, or how it is disp
it goes? Surely we do not need to
economy, which the Government clain
buying the rest of Europe's hazardous

Mr. Moynihan: The hon. Gentleman
we have a long history of waste control,
that the treatment and disposal operat
achieve the highest standards. The e
disposal service is an important indust
continue to have the right facilities and
handle hazardous wastes properly.
complacent, the Government are dedi
that every possible control is exercis
effective, well-managed and highly prof

Dame Elaine Kellett-Bowman: Does
agree that there are a limited number o
high skills required for controlling was
therefore better to concentrate on a few
the waste scattered hither and yon over

Mr. Moynihan: I completely agree wi
that this country has the highest compe
should utilise it, so I agree with the thru

Local Authorities (Land Ho

2. **Mr. John M. Taylor:** To ask the
for the Environment what representatio
regarding the introduction of a compul
for local authorities to schedule and p
ownings.

**The Minister for Local Governme
Howard):** My right hon. Friend has rece
representations from my hon. Friend a
subject.

Mr. Taylor: Does my hon. and lear
that local authorities are trustees of r
Does he further agree that this registe
voluntary, but should be compulsory?

Mr. Howard: I agree with the first
Friend's question. He asks that the
compulsory. We are presently awaiting
working group made up of CIPFA, th
associations and the Audit Commis
considering this matter and we intend
conclusions before taking any further de

Mr. Tony Banks: What about
Government-held land? For example,

Defence is holding land like some sort of medieval land baron. It has over 500,000 acres. What efforts is the Minister making to put pressure on some of his colleagues, such as the Secretary of State for Defence, so that land that is not necessary for such Departments is released for more useful social purposes?

Mr. Howard: The Ministry of Defence has particular needs which lead to its land holdings, and the Government are taking every step to ensure that it does not hold any land that it is not necessary and desirable for it to hold.

Mr. Brandon-Bravo: In our campaign for inner-city regeneration the availability and ready development of land is an important component. While local authority land is important, surely inner city land held by statutory undertakings and by private owners is equally important. Perhaps a register giving an overall picture would go a long way towards helping us in the campaign to regenerate our cities.

Mr. Howard: I am sure that my hon. Friend will not overlook the role of market forces in making that land available. As time goes on we expect more and more of that land to become available.

Mr. Simon Hughes: Does the Minister accept the overwhelming case for a land register of all land held by all private and public bodies? That was recommended by the Law Commission and there is a Land Registration Bill in the other place proposed by Lord Templeman. One way for everybody to know what is available, to prevent speculation and to develop the inner cities is open access to information about the identities of landlords. Will the Government say that they are willing to support that principle and do something about it?

Mr. Howard: The Government support the Bill to which the hon. Gentleman refers. I have written to him today on that very subject.

Planning Policy

3. **Mr. Nicholas Baker:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will bring forward proposals for reform of the planning system.

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Environment (Mrs. Marion Roe): We have made many improvements to the planning system in recent years. We expect to make an announcement shortly about our conclusions on the future of the structure and local plan system.

Mr. Baker: Does my hon. Friend agree that the planning system is failing to prevent the over-development of our countryside and failing to encourage development in the inner cities, where we want it? Does she also agree that at the moment our planning system is developer-driven and is allowed to be driven by bodies such as Consortium Developments? Will she now look at the task of revising the planning circulars?

Mrs. Roe: Later today we will give the House details of two new series of planning policy guidance and mineral planning guidance notes that are published today. I do not wish to anticipate the detailed written answer that will be given later, but the purpose is to make our planning advice clearer and more accessible. That should increase certainty for developers and others, and I think that it will be widely welcomed.

Mr. Andrew MacKay: Does my hon. Friend agree that, in the interests of good planning, the views of local people should be taken into account, and that the way to take them into account is to listen to what locally elected representatives have to say to the local planning committee? Again and again planning applications are overturned on appeal, and that is disillusioning for elected councillors, who are doing their best for local people.

Mrs. Roe: I have read with interest my hon. Friend's views on changes in the planning system, which were published in "This Pleasant Land". I do not think that everything he proposes is practical or desirable, but there is widespread agreement about the need to encourage development in urban areas and to protect our countryside as much as possible. It is encouraging that nearly half the land for house building is now found from reused sites or vacant urban areas. I draw my hon. Friend's attention to "The Future of Development Plans", which was published by the Government in September 1986.

Mr. Skinner: Is the Minister aware that the argument on the Tory Benches will make very interesting reading? It seems that the two strong interests within the Tory party — first, City financiers and developers and, secondly, farmers and those who represent the rural interest—are having a battle royal. Opposition Members, happily, are in favour of planning, but I must say that we look on this skirmish with more than a little amusement.

Mrs. Roe: I cannot comment on any specific proposal for a new settlement for which an application may have been made, or is being prepared. [HON. MEMBERS: "No one asked the hon. Lady to do so."] The hon. Member for Bolsover (Mr. Skinner) mentioned new consortia.

The argument is basically about the green belt. We have made clear how important we consider the green belt and its protection against inappropriate development. We have gone so far as to say that if developers propose schemes that are manifestly inappropriate in the green belt and there is an unnecessary planning inquiry, they risk an award of costs against them. I remind the House that the area of approved green belt has been more than doubled since 1979, from 1·8 million acres to 4·5 million acres.

Mr. David Nicholson: Does my hon. Friend agree that the proposals, when they come forward, need to include developments by gipsies? Does she recall, from correspondence that I have had with her on behalf of Taunton Deane borough council, that the borough council and my constituents are embarrassed and affronted by the fact that, under existing regulations, gipsies may make developments which other citizens are prohibited from making?

Mrs. Roe: It is for county councils to make provision for the number of gipsies in their area, and to bring to the Secretary of State proposals to find appropriate accommodation for them.

Dr. Cunningham: Whether or not we have a new planning Act, what is the purpose of planning controls if the present Secretary of State for the Environment, having followed the procedures, then overrules the decision of inspectors? That has happened twice recently. The first instance was in Cumbria, at North Stainmore—an area of outstanding natural beauty — when the right hon. Gentleman overruled the inspector's report from the inquiry and allowed the Ministry of Defence access to and

use of land, against the inspector's specific recommendation. More recently, in county Durham, when the inspector reported that it would be entirely against the environmental interests in the area to allow an application for opencast mining, the right hon. Gentleman again acted contrary to the inspector's recommendations and report.

What is the purpose of any planning controls, when that sort of thing is going on?

Mrs. Roe: We have made it absolutely clear that we have no intention of dismantling any planning system. Our approach is purely to simplify and improve the system. Every application is decided on its merits. The inspector's role is to advise the Secretary of State for the Environment, and the ultimate decision lies with him.

Mr. David Martin: On the theme of taking local views into account, will my hon. Friend consider the reform of the planning procedures? When local authorities give themselves planning permission for a particular development, should there not be a right of appeal to her Department if, say, 20 or 25 local electors wish for one? Should not local authorities and private individuals be considered on an equal basis in that regard?

Mrs. Roe: As I have already informed the House, the future of development plans is under consultation and consideration, and no doubt those points will be taken into account.

Legal Services

4. **Mr. Dalyell:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he has any plans to privatise legal services provided to his Department.

The Secretary of State for the Environment (Mr. Nicholas Ridley): My right hon. Friend the Prime Minister announced on 14 January that Sir Robert Andrew will undertake a review of the Government legal services. Sir Robert will take account of our policies of privatisation and contracting-out, and will cover legal services provided to my Department.

Mr. Dalyell: Is the Secretary of State aware that, for once, I had no notion of the answer to my question? Could he be a bit more explicit about the Andrew terms of reference? What exactly does he mean by "take account"? What is to be the future of the parliamentary draftsmen? Whereas nobody in his right mind would begrudge the Secretary of State the services of the best counsel—heaven knows, he could have done with it in the past and might need it again—is there not a real problem for civil servants in the legal services available to the Government? What is their future?

Mr. Ridley: I understand that the terms of reference are:

"To consider: what legal services are needed by the Government; how those services can most effectively and economically be provided and organised, taking account of the Government's policies of privatisation and of contracting out; what changes are needed in the management of legal staff in Government service, including their recruitment, retention, training, deployment and remuneration, so as to make best use of them".

I welcome the hon. Gentleman's conversion to the virtues of private sector provision. I must warn him in his enthusiasm that the private sector occasionally does not make a success of it — after all, he was privately educated.

Mr. Heddle: As my right hon. Friend's Department is responsible for the legal services provided by local government, does he share my grave concern at the length of time that a number of Left-wing Labour local authorities take to reply to local search inquiries by solicitors? Is he aware that the Law Commission suggested that 10 days is a reasonable time, but that the London boroughs of Hackney, Islington, Camden and many others take up to three months to reply to simple inquiries? Is that not an affront to nurses, teachers and first-time buyers who want to buy their own homes simply and without delay? Will my right hon. Friend consider imposing sanctions or possibly privatising such services when local authorities offend the code?

Mr. Ridley: I agree that it is very important to reply to searches as quickly as possible. I shall consider my hon. Friends suggestions. They could even be the subject of the contracting-out policy in the Local Government Bill. I shall have a look at what my hon. Friend has suggested.

Water Meters

5. **Miss Lestor:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what is the estimated cost of installing water meters in multi-storey flats and in properties on a common supply pipe.

Mr. Moynihan: No such estimate has been made. One of the objectives of the proposed metering trials is to help the industry assess the costs and practicality of metering multi-storey flats and properties served by a common supply pipe.

Miss Lestor: Is the hon. Gentleman aware that discussions which are presently taking place about the future of the water industry are causing a great deal of concern in constituencies such as mine where there are common supply pipes in multi-storey flats? Will he therefore give me an assurance that any costs associated with converting those properties—should the devastating proposals concerning water and privately-owned meters go through—will not be borne by the consumer?

Mr. Moynihan: The hon. Lady will be aware that in the Committee considering the Public Utility Transfers and Water Charges Bill we are discussing amendments to ensure that the cost burden moves from owners to undertakers, thus reforming the Water Acts of 1845 and 1951. The major changes will require owners to have separate joint supplies explicitly for the purpose of metering. I can give the hon. Lady an undertaking that the burden will not fall on them.

Mr. Jack: Is my hon. Friend aware that those in privately owned sheltered accommodation who have opted for water metering have achieved substantial savings?

Mr. Moynihan: Some consumers have indeed benefited from metering. One of the important issues involved with the compulsory trial schemes that are being proposed is the effect of metering on a range of consumers in a certain locality. Schemes will enable undertakers to identify technical difficulties associated with putting meters in properties.

Mr. Boyes: The Minister knows that there are tremendous cost and technical difficulties associated with putting meters into multi-storey flats. How does he square

that with the fact that, for 70 hours or more of consideration of the Public Utility Transfers and Water Charges Bill, he has tried to convince us that water meters will be fairer because consumers will be able to control how much water they consume? Is he not getting himself into an awful problem and a difficult contradiction?

Mr. Moynihan: I am glad to say that we have encountered no problems so far in the 70 hours of Committee proceedings to which the hon. Gentleman referred. Indeed, I thank him for his perceptive and useful analysis of the problems, including the problem that he has just mentioned. A lot of satisfactory work has been done on the matter that he raised. In reply to his first point, undertakers will have to consider the effect of metering and the effect of charges on metering, which will range beyond the single option referred to by the hon. Member for Eccles (Miss Lestor) and raised by the hon. Gentleman in Committee yesterday.

Homelessness

6. **Mr. Cohen:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what sums he has allocated to local authorities for the relief of homelessness in the current financial year and the next.

Mrs. Roe: Gross provision for local authorities' capital expenditure on housing will rise from £2,920 million in the current financial year to £3,048 million next, an increase of 4 per cent. It is for local authorities to decide what resources to devote to the homeless, but the Government have urged that priority should be given to those in special need, and £25 million of the special supplementary allocation announced in December last was targeted on authorities with the greatest homelessness needs.

Mr. Cohen: Has not the cost of housing the homeless rocketed over the past year to well over £100 million? Has not the Government's response been much too late and much too little? My borough, which is in the top 20 boroughs with housing problems, according to the Department's survey, has allocated all its available homes to homeless families at the expense of desperate waiting list families and it has not received an extra penny from the Government. Are not the Government hopeless with the homeless?

Mrs. Roe: While there has been a reduction in local authorities' allocations, from £136 million in 1987-88 to £129 million in 1988-89, that is more than offset by the increase in capital receipts available to local authorities. Overall, local authorities' capital spending will increase by 4 per cent. Many councils have only themselves to blame for such a high cost of meeting their obligations to the homeless. Often they place the homeless in bed-and-breakfast accommodation needlessly when there are cheaper ways to deal with the problem. Authorities should be spending more of their receipts from the sale of council homes on bringing empty properties back into use. It is a scandal that 112,000 council homes are lying empty of which about 28,000 have been vacant for more than one year.

Mr. Kilfedder: As a considerable percentage of the homeless people in Britain, and as many as 50 per cent. of the young homeless in London, come from the Irish Republic, will the Minister seek to raise at the next meeting of the Anglo-Eire Conference the question of conditions in the Republic which force so many in the Republic seek sanctuary in Britain, where indeed they are welcom Will the Minister also raise the question of a financi contribution towards accommodation in Britain for tho young people?

Mrs. Roe: I shall draw the hon. Gentleman's remark to the notice of my right hon. Friend. However, I mu stress that it is for a local authority to decide how to carr out its statutory duties regarding the homeless.

Mr. Corbyn: Will the Minister concede that her repl to my hon. Friend the Member for Leyton (Mr. Cohe was an insult to the many homeless people in London wh are forced to live in bed-and-breakfast accommodation o where they are denied such accommodation—as man are—are forced to sleep on the streets of this capita city? My council received only £800,000 towards its cost for bed-and-breakfast accommodation. Will the Ministe assure the House that in future the full extra burden o bed-and-breakfast costs on local authorities will be met b the Government, instead of the Government imposin penalties on councils that seek to alleviate the problems o homelessness?

Mrs. Roe: It is for local authorities to decide how t accommodate the homeless people for whom they accep responsibility. Our code of guidance advises the use of bed and breakfast accommodation only as a last resort. Tha accommodation is extremely expensive. On average i costs £30 per family per day and it is particularly unsuitable for families for any length of time. It is very surprising that some authorities such as Camden, Bren and Tower Hamlets use bed and breakfast accommoda tion extensively, while others, such as Greenwich, whic suffer similar problems, manage to avoid it.

Sir George Young: Does my hon. Friend recall th thoughtful speech made by the Minister for Housing an Planning at the party conference? He said that he wa considering an extension of the transferable discoun scheme to make more impact on tackling homelessness i London. When does the Department hope to come to a conclusion on an extension of that scheme?

Mrs. Roe: I remember the comments that my hon Friend made at the party conference. We are stil considering that proposal.

Mr. Winnick: In view of the reply that the Minister gave me just before Christmas, that it was no longer the function of local authorities to build, is it not the case that there will be far more homelessness and more people living in bed-and-breakfast accommodation? The Minister criticises local authorities for putting homeless people into bed and breakfast accommodation, but where are they expected to go — on the pavement? It is absolutely essential that local authorities should once again be able to build accommodation for people who cannot afford mortgages. The only way that such people can have decent accommodation is through the local authorities.

Mrs. Roe: Local authorities must make far better use of their existing housing stock. As I said earlier, local authorities now have more than 112,000 empty properties, and no fewer than 25 per cent. of those have been empty for more than a year. The number of local authority properties empty for more than a year is nearly three times the number of families in bed-and-breakfast accommoda- tion. We have sought to help local authorities to take

empty properties back into use through the estate action scheme. We have approved schemes totalling nearly £5·5 million for some 1,200 dwellings since August 1986, and, more recently, through our £25 million supplementary allocations.

Sir Geoffrey Finsberg: Is my hon. Friend aware that the London borough of Camden, with its problems of homelessness, has admitted to paying out between £1 million and £5 million to the owners of bed and breakfast accommodation for accommodation that has never been occupied? What steps does she propose to stop that ineptitude, and worse, occurring in other Labour-controlled London boroughs?

Mrs. Roe: I am aware of the press reports about the bed-and-breakfast problems in Camden. We are now awaiting the borough's official report on the matter. Clearly there has been a significant waste of ratepayers' money. Might I also add that that authority has more empty properties within its total housing stock than families in bed-and-breakfast accommodation. Indeed, 423—or 40 per cent.—of its empty dwellings have been empty for more than a year. Rent arrears in Camden were £4·4 million at the latest count. Those figures show that if Camden made better use of its housing stock by sorting out its housing management system it would be able to meet its responsibilities for homeless people without resorting to bed-and-breakfast accommodation.

Mr. Soley: The Minister's reply was a disgraceful insult to homeless people and to Conservative and Labour local authorities. Local authorities have a smaller percentage of their properties empty than have the Government, who have three times as many empty properties. When will the Government bring those properties into use? Local authorities have fewer empty properties than have housing associations or the private sector. What will the Minister do about that? What will she do about the fact that it is cheaper for the country to build a new home — the Government have cut housebuilding by two thirds since 1979 — than to keep a family in bed-and-breakfast accommodation for a year? When will she alleviate the crisis of homelessness in Britain?

Mrs. Roe: Government Departments own residential property for operational reasons, and they need to preserve their operational flexibility. Those Departments with significant numbers of empty dwellings are urged to bring them back into use, and, when they are no longer needed, to sell them as quickly as possible. Where they have no immediate operational need for them, but where disposal is not practical, they are encouraged to let them temporarily to local authorities or housing associations to help with the problem of homelessness.

I draw the attention of the hon. Member for Hammersmith (Mr. Soley) to the Housing Bill. All the Bill's proposals will benefit homeless people and those in poor quality housing. I urge the hon. Gentleman to support the Bill.

Rating Reform

8. **Mr. Janner:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what representations he has received from Leicester city council about the effect of the poll tax on the residents of Leicester.

Mr. Howard: Leicester city council responded to the Green Paper "Paying for Local Government". It has made no subsequent representations.

Mr. Janner: Is the Minister aware that, as a result of the poll tax, some 65 per cent. of Leicester citizens will pay more rates than they used to and that the average household, instead of paying £180 as now, will pay £220 —[HON. MEMBERS: "Reading"]—and that a household with two adults is likely to pay 21 per cent. more tax? In such circumstances, all the figures should be read out, not only by me, but by Conservative Members.

Mr. Howard: The hon. and learned Gentleman's point would have a little more force if it was not based on a report that was flawed in certain fundamental respects, as was the report recently produced by Leicester city council. The figures that I announced last week show that, over the country as a whole, 53 per cent. of households will benefit from the introduction of the community charge. The charge will be of wider and greater benefit to everyone in this country because it will introduce a much fairer and more accountable method of paying for local government.

Sports and Leisure Facilities

9. **Mr. Pike:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what responses he has received to the consultation exercise on competition in the management of local authority sports and leisure facilities; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Moynihan: Three hundred and fifty two responses have been received to the consultation paper issued by my right hon. Friends the Secretaries of State for the Environment, for Scotland and for Wales on 28 September 1987. The paper invited comments by 11 December 1987 and the responses are now being considered in detail.

Mr. Pike: Will the Minister recognise the widespread concern among local authorities about the possible introduction of competition in the provision of such important services, bearing in mind also a parallel consultation paper that suggests that some local authorities may have to invite tenders for such services in April 1989? Will he give an assurance that he will reach a decision on this as soon as possible? Indeed, will he say now that the Government do not intend to proceed in that direction?

Mr. Moynihan: The hon. Gentleman will be aware that the Government are committed to consider all the representations that they have received, and for me to pre-empt that consultation exercise would be wrong. However, I give him the undertaking that, as soon as possible, we shall make an announcement, and I hope that that will take place early in February.

Mr. John Carlisle: Does my hon. Friend accept that the majority of Conservative Members believe that competitive tendering can bring substantial savings to ratepayers? Does he further accept that the majority of leisure and sports facilities run by local authorities are losing enormous amounts of money? If that money can be saved my hon. Friend will be doing a great service to sport, ratepayers and the sports industry.

Mr. Moynihan: I fully endorse that view.

Mr. Douglas: The Minister has no direct responsibility for Scotland, but will he take into consideration the fact

that examples of the Government's financial strictures in Scotland include the possible closure of the only swimming pool on the Western Isles—*[Interruption.]* Conservative Members may think that is funny, but it represents an important local provision. Will the Minister state to the House how many local authorities in England and Wales, and possibly in Scotland, support the thrust of that particularly obnoxious policy?

Mr. Moynihan: I do not believe that the results from the proposals currently being considered by the Government will be those anticipated by the hon. Gentleman. For the record, I place before the House the fact that we have had many responses from a widespread group of interested parties, not least the governing bodies of sport. If one considers the views of those groups, it is clear that, from greyhound racing to sea anglers, from badminton to squash, from the Jockey Club to the Lawn Tennis Association, all are fully supportive of the Government's proposals.

Mr. David Evans: Is my hon. Friend aware that the extensive sporting facilities at Luton Town football club are widely used by the local authority?

At the weekend my hon. Friend spoke of English clubs being allowed back into Europe at the end of this season. Does he agree that his view was vindicated by the fact that last night Luton Town allowed visiting fans back into the stadium for the first time in 18 months? That resulted in three arrests and one policeman being taken to hospital. That suggests that my hon. Friend's view is absolutely right and that English clubs should not be allowed back into Europe until the season comes to an end.

Mr. Moynihan: I am grateful to my hon. Friend for that contribution. I should like to add a strong message of support to those who are now negotiating in UEFA if they are negotiating on the basis that re-admission of English clubs must be conditional on the behaviour of our fans, not only throughout the rest of the domestic season, but throughout the European championships, which will take place in West Germany. Any decision that is not conditional upon that is wrong.

May I congratulate my hon. Friend's club on the important community initiatives that it has developed? I recommend that other clubs use their facilities for similar community purposes.

Mr. Speaker: Order. I appreciate that we do not often get sports questions, but the question is about local authority sporting facilities.

Mr. Pendry: Will the Minister make a firm decision to stop the nonsense of privatising sports and leisure facilities, especially in view of the many submissions that he has had? Certainly he has had one from the Amateur Swimming Association, whose patron is no less a person than Her Majesty The Queen, which states clearly:

"Any attempts to make learning to swim more difficult and more expensive must be a retrograde step."

Will the Minister stand tall for sport on this occasion at least?

Mr. Moynihan: We have no proposals to privatise local authority recreational facilities. The privatisation of management contracts, as the hon. Member well knows, is sought to improve competition in the running of facilities. That has been our main task throughout the consultation exercise. The hon. Gentleman referred governing body whose patron is Her Majesty The Qu I refer him——

Mr. Speaker: Order. We do not bring the royal fa into our arguments in the Chamber.

Mr. Moynihan: The Lawn Tennis Association, w the hon. Gentleman knows well, and which widespread support throughout the country, is supportive of the concept and would see it as opportunity to increase and improve the utilisatio facilities in the public sector.

Mr. Harry Greenway: Does my hon. Friend agree there is real unfairness between local authority prov sporting amenities, which do not pay rates, and priva provided sporting amenities, where rates are paid? Is not totally unfair, and should not the position be rect soon?

Mr. Moynihan: One of the important reasons bringing forward the consultation document was to en that the private sector had an opportunity to bid fo management of local authority facilities. I am certain the introduction of competition into the running facilities would be a major improvement and w provide the answer to my hon. Friend's point.

Mr. Denis Howell: Is it not the case that overwhelming majority of local authorities and sp organisations are opposed to the proposition that sp facilities and swimming baths which have been prov by the community should be handed over to pri management? That is a prescription that will ensure no local authority will ever again build another swimn pool or sports facility. Since this ludicrous policy conceived before the hon. Gentleman took office, wi understand that he has our full support for burying soon as possible? Will he ensure that if schools opt ou the state system they should not take with them the use sports facilities which were provided by the commu for the benefit of the whole neighbourhood? Will he in those cases to protect the use of those facilities fo sporting organisations?

Mr. Moynihan: The right hon. Gentleman will note in the consultation paper it was specifically stated th is not intended that the competitive tender regime sh apply to sports facilities which form an integral par educational establishments and which are provi principally for the use of pupils and students at t establishments. I fully appreciate the importance of thrust of his argument with regard to dual use facilitie sensitive reappraisal of the management of facilitie local authority control will lead to an increase in use

Mr. Holt: While my hon. Friend is considering problem, would he care to consider the ice rink Billingham, which is currently run by private managem under licence from the local authority? The local autho has said that it will not renew the licence, not because rink does not provide a good service for the peopl because it does—and not because it is making mone because it is not — but because it says that councillors in the town hall can run a sporting facility the local community.

Mr. Moynihan: If my hon. Friend cares to send me details, I shall consider the matter.

Mr. Speaker: Order. I have allowed a good run on that question. We must now proceed more rapidly.

Property Fraud

10. **Mr. Simon Hughes:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what action he is taking to combat property fraud within the areas of development corporations; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Ridley: Urban development corporations take all reasonable action to detect fraud. If cases of alleged fraud are discovered, it is a matter for the police.

Mr. Hughes: Is the Secretary of State aware that there has been at least one conviction of a property developer dealing in docklands property recently, and that there have been at least two investigations by the Metropolitan and City police of allegations of complaints about property fraud and abuse in docklands? Given that the Secretary of State is now setting up further development corporations and that there have been major abuses, will he have serious discussions with the National Audit Office, which is preparing a report on accountancy controls, to be published in April, with the police forces and with the corporations themselves, so that we can ensure that the regime for dealing with property and its handling in docklands and other development corporation areas is not subject to such widespread abuse in the future?

Mr. Ridley: The hon. Gentleman makes allegations of widespread abuse and fraud which are not substantiated. I resented bitterly the last time that he raised this point, when he mentioned an individual by name. If he has any complaints against any individual and believes that there is any evidence of fraud, he should immediately tell the police, and not mention names in the House.

Mr. Robert G. Hughes: In view of the attempt by the hon. Member for Southwark and Bermondsey (Mr. Hughes) to smear the London Docklands Development Corporation and the whole marvellous movement that has done so much for central London, will my right hon. Friend confirm that the development corporation has done a remarkable job? Many houses for local people have been built, many jobs have been created and a tube line has been built, all of which flies in the face of what was claimed by the Opposition parties. They claimed that none of this would be achieved, and all that they are trying to do now is to denigrate what is being done and what will be done in the future.

Mr. Ridley: I entirely agree with my hon. Friend. What has been done is striking and astonishing and has been done in the face of hostility from both Opposition parties. I hope that they will now recognise that the London Docklands Development Corporation has been scrupulous in ensuring standards of professional conduct at every level throughout its organisation.

Rating Reform

11. **Mr. McAllion:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will estimate the average poll tax bill in England and Wales that is likely to be faced by a young single person with an annual income of £2,500 compared with the figure for someone earning £25,000 per year.

Mr. Howard: If the community charge had been fully in force in 1987-88, the average charge in England and Wales would have been £219. A young single person wit an income of £2,500 per annum would be likely to receiv a rebate.

Mr. McAllion: The Minister should know that the cu which the Government are implementing make rebat schemes of very limited benefit. The Low Pay Unit ha estimated that single people under the age of 25 will los their entitlement to rebate when their annual incom exceeds the princely sum of £2,380. Given that th Minister told the *Daily Telegraph* in July 1986 that, unde the current system of local government finance, someon earning £25,000 per year would be paying 20 times a much as someone on £2,500 a year towards the cost o local services, how can he describe it as fairer that thes two groups should now pay exactly the same, when i means that those earning £25,000 per year will pay muc less and those earning £2,500 per year will pay more?

Mr. Howard: The hon. Gentleman has misunderstoo what I said in the article to which he referred. It is the cas that the highest 10 per cent. of households by income wil continue to contribute about 16 times as much as th lowest 10 per cent. of households by income to the cost o local authority services when the community charge is i force.

Mr. Squire: Has my hon. and learned Friend noted tha the number of people who are unhappy with th community charge has apparently risen to nearly 70 pe cent.? Is he satisfied with that level, or does he have an proposals to bring forward that will have some effect i reducing the community charge's current unpopularity?

Mr. Howard: I certainly saw the poll to which my hon Friend referred. The conclusion was based on a clea misunderstanding of the effect of the proposals. Only 2 per cent. of those who responded to the poll thought tha their households would be better off as a result of ou proposals. In fact, 53 per cent. of households will be bette off. If that fact had been more widely understood, th results of the poll would have been rather different.

Mr. Allen McKay: As the legislation reads, it appear that a person with a dual residence or a static caravan wil pay two poll taxes. In that case, does it mean that the Prime Minister will pay one charge for a residence i Dulwich, one for the tied cottage at 10 Downing street and another for her holiday home at Chequers?

Mr. Howard: We have made it perfectly clear tha people with second or third homes will pay standard community charges in respect of such homes to a maximum of twice the community charge for the local authority in the areas in which such homes are situated.

Mr. Riddick: Will my hon. and learned Friend take this opportunity to give us some more details concerning the rebate scheme that will be available for people on modest incomes and for pensioners? Does he not believe that a £6,000 savings limit will hit those pensioners who have actually been prudent enough to save during their working lives? Will he reassure me that people in my constituency —for example, pensioners and those on modest incomes —will be properly protected under the proposals?

Mr. Howard: I cannot give my hon. Friend details of the rebates. We are talking about a scheme that will not be enforced until April 1990. He will not expect final decisions about such rebates to have been made at this

stage. I can tell my hon. Friend that 80 per cent. of single pensioners will pay less under the community charge than they pay in rates.

Mr. Rooker: Will the Minister therefore confirm that one in five single pensioners will pay more under the poll tax system than they pay under the rates system? Will he confirm what he said in answer to the original question asked by my hon. Friend the Member for Dundee, East (Mr. McAllion)? The Secretary of State said that a person who is earning £25,000 a year will pay 20 times as much to a local authority as a man on £2,500 a year. That is exactly the same figure as the Minister used in the *Daily Telegraph* article.

For the avoidance of doubt, will the Minister confirm that a young single person on £2,500 a year, who, because of fear of physical violence, happens to seek refuge, will be required to pay the poll tax, but, because of such fear, will be able to have his name excluded from the poll tax register? However, the person who earns, say £25,000 a year and is the head of the security services will not even pay the poll tax.

Mr. Howard: The hon. Gentleman's point is based on a misunderstanding. Those who, for security reasons, will be exempt from payment of the community charge will be obliged to make a contribution in lieu to the armed forces. That payment will be allocated in due course to the local authority concerned. It is not the case that they will not have to pay.

The answer to the first part of the hon. Gentleman's question is simple. I should have thought that a change that benefits four out of five single pensioners would be widely welcomed by those who have the interests of pensioners at heart.

Vacant Land

12. **Mr. Steen:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how many acres of land are currently in the Government land register of public vacant land; and how many acres of public land have been removed from the register since its inception.

Mr. Ridley: On 31 December 1987 the registers of unused and underused land owned by public bodies contained details of 91,000 acres. Since the first registers were compiled in 1981, 66,000 acres of land have been removed from them.

Mr. Steen: As the planning process seems to create a situation in which more vacant public land continues to be placed on the register, does my right hon. Friend agree that, even at the present rate of disposal, which is commendable, and even if he speeds it up, which will be better, there will still be many tens of thousands of acres of public land on the register by the turn of the century? Is not some new initiative now required to get rid of surplus public land? I refer to initiatives such as privatising land, handing it over to private companies to market and sell, or handing to public authorities the lion's share of it once it has been disposed of.

Mr. Ridley: I agree with my hon. Friend that there is far too much vacant urban land. He will be encouraged to know that in 1986, 46 per cent. of all new development in England took place on previously used or vacant urban land, which was a good use of that vacant land. I am awaiting the report of the Audit Commission, which is looking into this matter, which may give some on how to proceed. Further powers that will operation of the registers are being sought Government Bill.

Mr. Hardy: Does n the disposal of pu land become absurd if su h a policy leads to r development but the relevant local aut prevented from providin schools and other such development makes necessary?

Mr. Ridley: If that conjunction of ci occurred it would be abs d, but it does no many ways whereby such elopment can fol bringing into use of vacant land.

Mr. Gow: With regard to the figure of 91 much of which is in urban areas but suitable —does my right hon. Friend think that into use of that land is of great importance, in relieving the huge housing problems and rural areas? Will my right hon. Friend take fu to bring those acres of land into use?

Mr. Ridley: I agree with my hon. Friend. as are necessary are being taken in the Local Bill. However, not all that land is in places w a demand for it. Some of it is. There is acquiring land in an area where there is no industrialist who wishes to use it. We must those who want to use the land can do advertise that if there is any develope housebuilder or housing association that w vacant land in the ownership of various au that he has to do is to apply to my Departm is truly vacant, we will ensure that it is made him.

Radioactive Waste

13. **Mr. Campbell-Savours:** To ask the State for the Environment what representat received about the management of nuclear w

Mr. Moynihan: My right hon. Friend ha number of representations, which have been Nirex.

Mr. Campbell-Savours: Is the Minister awa British Nuclear Fuels offered up West Cu sacrificial lamb in a quest to find a national disposal of intermediate-level nuclear waste mandate from the district authorities, no ma the county authorities and no mandate for do the industrial development auhorities resp creating jobs in West Cumbria? Will the Mini assurance that this decision will be taken o objective of criteria and will not be influen whims of the monopolist employer and domi West Cumbrian economy—British Nuclear F

Mr. Moynihan: I can give that categorical

Mr. Michael Brown: Is my hon. Friend a have a certain amount of sympathy with the h for Workington (Mr. Campbell-Savours), imagine what his constituents must be going th my hon. Friend draw the hon. Gentleman's the fact that if the Labour party were in arrangements would now be in hand for

shallow facility for the disposal of intermediate and low-level waste? Have we not made some improvement, in that the hon. Gentleman's constituents have an opportunity of consultation and are being consulted at the present time?

Mr. Moynihan: There is no doubt that opportunities for full consultation in such an exercise are essential. I give a categorical assurance to my hon. Friend that there will be the fullest and most comprehensive consultation exercise once Nirex has come forward with a proposal for the Government's consideration.

Dr. Cunningham: Does the Minister recall the unanimous report of the Select Committee on the subject of nuclear waste, which was chaired by the hon. Member for Hornsey and Wood Green (Sir H. Rossi)? It recommended that site—specific research was essential before any site could be properly indentified, let alone used? Does he recall that a great deal of waste is accumulating on the surface of the British Nuclear Fuels site at Sellafield and that the Labour-controlled Copeland borough council has made it clear to British Nuclear Fuels that the continuing proliferation of surface buildings to house intermediate-level waste is unacceptable to the council and the community? How can we ever develop a long-term strategy for the storage of intermediate-level nuclear waste if no research and discussions are allowed to get off the gound?

Mr. Moynihan: The hon. Gentleman knows that in no way would it be right or proper for me to pre-empt what Nirex will come forward with. All I can say is that I a certain that the consultation exercise that is under way w be rigorously looked at and that the proposals that cor forward will take account of the sort of points raised the hon. Gentleman.

Nirex

14. **Mr. Ieuan Wyn Jones:** To ask the Secretary of Sta for the Environment when he last met the chairman Nirex; and what matters were discussed.

Mr. Moynihan: My right hon. Friend last met t chairman of Nirex on 22 October 1987. They discussed number of matters relating to Nirex.

Mr. Jones: In view of the massive opposition to t quest by Nirex to identify potential sites for the dispos of low and intermediate-level nuclear waste, is not t consultation procedure now undertaken by Nirex doom to failure? In view of the Government's stated aim saving money, does the Minister not think that it wou be far better to cancel that consultation procedure?

Mr. Moynihan: No, I do not. It is vital that Nir should fully investigate the three options for a deep, dua purpose disposal facility — deep burial on lan tunnelling under the sea from the shore and disposal in the sea bed from an offshore structure. It is vital that many technical assessments as possible are made so th Nirex can give full and comprehensive answers to t Government as soon as possible.

Radio Broadcasting (Written Answer)

3.31 pm

Mr. Roy Hattersley (Birmingham, Sparkbrook): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. It concerns the rights of the House and the Government's conduct of business in the House. Yesterday, the Home Secretary gave a written answer—No. 150—on the future of the BBC. In his answer he described what he was proposing as a "major change" in policy and went on to justify that claim with descriptions of the introduction of national commercial radio and deregulation of local radio. The significance of that announcement is obvious and clear, and I do not think that the House would argue about its importance.

This major statement — "major" by the Home Secretary's admission and description—was provided by means of a written answer which was available to hon. Members several hours after it was available to newspapers. I do not make a great point about the usual courtesies offered to the Opposition, but the Opposition's copy was delivered at 10 o'clock this morning, whereas the Press Gallery copy was available some time during the middle of yesterday afternoon. It is a denial of our proper rights if a statement of such major importance is issued by way of a contrived written answer when, according to all the standards of normal parliamentary procedure, the Home Secretary should have had the courage to make the statement in the House and subject himself to parliamentary inquiry and proper parliamentary scrutiny.

I make the point of order in the hope that two forms of progress will be possible. First, I hope that we will begin to consider guidelines by which there is a distinction between those subjects that can be announced by written answer and those that are so important that they must be the subject of ministerial statement. Secondly, I hope that, if that general rule cannot be pursued by you, Mr. Speaker, or some other authority, the Leader of the House—who has an obligation to us all, not just his own party—will tell the Home Secretary that a statement described by him as a "major change" in policy should not have been made by way of written answer and suggest that the Home Secretary remedy his mistake by offering a statement to the House so that we may comment on it.

Mr. Speaker: This matter was raised yesterday and I said then that the alternative would presumably have been a statement, which is not under my control. I can only say that, because there was no statement yesterday, about 25 Back Benchers were able to take part in the debate. However, a further 30 still failed to get in. I suppose that it is question of balance.

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: Order. I am on my feet.

I am sure that the Leader of the House will have heard what has been said; but this is not remotely a matter of order for me.

Mr. Dennis Skinner (Bolsover): On a point of order Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: I am not taking the hon. Member.

Mr. Skinner: Later.

Mr. Speaker: Not even later.

Mr. Norman Buchan (Paisley, South): I point of order, Mr. Speaker. We have to well-furnished duty of protecting hon. Mem well as any technical aspect involved. I wa this issue. I learned about the written answe past 10 last night. I would hope that, in t hon. Members — quite apart from courtesies of the House—you would mak view on the conduct of major matters of this.

As we see it, the proposals represent the the public service concept of broadcasting, w the great jewel in the crown of Britain in the past 60 years. They would mean the handing of our broadcasting to potential monopolies of Maxwell, Murdoch and Stevens in the They would mean a lightly regulated broadc in which the participants competed in trivia a any genuine diversity of programmes——

Mr. Speaker: Order. I called the hon because of his former direct interest in this

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: Order. I am not taking any of order.

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: Order. This is not a matter

Mr. Tony Banks (Newham, North-West)

Mr. Speaker: It is not a matter of order. T Member for Birmingham, Sparkbrook (Mr addressed his question not to me but to the House and the Government.

Mr. Hattersley *rose*——

Mr. Banks: It is a matter of order.

Mr. Speaker: It is not a matter of order control of——

Mr. Banks: Let me raise it.

Mr. Speaker: No. I shall take the spokesman. Mr. Hattersley.

Mr. Hattersley: I believed that I was maki point of order for you, Sir, in asking you t House from the Government's behaviour. Ho your point and I have no wish to argue with y recall that such points of order have often be opportunity for the Leader of the House to r the right hon. Gentleman's duty to respond i He knows that this is a genuine problem and statement—the Government's own descripti been made in the usual way and he owes it something, even though it may not be adequ

The Lord Privy Seal and Leader of th Commons (Mr. John Wakeham): I have hea right hon. Gentleman has said and I shall l matter. I believe that the Home Secretary a properly, but I remind the House that we h questions tomorrow.

Mr. David Winnick (Walsall, North): On order, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: I am not having a point of point of order.

Hong Kong

3.37 pm

The Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (Sir Geoffrey Howe): I beg to move,

That this House takes note of the White Paper on the Annual Report on Hong Kong 1987 (Cm. 293) and endorses the policies which the Government is pursuing to maintain Hong Kong's future prosperity and stability.

Her Majesty's Government and the Opposition both attach great importance to the subject of today's debate. It is both a product and a symbol of Parliament's commitment to Hong Kong. The Government's commitment to the publication of annual reports on the territory was itself a response to the wishes expressed in Hong Kong and taken up by hon. Members. The Government and Parliament alike are equally determined to fulfil our responsibilities to Hong Kong. Indeed, this House has already considered Hong Kong on a number of occasions since it endorsed overwhelmingly the signature of the joint declaration on Hong Kong's future. I have always been encouraged by the strength and quality of the interest shown on both sides of the House. We all seek a future for Hong Kong that will be in the best interests of the territory and its people.

Today, I want to concentrate on three separate themes: the implementation of the joint declaration; our consultation with Hong Kong and its people; and the issue of confidence. Britain and China are engaged in Hong Kong in a unique enterprise. We are creating conditions for the transfer of responsibility for an entire community, while preserving its present systems, human rights and lifestyle.

The relationship between the British and Chinese Governments is close and cordial. That is as it should be. It cannot be emphasised too strongly that that relationship is vitally important to the people of Hong Kong; but, at the same time, the success of the Hong Kong enterprise is critical to it. Hong Kong therefore lies at the heart of that relationship.

Throughout the complex process of negotiating the joint declaration, we bent all our energies to securing a good deal for Hong Kong. I believe we succeeded. Now we are working, with the same determination, for the full and faithful implementation of that joint declaration. The Chinese Government, I believe, have an equal commitment.

During the past year I have met my Chinese colleague, Foreign Minister Wu Xueqian, on three occasions and Hong Kong has been a major theme at each of those meetings. I look forward to continuing that discussion—as well as to considering other international and bilateral questions—when I welcome Mr. Wu Xuequian on an official visit to Britain in the spring.

The British and Chinese Governments have developed a pattern of close and pragmatic co-operation over the implementation of the joint declaration. We recognise the need for the utmost sensitivity to the circumstances of Hong Kong and the concerns of its people. Understandably, they look for reassurance. One important element of that reassurance is and will be a high degree of continuity in Hong Kong's institutions and systems of government across the change of sovereignty in 1997.

The watchwords for the future remain "prosperity and stability"; and stability requires institutional continuity. That has been much in the minds of those who are work intensively together, for example, in the Joint Liai Group and the Land Commission.

During the past year that work has resulted in fur solid achievements: a series of agreements on H Kong's continued, separate participation in internatio organisations; agreement on further steps enabling H Kong to protect its own commercial interests before after 1997; further steps in securing continuity over tr and identity documentation; and good progress discussion on defence and public order.

At the same time, valuable work has been done on drafting of the Basic Law. It is that Chinese law which enshrine for post-1997 Hong Kong the constitutio provisions set out in the joint declaration. The draftin the Basic Law is, of course, a matter for the Chin Government, but, equally naturally, we are following process with the greatest interest.

We welcome the extent to which China has sough involve Hong Kong people in the drafting process. Alm half the members of the Basic Law drafting commi come from Hong Kong. The Basic Law consulta committee in the territory has a vital role in reflect Hong Kong views. For our part, we have the right satisfy ourselves that the eventual provisions of the Ba Law fully and accurately reflect the joint declaration.

Without our present constructive relationship w China, we could not have made such progress implementing the joint declaration. I believe that that is widely understood in Hong Kong.

However, there are also certain misconceptions t should not be allowed to persist. One myth is that Brit seeks good relations with China at the expense of interests of Hong Kong. Nothing could be further fr the truth, and anyone who went, as I did, through lengthy and strenuous negotiations with the Chinese wh led to the joint declaration knows that is a grotesq distortion. There is no question of putting Hong Ko second: we have upheld and will uphold Hong Kon interests to the full, not only because that is right, because it would be an illusion to suppose that we co create good relations with China at the expense of interests of Hong Kong.

All the evidence makes it plain that Hong Ko prospers when London and Peking are in harmony. T central fallacy is to suggest that there is a choice betwe the interests of Hong Kong and good relations betwe Britain and China. One cannot have one without the oth The single question that needs asking—it is important is how to secure the firmest possible foundation for future stability and prosperity of Hong Kong. It certai cannot be founded on confrontation between Britain a China.

In Hong Kong, a lively and articulate commun ensures that its concerns are heard. Successive governe have stood up for Hong Kong's interests m persuasively, both in London and in Peking.

The death of Sir Edward Youde at the end of 1986 w a tragic loss. The whole House will wish to join me paying tribute to the wisdom and dedication that showed in shaping Hong Kong's future, both administrator and as my adviser during the negotiation the joint declaration. His successor, Sir David Wilson, h brought to the office unparalleled experience; I am glad say that that has been widely acknowledged. He uniquely qualified to administer and champion t

[Sir Geoffrey Howe]

interests of Hong Kong. He has my fullest confidence, and he has shown admirable steadiness and clarity of purpose during his first year in office.

The Government attach the highest importance to the process of consulting Hong Kong. There are close and intensive contacts between the British and Hong Kong Governments on all matters related to the implementation of the joint declaration. Officials of the Hong Kong Government play a full part in the work of the Joint Liaison Group.

Where consultation with Hong Kong people is concerned, one of the major events of the past year has been the review of developments in representative government. An earlier review took place in 1984. It resulted in important measures of reorganisation, including the introduction of 24 indirectly elected members into the Legislative Council. A commitment was made then to conduct a further round of public consultation in 1987. That commitment has been carried out in full.

The review is now nearing its end. A wide range of options was put forward for public debate, with none ruled out in advance. It has been scrupulously objective and impartial. Hong Kong people were encouraged to express their views, and their response has been on an unprecedented scale. An independent Survey Office has recorded the submissions made and views expressed by members of the community. Its report is comprehensive: no view, from whatever source, has been excluded. Two individuals of integrity and high standing in the community were appointed as independent monitors to oversee the work of the office. They have testified that the Survey Office recorded public views impartially and accurately.

The outcome of the review will be recorded in a White Paper, to be published by the Hong Kong Government next month. The House will understand that I cannot today anticipate details of the eventual decisions that will be announced. But I should like to explain some of the background.

In the first place, Her Majesty's Government and the Hong Kong Government alike wish to see the development towards more representative government in Hong Kong continue steadily. Neither we nor they would wish to impose any particular form or model. Hong Kong is unique in many ways, and it will need to develop its own system of government suited to its own requirements. Such a system should respect the wishes of the community as a whole and reflect Hong Kong's special circumstances and conditions, in the future as in the past.

We should acknowledge all the relevant factors: the range of views expressed by the community; the relevant provisions of the joint declaration; and the work now in hand to draft the Basic Law for post-1997 Hong Kong. We must ensure that any measures taken are accepted by the community as a whole and are consistent with the maintenance of stability.

Above all, we should remember that what we are building is not merely a temporary structure, but something which can and will endure in the years beyond 1997, and so carry Hong Kong forward into the 21st century. That is why our work must be set in the context of the establishment with China of arrangements for the future, and alongside the drafting of the Basic Law. There is nothing new about this. Through existence, its identity has evolved i realisation of its unique historical, international circumstances. It is again that we must work to preserve it.

The Hong Kong Government's Gre wide range of issues, but, as the Hous aware, the main focus of public del question whether a directly elected introduced into the Legislative Counci This issue was the subject of the submissions to the Survey Office. It also in the Legislative Council and other fo

The Survey Office report shows th views expressed have been in favour introducing some directly elected m Legislative Council. Of course, man express any view. None the less, I thin accurate to speak of a strong trend in p supports taking that step well before 1

On the question of timing, the repor be sharply divided. Some people b elections should be introduced this year the Legislative Council are due. Others about moving forward so quickly. They introduction at a later date, with some subsequent round of elections in 1991 most appropriate opportunity.

Mr. Jerry Wiggin (Weston-super-M sure that my right hon. and learned F what is common parlance in Hong Kon to say that representations were rec 137,000 people out of a population of 5 that the Government will bear in mi Chinese with residential qualification democratic Government. That shoul account.

Sir Geoffrey Howe: That is why th only one of the factors that have to be ta The report encompasses representation debates of many kinds in all the repr That is why the question is not suscep simple analysis. The division about whi has been reflected in debate, sometimes level from the Legislative Council down argued views are not always the most in most strident are not always the most the most likely to achieve the desired re

I have spoken of the need for co preliminary draft of the Basic Law, recen Basic Law drafting committee, all the composition of the legislature provide for element. That is very welcome in Hong of the considerations that should guide u conclusions. The views expressed by Ho help to establish the parameters within plan to move ahead on a steady and acceptable to the community as a whole. noted the general feeling in Hong Kon Paper should contain a clear statemen intended that direct elections should understand the widely expressed wish tha should bring an end to uncertainty.

In view of the short time that is availab I should like to give other hon. Members

possible to speak. However, I cannot exclude from my opening remarks a few words about the position in Hong Kong of the so-called boat people from Vietnam. On that topic as on any other, I shall be ready in winding up to address specific concerns raised by hon. Members.

I am acutely conscious of the concern felt in Hong Kong about the problem of the boat people. We are doing all we possibly can to relieve Hong Kong of this burden. We have accepted a further quota for resettlement in the United Kingdom, and we are urging other countries to follow suit. We are also discussing with all those concerned how those Vietnamese not qualifying as refugees might be returned to Vietnam against suitable assurances about their treatment. None of these matters is easy to discuss or to carry forward. It will be a long haul, but I assure the House and the people in Hong Kong that we shall persist in trying to find a way forward to solve this problem. In all that we do for Hong Kong, our overriding concern is to sustain confidence in the future.

Mr. Andrew Faulds (Warley, East): Would it not be advisable to make a very strong reservation in terms of the comments that the right hon. and learned Gentleman was making a moment or two ago, that there will of course be no compulsory repatriation to Vietnam while the unhappy circumstances in Vietnam still prevail?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: I understand the force of the hon. Gentleman's point. That is why I said that, when we were making representations and inquiries, suitable assurances about the treatment of anyone who might return to Vietnam were absolutely essential.

We are trying to reconcile two or three almost irreconcilable factors. It is plainly necessary to reduce the numbers in camps in Hong Kong; but there is clearly a limit to the places that can be found for them elsewhere. The third channel must certainly be sought: an acceptable way of returning them to their land. The hon. Gentleman is right to remind the House of the difficulties.

Mr. Churchill (Davyhulme): Is my right hon. Friend aware that during the past five years, while there have been closed camps in Hong Kong and on the islands, not one of the refugees — not a single family, although some have been behind barbed wire for more than five years — has asked to be repatriated to Vietnam? Will he take that into account? Furthermore, will Her Majesty's Government redouble their efforts to persuade other Governments to accept refugees for resettlement?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: My hon. Friend is right: he directs his focus to the other components. I have taken up that point in virtually every meeting that I have had with any other Government who could possibly be a candidate to receive refugees. I do not think that my hon. Friend is right to say that not one refugee has sought repatriation; I am sure that some have tried to return to Vietnam. He is, however, right to say that the numbers have been very small. *[Interruption.]* As my hon. Friend the Member for Christchurch (Mr. Adley) says, an underlying feature is the achievement of more balanced policies in Vietnam. That would make it a more acceptable home to return to.

Mr. Chris Mullin (Sunderland, South): Where was the right hon. and learned Gentleman when the Americans bombed Vietnam?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: I shall halt my digression rather than be distracted by that sedentary intervention.

Let me reiterate that our overriding sustain confidence in the future, both in t Hong Kong and in the wider internal co course there are uncertainties, but I beli should be seen in perspective.

Hong Kong people have always been h there is a strong tradition of travel overseas or training. Recently there has been som emigration. Uncertainty about the future factor in that, although it is by no means Moreover, many Hong Kong people, havi foreign nationality or residence qualificati return to Hong Kong. They are attracted lifestyle, the rewards and the sense of ident the community there. We and the Government will do our utmost to ensure attractions remain.

The House is, of course, well aware of recently connected with the Hong Kong stoc exchange. Hong Kong exchanges were no effects of the worldwide downturn in stock the Hong Kong Government moved deci ordinate financial support — to which, I a note, the Chinese authorities made contribution. They have also set in hand ac the longer-term problems connected with su operation of the exchanges.

Equally firm action has been taken mo ensure that allegations about the conduc individual office-holders of the stock exch pursued, without affecting the smooth ope exchange. The Hong Kong Government ar that the territory's position and reputatio international financial centre should be safe

The problems that emerge are being tackl On the credit side, we have much cause for en There is the joint declaration itself, and th certainty embodied in that legally binding treaty; there is China's commitment to work us over the implementation of the joint decl there is the efficiency and drive of the local ad creating conditions in which enterprise can

We are encouraged, finally, by the excepti performance of the local economy: a growth of over 12 per cent., bringing the 20-year aver 8 per cent. per annum; an increase in domes 26 per cent. over the year; virtually full empl a strong property market and high levels o Few economies in the world could match None of it suggests a lack of confidence in H prospects on the part of those who trade and

The Hong Kong Government are plann fully for the territory's future. Ambitious p hand to take the territory into the next quality of life is being steadily improved. Opp the next generation are being opened up.

The transitional years up to the change o in 1997 are bound to bring uncertainties, but has shown an admirable ability to adapt to sustained by the resilience and dynamism of is sustained, too, by the good will of the Chinese Governments and their joint commi successful implementation of the joint decla confident that all these advantages will keep steady on its course.

[Sir Geoffrey Howe]

It is the solemn responsibility of the British Government to administer Hong Kong up to 30 June 1997 in the best interests of its people. We shall discharge that responsibility to the utmost of our abilities.

4.4 pm

Mr. Gerald Kaufman (Manchester, Gorton): I join the Foreign Secretary in paying tribute to the late Sir Edward Youde. I knew Sir Edward well and worked closely with him for a time. I was well aware of his many qualities and, of course, of his heroic past. It is right that we should remember him now.

The Opposition are grateful to the Government for agreeing to the Labour party's request for a debate on the annual report. We are grateful for the annual report itself. The useful availability of these reports seems somewhat at odds with the adamant rejection by the Foreign Secretary almost three years ago today—it was 21 January 1985—of requests by my right hon. and hon. Friends for annual reports on progress in Hong Kong following the agreement of 1984.

Hansard for 21 January 1985 is littered with categorical rejections of the need and scope for such reports and the damage that they might inflict. The Foreign Secretary said:

"Such reports tend to be a repetition of previous reports in form . . . Although designed with the best intentions, they often have the opposite effect of that intended . . . My instinctive reaction to the annualisation of reports is to regard that practice as often diminishing the importance and value of the reports."

He said with enormous vehemence:

"one can become depressed by the wearisome familiarity of the structure of annual reports. They can fall into an annual rhythm, even when the scene is changing as rapidly as it is in Hong Kong. I am anxious not to condemn the reality of the subject to being encapsulated in a wearisome annual framework."—[*Official Report*, 21 January 1985; Vol. 71, c. 734 and 745.]

I am pleased that the right hon. and learned Gentleman repented of that view, because I think that the whole House will agree that the series of annual reports is of great value to the House and the people of Hong Kong. I hope that the right hon. and learned Gentleman's change of mind is a forerunner of even more valuable mind changes on this and other matters.

The report contains much encouraging information. We congratulate the Joint Liaison Group on the agreed involvement of the Hong Kong special administrative region, as it will become in 1997, in the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, the multi-fibre arrangement, the Customs Co-operation Council and the Food and Agriculture Organisation. We are sure that, as a member of the International Labour Organisation, Hong Kong China will pursue more enlightened employment policies than do the present British Government.

We are pleased to learn of the air service agreement with the Netherlands and of the anticipated air service agreement with Switzerland. All this makes encouraging progress in the evolution of the unique experiment on which the Chinese People's Republic has agreed to embark with such breadth of mind and vision.

We greatly applaud other aspects of the report. In particular, we congratulate the Hong Kong housing authority on its plans in the coming financial year to complete a record 52,000 public housing units. That

52,000 in Hong Kong contrasts
to 25,000 public sector complet
year. Hong Kong, with one tent
is building twice as many pub
Government are permitting.

This remarkable achievemen
Britain by 500,000 new counci
knows, we badly need. Perhap
could persuade the Secretary of S
to take a trip to Hong Kong a
—that would be most unfair
Kong; warlords are completely
— but to learn much-needed
provision for public need.

Mr. Cyril D. Townsend (Bexle
hon. Gentleman is far too soph
argument to the House. Does h
Kong has absorbed a very large
mainland China who are utterly
Hong Kong are entirely differe
Britain.

Mr. Kaufman: I accept that
Hong Kong has serious difficul
dismiss or underestimate for a
serious difficulties, too. We also
homeless people who would
admirable public sector housing
which Hong Kong is participatin

I thank the Foreign Secretar
about the boat people. I acknowl
difficulty of the problem. It is f
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"The Legislature of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region shall be constituted by elections."

We welcome the clarity and forthrightness of that pledge. In his statement of 25 October 1984, the Foreign Secretary confirmed that commitment when he said:

"The agreement provides for the Legislature of Hong Kong in the future to be on an elective basis".

In response to questions, he said:

"the legislature . . . must be developed and established, after proper consideration, on a due time scale." — [*Official Report*, 25 October 1984; Vol. 65, c. 822 and 826.]

I must confess that it is not immediately apparent to me what those words are supposed to mean. That phraseology may be a characteristic example of the Foreign Secretary's occidental inscrutability. However, I take it that that was a circumlocutory way of saying that the Foreign Secretary was keeping his options open. I say "his options" because, as he properly said this afternoon, although the Chinese Government naturally have a legitimate and important interest in that fundamental decision, it is a decision for Her Majesty's Government alone as they have sole responsibility for the administration of Hong Kong until 30 June 1997.

The question therefore is not whether there should be direct elections for the Hong Kong Legislative Council, but when and for what proportion of those seats the election should take place. The Chinese make no bones about that. A most formidable and brilliant representative of the Chinese embassy addressed a meeting of my right hon. and hon. Friends earlier this week. She categorically committed the People's Republic of China to direct elections for Hong Kong. She acknowledged that an overwhelming majority of the people in Hong Kong are in favour of direct elections. Those of us who listened to her welcomed the sincerity of that statement as well as the consummate skill with which the Chinese approach was described. We were also told that, while naturally China had the right to its own point of view about timing and proportions, the People's Republic of China is not opposed to direct elections before 1997.

I acknowledge immediately that the question of when direct elections should start is not straightforward or simple. One argument is that no action should be taken that would pre-empt the Basic Law for Hong Kong which, as the Foreign Secretary said, is now in preparation by the Chinese Government. The first draft of that Basic Law will be made public in April. It will be subject to five months of consultation and revised in the light of that consultation. It will then be made available in its revised form for additional calculation. It is due to be ratified by the National People's Congress of the People's Republic of China for publication in 1990. That is a powerful argument and it could weight the balance against action in direct elections in advance of 1997 which would pre-empt the contents of the Basic Law, which is solely a matter for China.

I could have been strongly influenced in favour of a delay in holding direct elections until 1991 after the Basic Law has been passed were it not for the clear statement from the Chinese that they are in favour of direct elections. In those circumstances, it is not the principle of direct elections and whether direct elections are acceptable to the People's Republic of China which is in question. The People's Republic of China has clearly accepted the principle. However, the timing and the modalities of such elections are in question. That being so, I believe that the arguments for starting with some proportion of direct elections this year are compelling. I trust tha Secretary will take those arguments into considering the final contents of next m Paper.

It is unquestionable that, if direct electio until after the handover in 1997, they will nc immediately. Preparations will have to be next scheduled year for a change in the comp Legislative Council after 1997 is the year 200 mean that even a start on the basic experienc and the practices and conduct of elected m not be made until into the new century. If point were to be made with 25 per cent., as s accepted proportion for a start, progress tow cent. elected Legislative Council might not until well into the 50-year period guaranteed Kong special administrative region.

There are no arguments in favour of wai changeover, and the People's Republic of Ch said that it wants to wait until the char question arises whether the direct elections before or after the Basic Law is approved important point is that time is already passi of the time between the signing of the agree and the handover in 1997 has already elapse until 1991 for the introduction of some p direct elections, more than half of the time signature of the agreement and the handov elapsed. There will not be much time for th to be assimilated and for experience to be g elections are conducted and how elected me employ their opportunities and status.

I believe that there is an even more import their great wisdom the Chinese Government two opportunities for public consultation in about the contents and provisions of the Ba is being drafted. It must be said that circumstances reactions to that Basic Law available from persons who are clearly representative of the people of Hong Kon distinguished and knowledgeable persons wi views and those will be important. Possibly e made to guage the views of the people of H a whole, perhaps through the use of opinion have already been employed. However, t distinguished and knowledgeable people will views and the findings of opinion polls are al challenge and interpretation, as indeed ha findings of the polls seeking the views of t Hong Kong on the question of direct electio

It would be invaluable for the Chinese Go have people available for consultation who ar to be the properly elected representatives of t Hong Kong. The availability of such elect tatives would be most helpful in securing clea of the Basic Law by the people of Hong Kon that that is in the interests of the Chinese Go this remarkable experiment on which t courageously embarking.

Mr. David Howell (Guildford): I am sure t hon. Gentleman is correct to be concerne development of representative and robust go Hong Kong, and that concern is shared by m and learned Friend the Home Secretary and Government. Does the right hon. Gentlema

[Mr. David Howell]

there is a danger in putting too much weight on 1988 as the starting point because, if that weight is too great, it will create undue anxieties in Hong Kong that will undermine all the work that lies ahead and the progress that has already been achieved? Will the right hon. Gentleman use his considerable influence to try to allay some of those fears?

Mr. Kaufman: That is the last thing that I want to see. The problem is that there is already a great deal of concern. It is impossible to say how representative is that concern, but there is no doubt that it exists. I have tried to balance the arguments for a start on direct elections before the drafting of the Basic Law and after its passage. After careful consideration, my conclusion is that the arguments are considerably weighted towards a start before the Basic Law is agreed. I will consider other arguments in a moment in response to the important point raised by the right hon. Member for Guildford (Mr. Howell). However, I have long been wary of the arguments in favour of what the late Hugh Dalton used to call the doctrine of unripe time. Arguments can always be advanced to state that some proposed change or advance is desirable, but the time is not ripe.

The problem is that we are under two time limits. First, we are under the time limit of the handover. Although the period of guarantee of the special administrative region is lengthy, it is clearly a limited period. Secondly, it is necessary for Hong Kong to have experience of a 25 per cent. elected Legislative Council and of a 100 per cent. elected Legislative Council early in that period.

The sooner that direct election begins, the earlier will be the experience of working representative structures and the greater the chances of sorting out any problems which may arise in direct election and direct representation, to which the people of Hong Kong are not used on a territory-wide scale. A start in direct elections this year would of course place a great responsibility on the people of Hong Kong to demonstrate their capability to conduct free elections in a responsible manner.

I am confident that the sophisticated people of that territory are more than equal to that challenge, and that their ability to meet it will be of assistance in the growth of their relationship with the country of which they will soon become an autonomous region. I believe that they will seize the opportunity to prove to China that the system can work. I am sure that the people of Hong Kong want the system to work—their whole future depends upon it—and the major change that the Chinese are proposing to be of benefit to them so that it can continue beyond the 50-year period.

Mr. Robert Adley (Christchurch): Will the right hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Kaufman: I hope that the hon. Gentleman and the House will accept that this must be the last intervention that I will take, as so many right hon. and hon. Members wish to speak in a short debate.

Mr. Adley: The right hon. Gentleman mentioned that the Labour party had received a representative from the Chinese embassy. We all know that the Chinese are in favour of direct elections, but was she in favour of them before 1991? Does the right hon. Gentleman agree that it will not help the people of Hong Kong if they ar encouraged to take decisions which are clearly contrary t the views of the Chinese Government?

Mr. Kaufman: That formidable and remarkable lad was careful to express no view on that matter. In my view she was sensible not to do so. Clearly, it is not in th interests of the people of Hong Kong for action to be take during the remaining period of British administration tha will be unwelcome to the People's Republic of China. A the same time, with all respect to the People's Republic o China, Britain and the House are administering Hong Kong and will administer it until 30 June 1997. It is our responsibility to take decisions which we regard as prope for Hong Kong, of course taking into account th important considerations mentioned by the hon. Membe for Christchurch (Mr. Adley).

The issue will not go away. There is an appetite fo direct elections in Hong Kong that is acknowledged i every statement made on the subject, including those statements made by the Chinese Government. Reluctant though I am to say it, I have to say that until a specific commitment as to date and proportion of those to be elected is given, it is a question that will bedevil the preparations for the handover and could overshadow the important discussion that China is laudably seeking over the contents of the draft Basic Law.

I do not believe that direct elections are the only important issue at stake in the next few years for Hong Kong. It would be a pity if preoccupation with direct elections were to dominate and distort discussion of all the other issues which need to be considered and settled.

Therefore, I put it to the Foreign Secretary that the arguments strongly predominate in favour of an announcement in the White Paper next month that direct elections for some of the Legislative Council seats should take place later this year. Indeed, faced with a choice between 25 per cent. in 1991 and 12·5 per cent. this year, I would strongly recommend 12·5 per cent. this year, even though my own preference, like that of many in Hong Kong, would be for 25 per cent. this year.

My discussions with people from Hong Kong show that there is a great readiness there to co-operate with China in the fundamental changes that are to come, and to demonstrate that readiness to China. Direct elections this year would assist in that co-operation and that demonstration. The Foreign Secretary said on 21 January 1985:

"The process of consultation . . . will be further assisted by the progressive strengthening of representative Government in Hong Kong over the next 10 years." —[*Official Report*, 21 January 1985; Vol. 71, c. 741.]

Consultation on the basic law starts in April. Strengthening of representative government should start in this year, too.

There is intense interest in this debate in Hong Kong. Although it is now after midnight there, this debate is being broadcast live in the territory, and is being listened to by a large number of concerned people. Let the Government give them the commitment that so many are looking for.

In its decision to set up a special administrative region in Hong Kong, the People's Republic of China has taken one of the most visionary steps that any Government have ever taken. It deserves credit and admiration for its openness of mind and its readiness to innovate. The House has a duty to assist the People's Republic of China in that

great enterprise, and to maintain its proper vigilance on behalf of the people of Hong Kong for whom we remain responsible. It is in that spirit that the Opposition approach the debate.

4.25 pm

Mr. Edward Heath (Old Bexley and Sidcup): I am grateful for the opportunity briefly to intervene in this important debate. Unfortunately, I was unavoidably prevented from hearing the first part of the Foreign Secretary's speech in which he paid tribute to Sir Edward Youde. I join him in that, as I knew Sir Edward Youde when he was ambassador in Beijing. He was our second ambassador there after we assumed complete diplomatic relations with the People's Republic of China, and he carried out an expert job in having working relationships with Mao Tse-Tung, Zhou Enlai and Deng Xiaoping.

When Sir Edward came to Hong Kong, he had a formidable task in following Lord MacLehose who had been governor there for 11 years and was immensely admired and respected, and had performed remarkable feats as governor of Hong Kong. However, Sir Edward assumed that task willingly and with great skill, in his own style, which was different from that of Lord MacLehose. His death was a tragedy and we should pay tribute to him for his achievements in Beijing and Hong Kong.

Before I come to the main question about elections, I wish to follow my right hon. and learned Friend the Foreign Secretary in saying a few words about the boat people. We must face the fact that that situation cannot continue. Those of us who have seen the camps are convinced that the Government of Hong Kong are doing absolutely everything possible to make them tolerable, but year after year children are growing up confined to those camps. That situation cannot be maintained. As we shall be responsible for Hong Kong for another nine years, we cannot allow a situation to continue in which so many young lives—they will soon become youths capable of work—are confined in camps. We cannot respectably hand over Hong Kong to the People's Republic of China with people kept in such conditions.

I do not believe that the People's Republic of China would allow such a situation to continue. Therefore, I urge my right hon. and learned Friend the Foreign Secretary, who has a compassionate nature, to recognise that year after year human lives are continuing, and young people are growing up in a situation which—however much the Hong Kong Government do—is intolerable.

I do not believe that it is impossible for Hong Kong to assimilate the numbers that are involved. A colony of 5 million people could absorb such a number; it is perfectly possible if it is handled properly. Britain certainly could take more people than it has already taken. Voices will always shout against that, but a country of 50 million people must be able to absorb more than we have been prepared to accept so far.

After all, when my Government — of which the Foreign Secretary was a member—faced problems with Uganda, we were able to absorb 25,000 Ugandan Asians in 10 days. They have proved themselves to be admirable working people. They have created their own private enterprises and have been immensely successful. I am not in a position to make a comparison between those people and the Vietnamese, but I am quite convinced that Hong Kong could handle the problem once the Governments of this country and Hong Kong made up their minds to do so.

The major point of the discussion today is elections. When we debated this matter on 5 December 1984, I congratulated my right hon. and learned Friend on the agreement that had been reached. I summed up my position by saying:

> "Far greater than any danger of haste is the danger of not having fully representative working government with experience by the time the handover takes place." —[*Official Report*, 5 December 1984; Vol. 69, c. 405.]

That is still my view. There is a much greater danger of our dragging our feet than of being over-hasty.

For the remaining period before the handover, the all-important thing for Her Majesty's Government to consider is that we are still the Government of Hong Kong and that we have accepted our full responsibilities, placed upon us, with the full agreement of the People's Republic of China, for all the activities and particularly for the government of Hong Kong, until 1997. If we are to do that, we must show all the time that we are not only managing the affairs properly, but dealing with the problems that arise. There is no point in trying to hide the problems of Hong Kong, because everybody there knows about them only too well. There are problems with the stock exchange and scandals that have taken place in industry, commerce and within other activities in Hong Kong. They must be dealt with quickly and firmly if we are to demonstrate that we are still carrying out our responsibilities.

If we are to maintain the confidence of the people of Hong Kong we must show that we are still running the show properly. We cannot afford to let it gradually slip. If we do so—there is some evidence to suggest that people believe that that is already happening — the financial, commercial and industrial interests of Hong Kong will rapidly reach the conclusion that we will not carry out our part of the agreement reached between ourselves and the People's Republic of China. If they reach that conclusion, the prosperity of Hong Kong will fade away. That will be the test of whether we properly carry out our responsibilities under the agreement.

One of the questions open to discussion is that of elections. We should be able to hand over Hong Kong with a system of representative government. My right hon. and learned Friend has said that Hong Kong should develop its own system, and I entirely agree. However, it must be a system of representative government, and unless action is taken quickly now we shall be unable to hand over any form of experienced, representative government. I made that observation three years ago and now we have less than nine years left. As Members of this House, we know how long it takes to acquire the experience within the House to enable us to achieve anything individually within our parties or in government.

In Hong Kong the operation of a full system of government must be achieved in a short period of time and it is rapidly getting shorter and shorter. When my right hon. and learned Friend is considering the White Paper he must take that fact into account. The People's Republic of China accepted that a system of representative government would be established and it is committed to the continuation of that system for 50 years after the handover. Therefore, what we hand over is of vital

[Mr. Edward Heath]

importance. That lends emphasis to the fact that my right hon. and learned Friend should be prepared to take action, but in what direction?

Obviously, when a new constitution is being devised it would be wise to ensure that any action taken now should not be in conflict with it. I fully accept that. However, do we need to do anything that is in conflict with that constitution? I believe that the answer to that question is no.

The first option for consideration is extending the functional system of government in Hong Kong with internal elections, and that is fully acceptable to the People's Republic of China. Those who are considering constitutional developments within the People's Republic of China at the moment are undoubtedly thinking along those lines. However, they face enormous difficulties. When they talk about opening up China or its liberalisation they are talking about the economic development of the country and they are determined on that. However, when it comes to the liberalisation of political activities the attitude is different.

It is genuinely believed that, with more than 1 billion people, the country is not sufficiently developed or experienced to carry on an effective system of government. One can understand that. A crucial point will be reached — as we have seen in other countries — because with economic development and liberalisation there inevitably follows a demand for political liberalisation. That always represents the crux for any country that is trying to develop its economy and political institutions.

We could increase what I term the functional representation in Hong Kong at this moment and that would be carrying the territory in the direction that would be followed by the People's Republic of China. Secondly, I understand that there are options contained in the basic constitution, as presently shaped, that concern 25 per cent., 30 per cent. and 50 per cent. of the Legislative Council seats for election. If those options are already within the proposed Basic Law and are accepted by the People's Republic of China, I do not believe that we would be in conflict with the constitution if we moved on that path between now and when the Basic Law is accepted. If we were certain that the Basic Law would be effected in a year's time all would be well, but, as we know, such matters tend to drag on and on. It may well be 1991 or 1992 before the matter is settled. In that case, the time left before the handover would be even shorter—one could count the years on the fingers of one hand.

If such options were taken up, I do not believe that we would be pursuing a path that would be in conflict with the forthcoming constitution to be agreed between the People's Republic of China and Her Majesty's Government. If I am wrong, no doubt my right hon. and learned Friend will correct me in due course. If we are not in conflict, I believe that it is possible to advance. Therefore, there are two options available to us by which we can help to develop representative government in Hong Kong. We would then be able to hand the territory over in 1997 with a system that could continue, without further controversy, for the remaining 50 years to which the People's Republic of China will be committed.

When my right hon. and learned Friend is considering the White Paper, which is the importance of today's debate, he should recognise that, from the point of view of governmental experience, it is urgently necessary develop a system of representative government in H Kong. Such a development would not be in conflict the new constitution.

Therefore, it should be possible for us to advance al such a path without the People's Republic of Ch claiming that we are in any way infringing undertakings that we have given. If we follow that pat will not be possible for the people of Hong Kong or of our other friends to say that we are not carrying out responsibilities that we have undertaken. If we do infringe our undertakings or fail our responsibilities, it be the best position for our Government.

The practical way in which the people of Hong Ko will respond to elections is a matter to be considered. I not quite certain whether my hon. Friend the Member Weston-super-Mare (Mr. Wiggin) was saying that 135,0 people represented a small or large number or whethe meant that people wanted elections or not. I do not m which way my hon. Friend interprets it, because, whe comes to the point, it is up to the people to decide whet they wish to vote in elections. My own judgment is that people of Hong Kong—the greater part of the 5 milli inhabitants—are mainly concerned with getting on w their own business, which they do extremely well. T does not mean to say that they should not ha representative government, especially when we have giv such an undertaking.

My hon. Friend and I may agree—probably for first time, but I hope not for the last—that the peo of Hong Kong can carry on doing their own business a continue to be successful. However, progressively, th will be opportunities for those who want to vote elections and form their own Government. We shall th hand over in 1997 not only a very successful Hong Ko commercially and industrially, but one which is satisfi with its form of representative government which can th continue for 50 years until further changes come under t People's Republic of China.

4.39 pm

Mr. John Morris (Aberavon): The whole House w have listened closely to the words of the right ho Member for Old Bexley and Sidcup (Mr. Heath), drawi on his long experience. They were wise words on the ne for direct elections and the fact that that would not incompatible, as he understands it, with the Basic Law far proposed.

On my last visit to Hong Kong as shadow Attorne General, in the course of discussions with the leg community I gave an assurance that whenever an iss arose regarding freedom, the law or the constitution, would be prepared to act as a conduit pipe if they ha exhausted all the existing machinery. Over the years the have been occasions when one has had to go to Ministe because of anxieties expressed in Hong Kong.

Let me give one example — the public outc regarding section 27 of the Public Order Ordinan enacted last March, which makes it a crime to publish fal news. If that were a crime in the United Kingdom, th Home Secretary would have to build prisons for editor sub-editors and the like. That law has caused great anxiet especially as regards the freedom of the press and fr speech.

I understand that there is now a film censorship Bill, fo political reasons, mainly the likelihood of seriousl

damaging good relations with other territories. Freedom and censorship, particularly political censorship, are never compatible — a lesson forgotten perhaps by Her Majesty's Government in their litigious rampage through the courts of the world.

Whenever one goes to Ministers the answer is always the same — this is a matter for Hong Kong. If Hong Kong had a democratically elected Government that would be right, but when one hears of these aberrations which are contrary to our understanding of freedom, we cannot, like Pontius Pilate, wash our hands of what is going on there.

I come immediately to the issue raised by the right hon. Member for Old Bexley and Sidcup. I believe, from the representations that we have had, that there is more than the beginning of a crisis of confidence in Hong Kong regarding progress on the road to direct elections. Informed opinion in Hong Kong, if we are to judge by the representations that we have had, is that they have been shaken by the timidity of the Government in grasping the nettle on how far and how quickly representative government is to be achieved.

The Foreign Secretary has not carried the matter one iota further. We do not know in what way Her Majesty's Government will encourage speed in moving towards a democratically elected government. Sophisticated Hong Kong, with a long tradition in the business world, perhaps will be unique as the only colony where we have not begun to move towards a democratically elected government when we hand it over. That is an odd reflection on the people of Hong Kong.

Mr. Adley: Has the right hon. and learned Gentleman not slightly misunderstood the history of Hong Kong? Is not the real reason why we never introduced any fundamentally democratic institutions in Hong Kong that, whatever the paper reality, the political reality was that no governor of Hong Kong for the last 150 years dared do anything along those lines that would fly in the face of the wishes of whoever happened to be governing China at the time? Is that not the reason why nothing was done?

Mr. Morris: Let us get away from the past. What is important now is the sophistication of business leadership and many other forms of leadership in Hong Kong. There are two great universities, with a third planned. It is unique that we have hardly moved along the road to democratic government. It is the only one of our colonies where we have not done so. The Government may assert on a technicality that there has been no breach of promise in not having direct elections in 1988, but it is only a technical defence and, like most technical defences, it lacks all merit.

Anyone who has read the excellent memorandum prepared by Mr. Martin Lee and his colleagues cannot fail to be impressed by the case that they have presented. Their analysis of the expectation in Hong Kong provides a sound prima facie case for elections now. It was Jim Griffiths, a distinguished Colonial Secretary and a compatriot of mine, who said on more than one occasion that half the battle was to begin. He had long experience of administering our colonies.

The expectation is based on the repeated promises of the Government, culminating in the Prime Minister's own words in December 1984:

> "We shall honour our obligations to the full . . . Long before 1997 we will have steadily and securely moved to increase the amount of representation of local people in the Government of Hong Kong."

Earlier, both the Foreign Secretary and the governor had said that representative government would be developed "in the years immediately ahead".

I emphasise the word "immediately".

As that was promised in 1984, how can there have been no progress by 1988? The sands of time are running out. Hong Kong needs experienced leaders to play their full part in the colony's affairs. Since the term of office of the Legislative Council is three years, it is difficult to see how a representative legislature can be established well before 1997 if a start is not made in 1988 on at least a small number of seats. If this opportunity is missed we shall chearly be in 1991 before a start can be made, and there will be only six years left.

May I ask three questions of the Foreign Secretary? First, are the Government aware of the extent of the anxiety of informed opinion in Hong Kong? Secondly — perhaps the Foreign Secretary will draw back the veil on the White Paper — how do the Government see representative government developing between now and 1997? Thirdly, will the Foreign Secretary endorse the assertion of my right hon. Friend the Member for Manchester, Gorton (Mr. Kaufman) that there is no tardiness on the part of the Chinese in going along with a start being made in 1988?

China has said that the Basic Law would represent the wishes of the people of Hong Kong. The letter and spirit of the agreement provide that the legislature of the Hong Kong special administrative region shall be constitutionally elected. The first step should be taken now. The right hon. Member for Old Bexley and Sidcup is right. It takes years for people to acquire the know-how to work the machinery of government and, indeed, the machinery of this House. Time is running out. If nothing is done by 1991 we shall have lost the advantage of seven years. They will have been seven very lean years indeed in making progress on the matter.

I quote the words of Sir Jack Cater, the chief secretary of Hong Kong until 1981, reported in *The Independent* this morning. He said:

> "Too little is made of the fact that we have so very little time. All that would be achieved by not introducing direct elections now would be to make [1997] that much more difficult. Hong Kong would not be getting the experience which it obviously needs. We should be treated as an adult society. If this is what we want, there has to be an extraordinarily good reason for not giving it to us."

Those are the words of a very experienced administrator in Hong Kong. I hope that the Foreign Secretary will tell us why a start cannot be made in 1988, or must three more years be lost before 1991?

4.50 pm

Mr. Jerry Wiggin (Weston-super-Mare): I and two of my hon. Friends had the good fortune to be invited by the Hong Kong Government to spend 10 days in the territory in September. We had a most interesting time, met very many people and were looked after most hospitably. At the time, the leading subject was the Green Paper and the survey was being assessed.

I intervened in the Foreign Secretary's speech and both the right hon. Member for Manchester, Gorton (Mr. Kaufman) and my right hon. Friend the Member for Old Bexley and Sidcup (Mr. Heath) questioned the point that I was trying to make. It is a very simple point: the survey, although producing the views of 135,000 people, did not produce the views of 5·25 million people. From my

[Mr. Jerry Wiggin]

discussions with very many people, I am certain that there is a substantial body of opinion that says either, "I do not know," or, "I do not care," or simply prefers a system in which elected government plays a very small part. I was delighted that my right hon. and learned Friend the Foreign Secretary responded to my intervention by saying that those who make the most noise on this subject by no means necessarily have the most influence or carry the greatest weight of support in the territory.

Mr. Dennis Canavan (Falkirk, West): The hon. Gentleman referred to a survey. There have been several surveys and opinion polls to measure public opinion in Hong Kong on this matter. Recent surveys show that the majority of people favour direct elections. There may be a division of opinion about the timing of elections, but the most popular date for the introduction of direct elections in all the recent surveys is 1988.

Mr. Wiggin: I disagree with that. The survey to which I referred is the public response to the Green Paper, which I am sure the hon. Gentleman has read. With all statistics, it is possible to come to whatever conclusion one might choose. Mr. Martin Lee comes to a very different view.

Mr. Robert G. Hughes (Harrow, West): My hon. Friend sets much store by that survey, but will he confirm that the key question about the 1988 direct elections was muddled and has been widely discredited by people who know about surveys? Will he also confirm that the reason why so many people expressed no view is that 40 per cent. of the people asked could not understand the question? Does he agree that, if he were asked that question before or after breakfast, he would not understand it any more than I would?

Mr. Wiggin: I shall not dispute with my hon. Friend what is the best time of day to ask me intellectual questions.

This debate has been raging in the territory and it is natural that it should be reflected in our debate. I do not share my hon. Friend's view on this matter. The vast majority of people are far less interested in voting for their representatives than we might like to think. We have made the mistake in many countries of imagining that the Westminster system, and all that goes with it, transfers easily and that it is for the benefit of the people concerned. I question that, and believe that history would be on my side.

I intend to speak only for a few moments, but there is one point that deeply impressed me during my visit and has not been mentioned in the debate. It concerns the general state of law and order in the territory. It is immensely refreshing to walk the streets of Hong Kong, which are litter-free and well policed. According to the police commissioner, the crime figures are amazingly low —there are 13 street crimes and 30 burglaries a day in a community of 5·5 million people. They are quite exceptional figures.

I asked the police commissioner on what he based this performance and he said that he had, quite simply, twice the number of policemen in Hong Kong per head of population as he did as an assistant commissioner of police in London. The right hon. Member for Gorton suggested that a housing Minister should visit Hong Kong their ways. I hope that the Home Secretary will tal of that vital point.

While in Beijing, I had the privilege of meeting t Minister in charge of Hong Kong affairs. The w is in everybody's mind is confidence. I am convin the Government of the People's Republic of Chi understand that fact and, in the action of suppor futures market, demonstrated their desire to p money where their mouth is. That was one of t dramatic exhibitions of their intention to hono commitments. It is vital that our Government do th because confidence is fragile and could so e disturbed. I left after a very happy visit with the fi that we were set on a road to a successful transit I congratulate Ministers on keeping up that mom

4.56 pm

Sir Russell Johnston (Inverness, Nairn and Loc I wish to associate myself with the tribute to Sir Youde. The few remarks that I wish to make a much in tune with the typically sane and cons comments of the right hon. Member for Old Bex Sidcup (Mr. Heath).

I remember the debates in 1984 and 1985 ve There was no sense of complacency, but there was a that the Government had achieved a very good agr with the People's Republic of China, given that th no alternative under international law than to ne the best outcome from a position of weakne solution of two systems in one country, reserved a century, earned for the Foreign Secretary and the Governor, Sir David Wilson, in particular, justifia considerable praise.

On Third Reading of the Hong Kong Bil February 1985, I regretted that the self-determ route could not have been followed, because that genuine democratic response and I had no doubt nor do I have any doubt now—that, given that the overwhelming majority of the people of Hong would have chosen to follow the example of their city, Singapore.

That would have required an act of magnanimity by the People's Republic of China. case, the republic came a long way and the agreeme hailed as an ingenious, flexible and enlightened doc However, the way in which the agreement implemented depends on the framing of the Basi which lies with Peking. The first draft is due in Ap second draft next year and the final draft in 1990.

The impetus for our debate stems from the con of two things. First, it stems from the first draft Basic Law. We all know that first drafts ar important. Sometimes they are more important t other times. Secondly, it stems from the approach o term for the Legislative Council which will overl final production of the Basic Law.

The view expressed by the Hong Kong Delegat Democracy, led by Martin Lee — which many Members, including the Foreign Secretary, have s that the new Legislative Council must have a sign directly elected element. The proposal of 25 per ce think prudent, restrained and sensible. As right ho hon. Members have said, this is the central issue

debate. Page 5 of the delegation's position paper quotes an exchange between the Foreign Secretary and myself on 25 October 1984. It states:

"In answer to Mr. Russel Johnston's question whether he had 'encountered any objection from the People's Republic to the development by the United Kingdom over the next 13 years of directly elected institutions in Hong Kong', Sir Geoffrey dovetailed the Green Paper proposals with those made in the draft Agreement by saying:

'The agreement provides for the Legislature of Hong Kong in the future to be on an elective basis and for the Executive to be accountable to that legislature.'."

It is central to the realisation of the concept of one country and two systems that democratic institutions are evolved and, as hon. Members have said, given time to bed down. Therefore, a beginning should be made now. If it is not, the hope and trust that certainly characterised the response to the joint declaration in 1985 will be gravely damaged, and that, in time, will have an economic effect.

The absence so far of specific proposals for a directly elected element for the new legislature is seen by many, rightly or wrongly, as stemming, first, from the Foreign Office—with great respect, I must say that the Foreign Secretary's remarks were opaque; he said quite a lot but we could not see any specific affirmation — and its pressure on the Hong Kong Government, and, secondly, from pressure from the People's Republic on our Government.

That perception exists despite the assurances that we have heard most recently from the Opposition spokesmen, particularly the right hon. Member for Manchester, Gorton (Mr. Kaufman) who quoted a lady who had obviously had a profound effect upon him and referred to her remarks to the Labour group from the Chinese embassy.

Mr. George Foulkes (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley): No. The lady was from the Chinese embassy, not the Labour group.

Sir Russell Johnston: I am most grateful to the hon. Gentleman for that clarification. I have always thought that some Labour party policies stem from the Chinese embassy.

Mr. Canavan: The hon. Gentleman is thinking of Bob Maclennan again.

Sir Russell Johnston: I seldom think of anything else.

Hardly anyone believes that the delay in making proposals for a democratic element is due to the published results of the two Survey Office soundings of public opinion, which have been quoted. I certainly hope that the Foreign Secretary will say more than he did at the beginning of the debate about the wide discrepancy between the private opinion polls on the subject, which showed between 40 and 60 per cent. of people in favour, and the Survey Office results, which showed a range of 11 to 15 per cent. in favour. That is a significant difference, particularly these days when we are supposed to get much more accurate results.

The Survey Office exercise was so clumsy—the point was well made earlier—as to be seriously flawed. As the right hon. Member for Gorton said, annexe 1 of the joint declaration is relevant. It states that, after 1997, the Hong Kong legislature is to be constituted by election. Unless a start is made now, that will not happen.

Do the Government see 25 per cent. as a start or as an end? It is a good question. We all know that there is a proposal that the end should be 25 per cent. directly elected, 25 per cent. taken from financial institutions, and 50 per cent. taken from the so-called grand electoral college, which is chosen we know not exactly how, but we can guess. It is not just that it makes a nonsense of the possibility of the rejection of the chief executive — something that was spoken about at the time—but it describes a provincial Hong Kong with its independence of action not only circumscribed but neutered.

Many hon. Members have remarked on the failure of successive British Governments to move Hong Kong in a democratic direction. Successive Governments have defended themselves by saying that they wished to avoid provocation. Of course, they were in an exposed position. In practice, the media—the newspapers—have become a democratic surrogate: the release valve for free expression. As we move into a more active dialogue with the People's Republic of China, there are some things from which we cannot shrink. We cannot avoid some direct challenges on future safeguards for the kind of open dispute that is now available in Hong Kong — even without democratic institutions—but which, despite the notable changes that have taken place within China, are still very limited there.

The Foreign Secretary mentioned human rights. I shall make three short quotations from the document on the People's Republic of China that was published last year by our parliamentary human rights group. The first quotation, which appears on page three, makes a point that I have often noticed. It states:

"The contrast with the Soviet Union could hardly be more stark. There, irrespective of the economic and political reforms introduced by Mikhail Gorbachev, Western leaders have used their leverage to insist on human rights concessions. When Secretary Shultz was in Beijing in March 1987 he never met with Chinese dissidents nor said anything publicly about human rights violations. On visiting Moscow in April, he took reporters and television cameramen with him to meet Soviet refusniks . . . and used the occasion to declare that 'we never give up, we never stop trying' to advance human rights in the Soviet Union."

Some examples of that appear on page 75. It refers to the summary execution of thousands of common criminals, 7,000 to 14,000 persons who were executed without due process of law between 1983 and 1986, the situation in Tibet, and so on. The publication goes on:

"International human rights efforts in fact have intensified on behalf of groups in South Korea and Taiwan seeking greater political liberty. But China's economic accomplishments have sidetracked observers from pressing for political and legal institutions that could better protect China's citizens and strengthen the underpinnings of its economic modernization."

These are sensitive, difficult issues. In raising them, I in no way intend to diminish the significance and worth of what has been accomplished in the Hong Kong agreement. However, we in the United Kingdom, who have made Hong Kong — certainly for reasons which can now clearly be seen to be disreputable—have maintained it and overseen its expansion, which stems from the vigour of its inhabitants who went there of their own choice. We now have a responsibility to do our utmost to fulfil an historic trust.

I described the Hong Kong press as a surrogate democracy. I understand from the right hon. Member for Gorton that what I say now is being broadcast live. It will certainly be reported, but will that be the case after 1997? If the majority of the Legislative Council is democratically elected, I believe that it will be; otherwise, I doubt whether it will be.

[Sir Russell Johnston]

I take the point made by the right hon. and learned Member for Aberavon (Mr. Morris). We are talking about our honour as a country and the effect on it if we fail to discharge a clear moral debt.

Regrettably, the debate has been a short one. There are other issues that I could have developed that demand attention, such as the status of passports and the boat people. I must say to the Foreign Secretary, in all earnestness, that when he said, almost casually in his off-beat fashion, that we could repatriate the boat people with adequate guarantees, a little shiver ran down my spine. It was not nice to hear such an idea in the middle of a debate.

The election is the immediate issue and it is the touchstone of future confidence in the arrangements for Hong Kong. I hope that the Foreign Secretary will be rather more positive before the debate is over than he was in opening it.

5.10 pm

Sir Peter Blaker (Blackpool, South): Like others who have spoken, I favour direct elections. The question is what part of the Legislative Council should be directly elected, and when that should happen.

Like my hon. Friend the Member for Weston-super-Mare (Mr. Wiggin), I do not take it as axiomatic that 100 per cent. of directly elected Members of the Legislative Council, based on the Westminster model, is necessarily right for Hong Kong. A start should be made with 25 per cent. of the Legislative Council being directly elected, to see how that works. It should then move on, the success of that percentage having been demonstrated, to a larger one. Direct elections should start between 1988 and 1991, not at a later date. For part of the Legislative Council, it should be not later than 1991.

I have three points to make in that regard. First, we are still in the lifetime of the first Legislative Council containing indirectly elected Members. Therefore, we have not had a chance to see how the experiment is working. It has certainly transformed debate in Hong Kong. The debate there is more vocal and, on the whole, is well-informed. It is interesting that there is no sign of the people of Hong Kong saying, "The people in the Legislative Council, whether nominated or indirectly elected, lack authority because they are not directly elected by the people." At present it is not losing authority for that reason.

We hear remarks, such as those made by the right hon. and learned Member for Aberavon (Mr. Morris), that time is running out. That makes the basic assumption that the clock stops in 1997. Why are we assuming that? I know of no reason why we should assume it. We have not seen the draft Basic Law. We do not know whether there will be provision for further evolution in the special administrative region—SAR—of Hong Kong after 1997.

The most important question is, what do the people of Hong Kong want? I attach importance to the report of the Survey Office. It has done a very thorough job, and it was congratulated by the independent monitors on having properly, accurately and impartially conducted its operations. It is wrong to describe its work as a concoction, as has been alleged, implying that it was some sort of rigged arrangement by the Government of Hong Kong. That is a disgraceful allegation to make.

It is also said that it was wrong for the
to attribute different weights to differ
submissions, depending on whether they we
individuals, petitions or stereotyped letters.
the Survey Office report does not do that. It
happened and leaves the reader to make his o

With regard to the different opinion po
McNair is a well-known polling company of
repute. It was selected on the basis of an ope
target population that it took was the adult
Hong Kong. It operated by random sample,
of 3,000 people to test, and conducted a
advance. Its methods seem to have bee
professional, and it certainly was not doing
told by the Hong Kong Government.

Mr. Foulkes: When I was in Hong Kon
spoke to the managing director of A. G. B.
confirmed that the formulation of the questi
asked in the survey were based on the wo
Green Paper and that, given a free hand to as
and simple questions, the questions in the su
the ones that would have been asked. She fel
by the complicated wording of the Green P

Sir Peter Blaker: That is a very interesti
is news to me that the company was instruc
that wording. If it is correct I accept that, b
invalidate my argument. A. G. B. M
experienced and trained interviewers an
perhaps this is the most important point—
face interviews.

If one looks at some of the other opinion
referred to in the document that has been circ
Delegation for Democracy, the organisatio
Martin Lee, one finds a lesser degree of pro
The colonywide polls were largely conducted
If one conducts a survey by telephone, one a
limits the people whom one can reach to telep
Therefore, one is excluding more than half th
of Hong Kong. I can see no reason why n
owners would be more likely than others to
elections in 1998. It is wrong to imagine tha
are opposed to direct elections in 1988 are n
only of big business.

Other polls were confined to specific
groups; for example, a group of university st
imagine what sort of reply I would receive
group of university students.

If one looks at appendix 7 to the volumino
the Survey Office, one gets a better idea of t
the other surveys that have been cited by th
calling for direct elections in 1988. My rea
Survey Office report is that there is clearly a
favour of direct elections, but not in 1988. I
the majority are against direct elections in
favour of them at a later date.

What is beyond dispute is that there is a
large divide in the population. I should like t
question that my right hon. Friend the
Guildford (Mr. Howell) asked: why should
that people would be less inclined to obtain p
Canada, Australia or the United States if th
promised direct elections in 1988? It is possib
would be more concern if it were announce
were to be direct elections in 1988 than the

would not be right to move towards direct elections at the present time, given the clear division among the population of Hong Kong, and given also that we are still in the first legislature that has been elected, even partially, by indirect elections.

Secondly, I want to deal with the accusations that have been made against Her Majesty's Government by the Delegation for Democracy. Somebody must mention these allegations, because Her Majesty's Government have been accused, in plain terms, of breaking their promises. That is a serious accusation, and I asked Mr. Lee how he substantiated that accusation. I asked him to quote the words on which he was relying. He was unable to find any words to that effect. The closest that he could get was to refer to undertakings about the development of representative government. That has happened, and Mr. Lee is an example of the development of representative government.

Mr. Lee referred to a 1984 report which said that a substantial section of opinion was in favour of direct elections in 1988, but he could not point to a promise by Her Majesty's Government that there would be direct elections in 1988. I hope that this accusation will not be repeated. It is unjust. It is unwise for the Delegation for Democracy to make that accusation, because it reduces its credibility. The people who know about these matters know that the accusation is not true.

The accusation generates an atmosphere of acrimony, which is highly undesirable. What is more, it is deeply offensive. I was born in Hong Kong. I have followed the events there for decades, and have done so especially closely in recent years. I have followed the statements, and I know that there has been no such statement by Her Majesty's Government. I hope that we have heard the last of that accusation.

Thirdly, what should be the attitude of the Hong Kong people towards China? I understand their nervousness. They did not want to be transferred to the sovereignty of China. China is enormous, and Hong Kong is tiny. China has a Communist system which the people of Hong Kong do not want, but I ask the Hong Kong people to look at the pluses.

There is what is generally agreed to be an excellent joint declaration, which was made in 1984 and gives the Hong Kong people all the freedoms that they could possibly want. That international agreement is registered with the United Nations. It gives the Hong Kong people a guarantee of freedom from Socialism for 50 years after 1997—something that I should be happy to see in this country, where we do not enjoy such a guarantee.

We see that China is carrying out its obligations. My right hon. and learned Friend the Foreign Secretary referred to the excellent work of the Sino-British Land Commission, which has been carried out harmoniously. Hong Kong has been independently accepted by various international economic and cultural organisations. Harmonious and constructive work has been carried out by the Joint Liaison Group.

If I had been asked a few years ago whether it was conceivable that there would be a committee drafting the Basic Law of Hong Kong under the aegis of the People's Republic of China, and that virtually half the members of that committee would be from Hong Kong, I should have been astonished, but the Basic Law drafting committee exists. I should have been astonished also at the idea of the Basic Law consultative committee, which consists, I believe, entirely of Hong Kong people and is advising the Basic Law drafting committee.

If I had been told that all the drafting committee activities would be conducted virtually in public, I should have been amazed. Everyone knows what the committee is talking about. Its discussions are immediately reported in the press. This is one of the most intense, thorough consultations that I have seen in 24 years in politics. It is incredible, and it is conducted under the aegis of the Chinese Government, of whom some hon. Members are so suspicious. That is really what those hon. Members are saying when they call urgently for a move to direct elections this year—that they are suspicious of China.

The attitude adopted by the Delegation for Democracy is mistaken. It is a confrontational posture, which is unwise. I do not think that it will help in the development of true co-operation. Part of the loss of confidence in the future by the people of Hong Kong, which some recent opinion polls say exists, may be due to the activities of the Delegation for Democracy, which is causing fear——

Mr. Robert G. Hughes: This is shameful.

Sir Peter Blaker: I agree that it is shameful.

Mr. Hughes: No, what my right hon. Friend is saying is shameful.

Sir Peter Blaker: My hon. Friend may have an opportunity to speak later. I hope that he will, and I shall listen with close attention.

The people of Hong Kong face a difficult process of adjustment, but what is the picture from the Chinese side? It is worth while the people of Hong Kong asking themselves that question. China has agreed to the joint declaration. It is an enormous step for China to take to accept the one-country, two-systems concept. Hong Kong will continue to be run by the Hong Kong people in a capitalist manner for 50 years after 1997. China is honouring the agreement. It is continuing to honour the agreement because that is in China's interest. Hong Kong is of immense value to China as it is—a capitalist, thriving, prosperous territory which will bring China great wealth and technology.

Hong Kong is China's open door on the world. Therefore, the Chinese are having to make enormous adjustments. They are learning about capitalism. We have seen the assistance that the Bank of China gave a few weeks ago in rescuing the Hong Kong future's market. I remember when Hu Yao Bang was relieved of his post—I think last year. It caused great concern in Hong Kong. China purchased a large share in Cathay Pacific. I do not know whether that was a conicidence, but, if it was not, it was a remarkable step. The negotiation was conducted at great speed and helped to stabilise confidence in Hong Kong. That is in great contrast to 1984, when the Hang Seng index fell dramatically during a difficult phase of the negotiations that we were conducting with China and the Chinese put it down to Britain playing the economic card. Would that one could manage the Hang Seng index as easily as that!

Having learnt a great deal about capitalism, China is learning about representative government—a concept foreign to the Government and people of China. The questions are not simply: what will China do for Hong Kong and what will be the effect of China on Hong Kong?

[Sir Peter Blaker]

The question is also: what effect will Hong Kong have on China? The question which we should debate is much bigger than the single one of direct elections in 1988 or in 1991. It is a matter of confrontation or co-operation. I opt for co-operation.

5.27 pm

Mr. Jack Ashley (Stoke-on-Trent, South): I was surprised by the speech of the right hon. Member for Blackpool, South (Sir P. Blaker). The House respects his voice on the issue of Hong Kong, but his speech astounded me. I was surprised that he based so much of his case on the Survey Office report. The argument against the report is not that it was rigged. That is a preposterous charge. Clearly, the Hong Kong Government initiated the report in good faith and it would be wrong to accuse them of rigging it. The argument put forward by statisticians and other market researchers against the report is that it was invalid. All the polls to which the right hon. Gentleman referred reached the opposite conclusion. I am surprised that the right hon. Gentleman based so much of his case on those polls.

I am surprised that the right hon. Member for Blackpool, South attacked the Delegation for Democracy so strongly. I met Mr. Lee only five minutes before the debate. I did not know him before and I do not agree with everything that the Delegation for Democracy says. But why should not that delegation be confrontational? Why should it not fight passionately for its rights? We do not have to agree with all it says, but it is entitled to fight passionately because the livelihood of its members is at stake. I am surprised that the right hon. Gentleman was so indignant about the delegation's case.

There are reasons why we feel that the people of Hong Kong want immediate direct elections. The movement out of Hong Kong is disturbing. Some people are moving out. Some people do not speak out because they do not want to offend the Chinese, and that is quite understandable. If I was there, I would not want to offend China if I thought that China opposed direct elections—although, in fact, I believe that it favours them. So many want direct elections. For all those reasons, I think that the right hon. Member for Blackpool, South was wrong in his analysis.

The great challenge underlying the debate and facing the Governments of China, Britain and Hong Kong, is how to make a reality of Deng Xiaoping's imaginative concept of one nation, two systems. That was an inspired idea and the Chinese deserve all credit for it. The difficulty is that everyone involved has a different history, a different cultural background and a different way of life, so there is a danger that there will be widely differing interpretations and expectations and that misunderstandings will arise. That is what we must avoid.

In this House, we focus mainly on the interests of Hong Kong, and rightly so, because we are still in charge and we shall remain in charge for the next nine years. I do not think that we fully appreciate the pressures that the new concept puts on China. Although China will eventually benefit from Hong Kong's financial and economic strength, it will have to accept in return a system alien to its own. China is accepting—even welcoming—a system that results in the accrual of great wealth to the Hong Kong people and gives them a higher standard of living than China's own people.

The Chinese Government deserve great cr
constructive attitude to Hong Kong in recen
have shown that they can appreciate the nat
Kong's prosperity and they are responsive
Kong people, which is very encouraging fo
However, inevitably, those in Hong Kong a
about what lies ahead. It would be surprising
not. There is to be a change in sovereignty a
the concept of one nation, two systems. Tha
a major economic and political upheaval.

Before that takes place, many vital issues
be settled—not just the issue of direct el
selection procedure for the civil service wi
important issue, as will the balance of po
balance of the assembly to be elected. We
publication of the draft Basic Law with inte
that will affect all these basic issues.

However, the immediate issue that is being
and forth in the debate is that of direct election
or for worse, direct elections have become
good will and good intentions. Direct electio
questions, because, although Britain has
achievements to its credit in Hong Kong, dem
one of them. We have nothing to boast ab
respect because we have done very little. Alo
magnificent and historic achievements in Ho
us recognise our failure to introduce democr

Some press reports create the impression t
unenthusiastic about direct elections in Hong
as my right hon. Friend the Member for
Gorton (Mr. Kaufman) said, China has said
that it favours direct elections, although the
has yet to be decided. It is therefore a questio
and extent. Some people think that the iss
elections gives rise to a conflict betwe
requirement of sovereignty and Hong Kong
autonomy based on democracy. If the critic
believed, direct elections could threaten the
prosperity of Hong Kong. I believe that thos
quite wrong. They have misjudged the situati

China's right to sovereignty in 1997 is indis
it is generally understood—at least we hope
that the Basic Law will include an element to
elections. If so, we should introduce dire
immediately, in 1988. That convergent develop
not threaten China's position in 1997. As a ma
direct elections this year would greatly be
because it would then have democratically ele
who could speak knowledgeably to it about th
Hong Kong's people.

It is to cast no aspersions on those in LegCo
democratically elected people would have a
voice. In the long term those democratically ele
will be of great value to China.

I hope that China will declare that it does
early direct elections. Nothing is worse than a
appearing to drag its feet on an important iss
reluctantly acquiescing. I do not believe for a m
China is reluctant. But China would benefi
specific about its acceptance of early direct ele
the doubt in people's minds would be remove

There would be an added benefit, because
such a declaration China would demonstrate
public, including the people of Taiwan, its belie
democracy and its pride in the electoral de
taking place in China. Hong Kong would cle

because elected representatives would be better able to articulate the views of those who live and work in that remarkably prosperous territory. Hong Kong could then have a constructive dialogue and a harmonious relationship with China.

Some people, whose opinions and experience are greatly respected, advocate a pause to allow Hong Kong to absorb the recent electoral developments. I do not agree. Notwithstanding the speech of the right hon. Member for Blackpool, South—a fine speech, but one with which I differ—Hong Kong has no time to pause. There are only nine years left before the transfer of sovereignty and Hong Kong must cope quickly with change. I have no doubt that, because the Hong Kong people are adaptable, they will be able to cope with that change. Direct elections will promote, rather than damage, the stability of Hong Kong. Some very able people recognise that it will be a matter of concern if such elections are not held.

The value of Hong Kong lies in the quality of its active people. They have the money and the passports, and they will literally fly away if they are denied an early democratic voice. An uneasy people is never a stable people. There is nothing to be lost, and everything to be gained, by both Hong Kong and China from having early direct elections.

Of equal, if not more, importance than those people, who are vital to Hong Kong, is the broader-based segment of active young people who will be the future leaders of Hong Kong. The future of Hong Kong lies with them. Their confidence is vital. However, as with a bank or stock exchange, once confidence is shaken or eroded, it can slide away with growing and unstoppable momentum. Lack of confidence could be an avalanche of disaster for Hong Kong.

Therefore, let us have early direct elections. If those young people are given a democratic voice and new hope for the future, they can raise Hong Kong to new heights of prosperity. They can be an asset of incalculable benefit to Hong Kong and to China if the right decisions are made now.

5.41 pm

Mr. Hal Miller (Bromsgrove): I shall follow the remarks of the right hon. Member for Stoke-on-Trent, South (Mr. Ashley) on one country, two systems, in a moment, but I cannot allow his attack on my right hon. Friend the Member for Blackpool, South (Sir P. Blaker) to pass. I happened to be present at one of his meetings with Mr. Martin Lee. Orator of silken persuasiveness and practised reason, and successful advocate, that he is, he made the stark accusation that the Hong Kong and British Governments had acted in bad faith and had gone back on their words, and he used the phrase,

"the survey report was a concoction."

One monitor of the report was one of my most esteemed colleagues in the Hong Kong Government, so I had better declare an interest. There is no question that Mr. Li Fook-Kow would be party to a "concoction" of the survey report. I find that a damaging and a bitter accusation. I am grateful for the fact that my right hon. Friend rebutted it so forcefully and conclusively.

I find it a little ungenerous that sources are quoted, such as Mr. Martin Lee or the representative of the embassy of the People's Republic of China, but that little reference seems to have been made in the debate to the advice tendered by the Unofficial Members of the Executive and Legislative Councils, and especially to the Unofficial Member, Miss Lydia Dunn. I sh thought that some attention might be paid t which she and they have expressed, because responsibility in a difficult situation.

As I walked to the Commons this morning a light precipitation which, at this time of approach to the Chinese new year—is refe Hong Kong as Suet Sui. It is a propitious guarantees prosperity in the forthcoming year

I return to the joint declaration and the ceme the British and the Chinese Governments that the prosperity and stability of Hong Kong that is what this is all about. Direct elections ar of that declaration.

I regarded as rather remiss the remarks of th Member for Manchester, Gorton (Mr. Kaufma those of my right hon. Friend the Member for and Sidcup (Mr. Heath). They seemed det impose the smack of firm government on H which they were unable to exercise in this countr imagine anything that would be more likely confidence in Hong Kong than the British G suddenly starting to impose solutions there, u the people had not been consulted and to whic not given manifest and majority consent. Tha been the way in which Hong Kong has been ad

I am not going to take lessons in democracy returning officer at the first elections that we Hong Kong, to the urban council, in 1956. A about direct elections ignores the fact that they taking place for some time and have been incr the 1984 White Paper. That was the gravam charge of my right hon. Friend for Old Bexley a

There have been elections to the district b there has been a greater proportion of elected m the urban council and regional council in territories. Therefore, progress is being made perhaps not as rapidly as some of us would n disposed to advocate here. However, plea remember, while we are still responsible administration of Hong Kong—until 1997—does not give us carte blanche to impose solutio injurious to Hong Kong or foreign to its inter

However much we may regret that it was n to move towards a full democratic and indepen Kong, that is no reason for us to indulge in a l flurry to salve our conscience by introducing a of that at the last minute which might prove damaging. Nor should we be tempted to try t a kind of outpost of a Western-style democracy advance of an alien creed—of an alien capita —*[Interruption.]*—of an alien Communist syst

Mr. Tony Banks (Newham, North-West): I first time.

Mr. Miller: As the right hon. Member for Trent, South said, we must put this issue into t of one country, two systems. It is still one countr countries, which is an important difference.

Mr. Ivan Lawrence (Burton): Why wo damaging if there were direct elections, when th Republic of China has said that it is prepared to elections?

Mr. Miller: We are all committed to direct elections. The argument turns on the timing of those direct elections, which is exactly the point to which I was coming. We are committed to direct elections, and I am glad that early in his speech my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State gave the assurance that there would be full and faithful implementation by the British Government of the joint declaration. Nobody should accuse him or us of bad faith. However, we must consider the time scale. It is not 1988, 1991 or 1997. As has been said, it is 1997 plus 50 years.

We have talked loosely about direct elections to the legislature, but it is important to remember that nobody has begun to examine the structure of government that is to ensue. Is a full ministerial system expected, with a Government formed from an elected legislature, or is a separation of powers, on the United States' model, between the Executive and the legislature envisaged? Such things need careful definition before we start talking loosely about a directly elected legislature. It is important to understand what system of government is being envisaged.

Mr. Heath: My hon. Friend has touched on an important point about continuing developments in the 50 years, but Hong Kong understands that the position at the time of handover will be carried on for 50 years under the guarantee of Beijing, which is different. My hon. Friend is arguing that Hong Kong should accept that it should go on developing in the way that it wants during those 50 years, but I do not think that that is justified by the understanding in the agreement.

Mr. Miller: I do not accept that the stage of development reached in 1997 will be frozen in aspic. That presupposes that there will be no development in China, either. The form of government must be thought out before direct elections can be meaningfully held. Although China is committed under the joint declaration to an elected legislature, as far as I know — no one has produced evidence to the contrary so far this evening— there is no document that sets out the Chinese view of the elected legislature.

Mr. Foulkes: Yes, there is.

Mr. Miller: I think I am correct in saying that we do not yet have the first draft of the Basic Law, which will be subject to widespread consultation among the people of Hong Kong—a consultation which, I can well imagine, might exceed that undertaken by the Survey Office. I can see grave difficulties if movement has begun on a directly elected legislature in a direction that is not envisaged in the draft of the Basic Law, which, when it appears, will be subject again to a widespread public consultation exercise, followed by final confirmation and enactment some time in 1990. Those are facts of life, and they must be carefully taken into consideration.

Then there is the comparatively minor matter of getting the sequence of elections as between the district boards, the urban councils and Legislative Council right, but the Basic Law is the thing, and our task this evening is to ram home our commitment to direct elections and to seek to influence the content of the Basic Law. We shall influence its content only if we show a real understanding of the position in China and Hong Kong, reaffirm our commitment to the prosperity and stability of Hong Kong and do nothing to undermine the
unknown quantities and possibilities-
formation of political parties and an
We might have been pleased to see
Hong Kong to remain independent,
such formalised opposition being esta
introduction of the SAR in 1997 would
to confidence and stability, and would
whole reason for Hong Kong. So let u
mean when we talk so loosely about d
let us concentrate on their timing.
We must remember the importance
authority of the Government of Hong
1997. The issue of stability has been ra
my hon. Friend the Member for Westo
Wiggin), but we must give it, and the
and order, serious attention. I make a pl
and learned Friend the Foreign Secreta
the defence costs agreement with
Government. They are having to assum
burden of strengthening the police forc
part of the responsibility for interna
currently borne by our troops, who a
defence costs agreement. The Chinese
made it plain in the documents that the
any contribution from Hong Kong
forces, as opposed to internal security
for more generous consideration to
Kong in this regard than has thus far
We want the realisation of one cou
—of Hong Kong people governing H
is no doubt of our commitment to tha
it will have to be a Hong Kong system
take some time to evolve.
I end as I began. We may well feel
Hong Kong are in a difficult position b
and the deep blue sea, but I remind
according to the principles of geom
between the arms of the dragon and
desirable place in which to dwell.

5.57 pm

Dr. Jeremy Bray (Motherwell, S
Member for Bromsgrove (Mr. Miller) h
of the Foreign Office and of the Gov
Kong, and we are always interested in w
although we need to correct some of th
remarks in the light of the background
speaks. So it is for all of us.
It is now 25 years since I raised th
Kong in this House on the Easter Adjou
the first debate on Hong Kong since th
elected Member, I was surprised to be
office of the newly elected leader of
Lord Wilson as he now is, and still mor
in his office the Lord Privy Seal, in the
hon. Member for Old Bexley and Sidcup
Lord Privy Seal told me that the Fore
governor were worried about debating
Kong publicly, and asked me to call of
Wilson asked me what I was planning
have such a remarkable effect.
I explained that the essential conti
settlement was reached about 1997
reasonable continuity of economic devel
border between Hong Kong and its hi

that would take time to establish. If it grew, there would be a political basis for a settlement that would safeguard the essential future and the interests of the people of Hong Kong. So it has proved. But the sensitivity of the Foreign Office and of Foreign Office Ministers about stability in Hong Kong is not new. I hope that the Foreign Secretary will follow the example of the Lord Privy Seal, who wound up by saying that he did not see anything wrong with my arguing my case, and the debate went ahead.

All hon. Members have placed the greatest emphasis on the need for stability and continuity during the transition. We also need to recognise that China itself is undergoing a remarkable internal transformation, with a pace of change in some places that exceeds even that of Hong Kong. So of course China is highly sensitive about the situation that it will inherit in Hong Kong. Equally, it will be a somewhat different China in 1997 from what it is today. It will be by no means a homogeneous China. Already, the province of Guangdong does not raise taxes at the rates prescribed by Beijing; it negotiates its taxes with the capital. I was told that this year it is paying no taxes at all to Beijing, which seems a satisfactory outcome to its negotiations.

Such skills in the conduct of political life within China are already being learned rapidly in Hong Kong by all sections of opinion. It is against that background that we have been listening to what the people of Hong Kong are saying, and we must reach a judgment about what, in this rapidly developing situation, we should advise from this House.

There is no possibility of maintaining the status quo. The economic and constitutional development of Hong Kong are inextricably linked. Immigration has been referred to as one important indicator of stability, but perhaps an even more dramatic and immediate one is the exchange rate of the currency. For better or for worse, the touchstone of development—in the first place political but closely followed by economic development—has become the issue whether direct elections to the Legislative Council should be held in 1988. Now that that question has been raised and given a high profile, there is no dodging it. It is necessary to get over this step as soon as possible before Hong Kong can go on to the much more difficult stage of producing its own Executive and working out relations between the Executive and the legislature. The hon. Member for Bromsgrove rightly made that point.

When we reflect on this rapidly changing situation, we must ask ourselves whether it is possible to arrive at a pattern of relationship between the Executive and the legislature if the legislature is itself constituted on a pattern that is quickly to be superseded. Will there be a pattern of relationship between the Members of the Legislative Council, the electorate and the Executive that can develop, sustain, advise upon, demonstrate and learn in practice a new system?

Easy comparisons can be made. The hon. Member for Bromsgrove drew attention to the Westminster ministerial pattern and pointed out that is not the only one because there is the United States pattern, the pattern of local government and so on. None of the patterns offers easy, quickly learned or instantly absorbable patterns that would fit naturally into Hong Kong. Hong Kong must have time to learn these very necessary arts of government.

We recently had a good demonstration in Hong Kong of the need to learn following the stock exchange crash. An appeal was made to Beijing for financial support which was quickly given. An appeal was made people and they were quickly forthcomin in and resolve a rather difficult situation. S not be forthcoming and cannot be summo way in 1997. Problems will have to be people of Hong Kong and they will have to and establish traditions at breakneck pac years from now until 1997.

How does the relationship between the the legislature develop to the point where such sensitive issues as the stability of fir and the level of the exchange rate? We know experience that we cannot deal with t detachment from the facts of our own affect wages, employment and public exp Governments are dealing with the instabilit against a background of the support and their own people, they are in an incom position to defend their people and to sta interests in debates involving different nat

The arguments for going ahead with this year seem quite overwhelming. What that have led to any doubt about that in House, but perhaps more on the Conservat Opposition side? First, we had the survey response to the Green Paper. Seldom can Government have made such a shambles o process, especially a Government that a sussing out public opinion.

To find out about public reaction to a the Star ferry, questions are asked and Council get the answer within a week. It i thorough process of consultation than cou Britain. However, against that backgrou great deal of confusion and an inability questions and receive simple answers. I do n that the survey was deliberately confusi accident.

The People's Republic of China has ma the administration of Hong Kong up to 1 for the British Government. However, it through many channels unease about whe elections—which it accepts—should be Inevitably, there are tremendous and sensitivities in Hong Kong to the wishes Republic of China. It is natural that the certain hesitation about going ahead with the Hong Kong context a perfectly mandatory step. This should not be allowe question of face.

The draft Basic Law will be published in Hong Kong Government are due to m February their judgment about direct ele That is early in the year and it would not suggest to the House, still less to the ski concerned, that the specific forms fo provisions of the draft Basic Law and the ahead with direct elections in 1988 must b a way that properly recognises the profou everybody has in the continued peace development of Hong Kong.

I am confident that the good will of the future of Hong Kong and a firm expressi Kong, being in charge of its own destiny,

[Dr. Jeremy Bray]

to have those direct elections as soon as possible—and they can be held in 1988—is the right message to go out from the House.

6.8 pm

Mr. Robert Adley (Christchurch): I am fortunate to follow two speakers who both have long and close connections with Hong Kong. I first went there in 1955, I think, and have gone there regularly ever since.

I agree with most of what has been said by hon. members who say that we cannot possibly speak on the issue sensibly and seriously without putting the discussions in the context of history. As my hon. Friend the Member for Bromsgrove (Mr. Miller) said, to do so is a fundamental mistake which could have lasting and damaging effects on the people of Hong Kong. It is the people of Hong Kong whom we should be thinking about and I utterly reject the proposition that their future welfare depends solely and simply on whether there should be direct elections this year. That is so to simplify and trivialise the situation that it is not worthy of serious discussion.

I take issue on one matter raised by the hon. Member for Motherwell, South (Dr. Bray). He spoke about the ability of people to assess public opinion in Hong Kong about the Star ferry fares and assumed that one could use the same process to deal with the complex situation surrounding whether, and when, there should be direct elections, to which body, by whom, at what time and with or without parties. That is about as fair a comparison as the one with which I concerned myself recently, when I heard about a public opinion test of people visiting a museum that had been subjected to museum charges. They were asked, "Do you accept these charges or would you rather go into the museum free?" It is not very difficult to assess the answer that is likely to be given to that question.

I agree with the right hon. Member for Stoke-on-Trent, South (Mr. Ashley) that direct elections have been made the issue. They have been made the issue by the media and by people who have an interest in spreading unease in Hong Kong. They have been made the issue by people who have their own purpose and private interests in promoting that proposition. However, I reject the proposition that it is the only question of interest to the people of Hong Kong. I am sorry that the right hon. and learned Member for Aberavon (Mr. Morris) is not in the Chamber. I intervened in his speech. For him to start making comparisons in 1988 with what we were able to do or what happened in Singapore or Kenya or Timbuctoo is wholly farcical. Anyone who is aware of the history of Hong Kong would accept that.

I am also sorry that the right hon. Member for Stoke-on-Trent, criticised so severely the speech of my right hon. Friend the Member for Blackpool, South (Sir P. Blaker), who was born in Hong Kong. In Hong Kong, in many instances for media-driven reasons, we are increasingly being presented with confrontation. It is as though the people of Hong Kong were being forced to make choices this week to determine their future for the next 50 or 60 years. Along with my right hon. Friend, I earnestly believe that the choice that really faces them is between confrontation à la Martin Lee and his friends, and co-operation under changing circumstances and with the Government of the People's Repu
whom they will have to work
sovereignty they will have to live.

I well remember the speech by t
for Leeds, East (Mr. Healey) durin
the right hon. Member for Man
Kaufman) referred. Let me quote
words:

"The skill of our diplomatists
underlying good will of the Beij
transformed the atmosphere and offe
Kong a far more promising future tha
when this act of the drama opened i
—[*Official Report*, 21 January 1985;

Mr. Foulkes: Perhaps the hon.
own speech on 5 December 1984, w

"Those who hold power in Hong
want to hold on to it. They have no
have an obvious incentive to resis
Report, 5 December 1984; Vol. 69, c.
Can he tell us why he has changed h
where the inspiration has come fro

Mr. Adley: The hon. Gentlema
affairs comparatively recently. He
that I have not always been the great
Kong Government. As I was about
establishment in Hong Kong has
answer for over the past few years,
the Hong Kong Government h
considerable criticism from me.

Without divulging too many secr
embarrassment, I can say that there
I had to invoke the assistance of my
Friend the Foreign Secretary to deal
tricks practised on me by that Go
ago, when they deduced that I was
grateful to the hon. Gentleman for
that point.

Let me return to putting the ma
context. It was not a matter of free
we had to make new arrangements
Hong Kong; it was due to the impe
on the new territories. It is very
ourselves in the House—or, indee
Hong Kong to allow themselves—t
faced with circumstances that seem
straitjacket. As has been said on m
us in those days could have imagined
arrangement could be made to secure
and stability of the people of Hong

Either we accept the good wil
Chinese Governments to ensure th
carried out or, if we do not, we sho
believe that there was and is a better
of the present system should speak u
that a better deal could ever have be
the view of my hon. Friend the Me
that it is grossly insulting to sug
Government are failing to do their b
obligations under the agreement.

We all know that the Governm
Republic are not opposed in princip
I presume that the hon. Member fo
and Doon Valley (Mr. Foulkes)—I
tell me if I am misreading his atte
different colour—was trying to imp

ic of China—with
and under whose

right hon. Member
he debate to which
ester, Gorton (Mr.
iefly from his wise

combined with the
Government, has
the people of Hong
nost people expected
ne summer of 1982."
l. 71, c. 742.]

mber will recall his
en he said:
ong now like it, and
een elected to it and
change." — [*Official*
4.]
view since then, and

has come to these
ill know, however,
friend of the Hong
say, I think that the
d a great deal to
d in the recent past
e certainly drawn

which might cause
ere occasions when
ht hon. and learned
th some of the dirty
rnment some years
ritic of theirs. I am
owing me to make

into its historical
nd easy choice that
the sovereignty of
ing end of the lease
angerous to allow
for the people of
orget that we were
l to leave us in a
y occasions, few of
at such an excellent
ne future prosperity
ong.
of the British and
the agreement is
d say so. If people
eal on offer, critics
but I do not believe
envisaged. I share
er for Bromsgrove
t that the British
t to carry out their

nt of the People's
to direct elections.
Carrick, Cumnock
n sure that he will
pts to paint me a
that I was wearing

my hat as chairman of the British-Chinese parliamentary group, and acting as a spokesman for the People's Republic. That charge has been thrown at me on more than one occasion, and I do not think that it is even necessary to rebut it.

We are all concerned to retain the stability and prosperity that Hong Kong has enjoyed for a long time. Although my hon. Friend the Member for Bromsgrove did not put it quite so bluntly, that stability and prosperity are based firmly and simply on autocracy, not on democracy. We owe it to the people of Hong Kong to ensure that, before we chuck out the baby with the bath water, we know clearly what we are putting in its place. Overt and covert pressure has always been brought to bear on Hong Kong by the Chinese Government, not just since 1949. The history books show that much of what was said in 1911 about the British in Hong Kong was far more vigorous and unhelpful than anything said by Beijing since 1949.

My right hon. Friend the Member for Blackpool, South invited the House briefly to consider the position from the point of view of the Chinese Government. Sensible people in Hong Kong know that they must learn to live with China. That is a fact of life, and there is no point in trying to avoid it. Either they must accept the good will of the Chinese Government, or they must believe that that Government are deliberately trying to string them, the House and the British Government along until 1997, when they will suddenly impose some new system. I consider that mischievous, and utterly nonsensical. If, however, we suppose it to be true, what difference would it make which institutions we put in place now? Surely we should advise the people of Hong Kong that co-operation, not confrontation, is essential.

Like most hon. Members, I have received a great deal of paper, and I shall not weary the House with numerous quotations. I am bound to say, however, that it is not only Mr. Martin Lee and his friends who are stirring up mischief. I received a communication from the Hong Kong Social Workers General Union, stating:

"The people of Hong Kong would not tolerate the decision to postpone the introduction of direct elections by 3 years and it would be folly to assume that they would accept such a decision mildly".

That sounds almost like an attempt to generate insurrection, and—at the very least—suspiciously like a threat. I do not think that such wild statements are doing any good to the people of Hong Kong as they struggle, understandably, towards a new future.

If I have any contact with the Chinese Government—which, of course, I have—I may be able to give the House the benefit of some wisdom and understanding. Unfortunately for me, however, that has already been done by the right hon. Member for Gorton, and, indeed, by the Foreign Secretary. They have both said what we know to be true: that the Chinese Government are not opposed to the principle of direct elections. All that we are talking about is timing: the timing of the introduction of direct elections, in relation to the progress of the joint liaison group and the development of the Basic Law.

It seems to me rather unwise to try to rush headlong into direct elections for an assembly none of whose constitutional arrangements have even been discussed, let alone put in place, before that Basic Law is complete. I believe that that would be the view of the Chinese Government. I may be wrong—it may be a changeable position. However, it would seem sensible to put the Basic Law in place first in 1990, and then have elections. Doing otherwise, and pushing elections for their own sake, would b instability. If that were done in the face of the Government of the People's Repub know whether they are opposed—it wo the face of sanity and disregarding sovereignty of the People's Republic, whi in the interests of the people of Hong Ko

I am worried that some people in H allowing themselves to be misled by politicians and trouble makers who wa unrest and who clearly do not trust the Ch Governments. Perhaps most dangerous people are allowing themselves to be meaning do-gooders.

The reputation of the Chinese Governm their ability to maintain the stability of should have thought that that was everyone. The message to the people of H be that they should not allow themselves siren voices.

The stock exchange scandal has been m mention it only to illustrate a point. T Chinese Governments are clearly committ ing stability. If stability is upset, howeve upset in London or Beijing—it is likely t by what goes on in Hong Kong.

I told the hon. Member for Carrick, Doon Valley that I have not always been admirer of the Hong Kong Government. I Sir David Wilson, however, Hong Kong possible Governor to see it through the ne years. It would be hard to imagine a mor friend. Hong Kong's gain is our Government's loss in the Foreign and Office. He is a good man. He will do his be the people of Hong Kong are led steadily the next few years.

We all want to do our best for the p Kong, but it should be steady as she constructively with the British and Chines is far more likely to achieve that than lis who appear to have instant solutions to e

6.22 pm

Mr. Andrew Faulds (Warley, East): I a last, to have an opportunity to intervene s in this very important debate.

The hon. Member for Christchurch (M not be too surprised to find that I endor word that he said, as I endorsed the cont right hon. Friend the Member for Blackp P. Blaker) and his right hon. Friend th Bromsgrove (Mr. Miller). That is not to view of the fact that the four of us have considerable interest in the affairs both o Hong Kong, and, if I may say so with my u we probably know more about it than th Members in the House of Commons.

The emphasis in the debate today seem been primarily on the need for direct e Legislative Council sooner rather than la me that the pressures for direct elections from two quarters: first, from the media groups in Hong Kong, some expatriate, wh

[Mr. Andrew Faulds]

the Sino-British agreement was always somewhat suspect and who really did not — and do not — want the agreement to work out properly.

Newsmen have been perhaps the most malign in this regard, but there are undoubtedly other factions in Hong Kong itself who were unhappy — always unhappy — about the inevitability of China reclaiming its own after 1997. They are usually the well-heeled and, under the admirable capitalist system of Hong Kong, they have not done too badly. They can afford the luxury of a funkhole somewhere else and they have, of course, the requisite passports and tickets ready to hand. If the future turns difficult for them, they can up and go. Their commitment to making the agreement work is somewhat less than wholehearted.

Then there are those in the West, public opinion formers and parliamentarians in particular — we have them here tonight—whose traditions endorse and whose purpose depends on the cross in the ballot box. They disregard or perhaps conveniently forget that in all the years of colonial government, in spite of our commitment to the electoral ballot, we were diligent in denying it to our subjects in Hong Kong. Now the parliamentary majority are loud in their demand for direct elections now, this year.

Most of us forget, too — we are not well enough versed in knowledge of the history of other peoples, one of the unhappy developments of the abandonment of empire — that China and Chinese people everywhere have totally different cultural and social traditions from ours. The concept of democracy is at variance with their political thought over the many centuries of Chinese life. China, both Confucian and Communist, has shown a long respect for authority and social order — not perhaps ideas that we in the individualist West are too committed to or have too much respect for.

I accept the arguments of those of our Hong Kong friends—some of us have a number of friends in Hong Kong—who say there is no need to rush into elections, that gradualism and convergence will work out best for the true interests of the great mass of the Hong Kong populace who do not have a ticket and a passport to get out.

It is quite clear that public opinion in Hong Kong is very sharply divided on the speed of introduction of direct elections and I am sure that the "direct elections this year" factions are largely the westernised people who have very much fallen under the influence of European attitudes. I believe that those who want to hasten slowly are the great bulk of the populace in Hong Kong who still feel the ancient attachment to China and to Chinese values. That is as, I believe, it should be.

The first draft of the Basic Law is to appear, I gather, in April this year. I suspect it would be advantageous to all the parties, if the Chinese were to accept a move to some proportion of direct elections to LegCo.

Dr. Bray: I am sure that my hon. Friend would not wish to do an injustice to the people of China. He must be aware that the people of China have gone through a tremendous trauma recently and that it was that trauma which led most of the population of Hong Kong to go where they went. It is against that background of recent history that the matter is being resolved in Hong Kong and China. I think that my hon. Friend is showing remarkable insensitivity to that fact.

Mr. Faulds: No. I am moderately aware of that, but I think that the longer lesson of history is that, whether we like it or not, and whether the people of Hong Kong like it or not, they will be subsumed by China, and the more gracefully that happens, the happier their lot will be.

I hope that the Chinese will agree to something like a 25 per cent. proportion of direct elections. It would not be a bad figure to settle on. The British Government, as we know, are committed to an element of direct elections, but they did not spell it out in a timetable. I personally consider that it would be wiser to wait for that development till 1991 when the Basic Law, which, after all, is going to be the basic fact of Hong Kong's life and future, has been promulgated.

A proposal of a 25 per cent. introduction of direct elections in 1991 would still give some years of practice of democratic conduct of Hong Kong affairs. I should be very concened indeed for the prospects for the agreement and for our relations with China if there were to be too precipitate a move to a much larger proportion of direct elections.

A Government who have the responsibility in 1997 to take over Hong Kong have a legitimate interest in how things evolve politically—a point made by one of our Hong Kong friends. This is where convergence of developments with the Basic Law is so crucial, indeed critical, to the future of Hong Kong. Nothing could be worse for the future, both politically and economically, than for the introduction of changes before 1997 which the then Chinese Government might have to unscramble—and, of course, they would have to suffer the opprobrium of the international community if that were to happen.

Finally, there is another risk factor in rushing into direct elections. Party politics is all very well in our old democracies, regardless of the damage the swing of the pendulum often does to the real interest of the people concerned. But if direct elections were to lead to party politics in Hong Kong, the damage would be immense. There would be really only two parties involved—in our sense of party politics — and they would be the Communists and the Knomintang. Imagine what turmoil of instability that would lead to.

I believe that by far the most sensible course for us to urge in Hong Kong is to trust the Chinese Government's integrity in their intentions. They have listened to Hong Kong opinion. They were not at first really prepared to do so, but they have done so. They have taken part in very constructive consultations, and they continue to do so. They want a stable and successful Hong Kong for their own national reasons — the continuation of China's reconstruction and her economic progress and, of course, the reclaiming of Taiwan.

We should always remember that China, under a variety of governmental systems, has historically observed its obligations. I believe that all will be well—I am by nature an optimist, but I think that we have good reason in this case—and that unwise pressures from this House or this Government could do nothing but harm to Hong Kong's stability and success, and that is what we must be most concerned about.

6.30 pm

Mr. Alastair Goodlad (Eddisbury): I begin by strongly supporting my right hon. Friend the Member for Old Bexley and Sidcup (Mr. Heath) in his eloquent plea for

further urgent action to remedy the problem of Indo-Chinese refugees in Hong Kong. This country has a proud record with regard to the number of Indo-Chinese refugees that it has accepted through Hong Kong and with regard to our efforts in orchestrating their resettlement elsewhere.

As I rehearsed to the House in the Christmas Adjournment debate, the position is becoming markedly worse. The number of refugees arriving for resettlement is increasing and the number accepted for resettlement elsewhere is declining. Since we debated the matter in the Christmas Adjournment debate, the position has become even worse. The number of arrivals in December was 278 and the figures for October, November and December were the highest since 1982. The number of people who have already arrived this month is 164, and that is already the highest January figure since 1983.

When my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State replies, I hope that he will be able to tell us that he has made significant progress in the process of persuading other countries to accept more refugees for resettlement so that this difficult problem may be solved quickly. My right hon. and learned Friend would find that he would have broad support on both sides of the House if this country was to act as a catalyst and offer to take more refugees for settlement than we took in the middle of last year.

I agree broadly with the comments made by my right hon. Friend the Member for Blackpool, South (Sir P. Blaker) and my hon. Friend the Member for Bromsgrove (Mr. Miller). The views of the people of Hong Kong on direct elections have been canvassed systematically ond objectively. It is obviously too early to detect a consensus. Many people did not respond and of those who did, although the majority were in favour, opinion was divided about the type.

It is not surprising that there is no consensus. In this country, democratic institutions have grown up over hundreds of years, but we still try to change and improve their character and workings. Hong Kong has only recently introduced indirect elections and is considering the development of democratic institutions simultaneously with a change in sovereignty to its neighbour, which is not a democratic country in the sense that we use the term.

The motion refers to "stability" and "prosperity". They are both inextricably interlinked in Hong Kong. More than half of those living in Hong Kong previously lived in China. Their perceptions of stability obviously differ from ours. None the less, however they look at it and however we look at it, in an uncertain world the future viability of Hong Kong depends on its stability and on people's perception of its stability. In other words, it depends on confidence.

I believe that a consensus for direct elections will certainly emerge, but people will probably not want to be rushed. It is envisaged that Hong Kong should enjoy a high degree of autonomy after 1997. It follows that there should be as many years as reasonably possible of direct elections and whatever accompanying arrangements emerge for relationships beween the legislature and the Executive. It is equally desirable that the system in place should last beyond 1997. If the draft Basic Law that is expected to emerge in the spring shows a need for further consultation, that should take place before a system is installed.

It is important that the House should be clear about the position of the People's Republic of China. We should not be misled by vague optimism. I want to quote Mr. Li Hou, the deputy director of the Hong Kong and Macao office of the State Council. In the overseas *People's Daily* on 24 June 1987 he said:

"Concerning the question of whether or not there should be direct elections in 1988, starting from the point of view of convergence between the Basic Law and current reform of the political system in Hong Kong, ...until the Basic Law had been formally approved, the Hong Kong political system should not undergo any great change. If direct elections were hastily introduced in 1988, then a situation of non-convergence with the Basic Law would occur . . . In the past I have thought and now still think that the future political system in Hong Kong should be stipulated by the Basic Law: the political reform being carried out now in Hong Kong should converge with the Basic Law. Until the Basic Law has been formally approved, there should be no change in the political system in Hong Kong. We do not wish to interfere in the administration of Hong Kong by Britain before 1997, but if the measures being adopted now will have an influence after 1997, or will influence the smooth transition, then we cannot but express our ideas."

We should not be in any doubt about the view of the Government of the People's Republic of China. I believe that there is a strong case for allowing the present arrangements a little time to settle, for experience of democracy to develop, for parties to form and for a confluence of view within Hong Kong with the People's Republic of China about the way in which the way ahead should develop in line with the wishes of the people of Hong Kong.

Hong Kong has a unique record in the world in terms of economic and social achievement. One of the reasons for that is that it enjoys a political consensus—seldom upset—based on pragmatism. It is vital that that is not jeopardised and that the political achievements of the past few years are built on at a measured speed with which consensus can keep pace. There can be no absolute certainty in such matters. It is certain that the People's Republic of China wishes to respect Hong Kong public opinion and that the mutuality of interest of the Hong Kong people and their neighbours must be given a chance to assert itself through institutions with which everybody is at ease and at a pace which can reasonably be achieved.

The right hon. Member for Manchester, Gorton (Mr. Kaufman) referred to the principle of unripe time and he attributed it to the late Hugh Dalton. I think that Hugh Dalton got it from a book by F. P. Cornford written in the 1920s, called "Microcosmographica Academica", which was about university politics. The principle of unripe time is that one can put off indefinitely anything that really ought to be done by saying that the time is unripe and that it would be better to put it off for a little. But it is never done. That does not apply to Hong Kong.

Cornford linked that principle with the practice of squaring. Squaring was a process carried out in King's parade. It was done by taking those concerned by the elbow, somewhere between the front entrance of King's and The Copper Kettle, and persuading them to accept one's point of view. There was nothing discreditable about that. In all matters where consensus has to be achieved, a period of time for squaring must be allowed.

Hong Kong's only natural resources are her people, and the genius that they have shown. We must be careful not to do anything to prejudice the stability that has allowed such genius to flower. I have every confidence that if things continue at a measured pace, Hong Kong will continue to flower long into the next century.

Mr. Tony Banks: On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. A number of hon. Members on both sides of the House wanted to speak in the debate. It is absolutely selfish for hon. Members, who know of the pressure on time, to make very long speeches, thus shutting out other hon. Members who wish to make points.

I wished to make a short, sharp point about the trade in endangered species in Hong Kong. Tigers and leopards are eaten in Hong Kong restaurants. That is a form of gastronomic perversion. We have had to listen to many speeches——

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Sir Paul Dean): Order. I realise that the hon. Member for Newham, North-West (Mr. Banks) and a number of other hon. Members on both sides of the House have not been able to speak so far. The hon. Gentleman cannot make his speech under the guise of a point of order. Perhaps I should tell the House that this debate will be interrupted at 7 o'clock for private business. If the private business were to end before 10 o'clock, it would be possible for the House, if it so wished, to return to this motion until 10 o'clock.

6.42 pm

Mr. George Foulkes (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley): The interest and eloquence shown today and the queue of speakers waiting to participate in the debate justify the Opposition's request for a debate on the report, and confirms once again the House's great interest in Hong Kong. I hope that the Foreign Secretary will take account of the views expressed in the House and ensure that they are taken into account in the drafting of the White Paper to be published on 10 February.

Before coming to the central issue of the timing of direct elections, I wish to mention the Vietnamese refugees—the boat people. The annual report confirms a dramatic increase in their number—a 65 per cent. increase in 1987. The numbers leaving for settlement are declining. By the end of 1987, the number was 9,530. When I was in Hong Kong, I visited Tuen Mun, one of the closed camps. While I was there, another 120 people arrived. I met members of the Legislative Council who argued unanimously and strongly that they are querying the position of Hong Kong as a place of first refuge.

Already, a number of camps are full to capacity, and overflowing. The closed camps resemble prisons—indeed, one of them was built as a prison. While the Hong Kong Government are doing all they can with great humanity, I heard moving appeals from inmates—including women and children—who were anxious that the British Government should take some action to help them. The conditions in the camps are unacceptable and intolerable.

The British Government have reduced the numbers being accepted. We have taken 468 people in two years. That is not the 40 people a month that used to be accepted, and the conditions of acceptance are restricted to those with family links. We have a moral responsibility to give a lead, and I hope that the Secretary of State will make a positive reply.

As for the central issue, I shall concentrate on one of the principles included in the joint declaration, which must be a bible on these issues. The Secretary of State and the Government must ensure that it is taken account of in the drafting of the Basic Law and other matters. One of the agreed processes is that of convergence. The actions of the British and Hong Kong Governments up to 1997 should, as far as possible, fit the plans of the People's Republic of China from 1997 onwards, and vice versa, so that there is no disjunction or disruption between 30 June and 1 July 1997.

As the right hon. Member for Old Bexley and Sidcup (Mr. Heath) said, there is no conflict between what the right hon. Gentleman and Opposition Members have proposed and what has been proposed by the People's Republic of China. The right hon. Gentleman knows well the People's Republic of China and its Government. He is well respected by that Government—probably more than by ours. The Foreign Secretary and all hon. Members who have spoken have accepted the principle of direct elections. They accept that the People's Republic of China is not opposed to direct elections in principle, although the hon. Member for Bromsgrove (Mr. Miller) queried the Basic Law draft.

A substantial collection of draft articles has already been compiled by the secretariat of the drafting committee for the Basic Law published in December last year. The right hon. Member for Old Bexley and Sidcup referred to the three options in which the minimum proportion to be directly elected is 25 per cent. There seems to be no dispute that a percentage of the Legislative Council should be directly elected. The only question is about timing. I agree with the right hon. Member for Blackpool, South (Sir P. Blaker) that the Opposition have no wish for any confrontation with China, but we sincerely believe that the Government of the People's Republic of China would understand and respect a stand on principle by our Government on that issue.

The views of the people of Hong Kong must be taken into account. So many hon. Members have said that those views are not paramount—as the Government might argue in the case of another dependent territory, but I shall leave that aside—but they must certainly be given a great deal of priority. As several hon. Members have said, the report of the Survey Office on the White Paper is open to serious question. The whole process, from the Green Paper onwards, is in clouded and obscure language, as the hon. Member for Harrow, West (Mr. Hughes) said in an intervention.

In the McNair survey, between 40 and 45 per cent. could not understand the questions because they were so obscure. I am not suggesting that it was rigged. It was sincere and honest, but severely flawed. In fact, it is the only poll which shows low support for direct elections in 1988. Successive polls, before and since that survey, have shown increasing support for direct elections. The most recent poll carried out by Marketing Decision Research showed that 78 per cent. were in favour of direct elections. That was broken down to 53 per cent. in favour of direct elections in 1988 and confirmed the trend in other polls.

Last week, I spoke to regional and urban councillors, community organisations and trade unions. My hon. Friend the Member for Warley, East (Mr. Faulds) will be interested to know that the only people I found on the other side of the argument were big business men, who are not often in favour of direct elections anywhere.

Some people argue that the people of Hong Kong are not ready for direct elections. I find that not only patronising, but, from my recent experience, completely untrue. The experience of election to urban and regional councils and now to district boards has already provided an excellent training ground, just as local government

elections in the United Kingdom are a good training ground for prospective parliamentarians. When there are elections to the Legislative Council in Hong Kong, I do not believe that political divisions will be polarised in the way described by my hon. Friend the Member for Warley, East.

Another worry has been expressed about the effect that elections may have on confidence—the hon. Member for Weston-super-Mare (Mr. Wiggins) mentioned that. Such a fear is sometimes expressed by people who have shown their faith with direct elections in other countries by taking out dual nationality or refocusing their investments in those countries. However, the converse and more valid, powerful argument is the effect on confidence if the British Government are perceived as abdicating their responsibilities or if it is believed that a promise that was perceived has not been fulfilled.

I reaffirm the advantages of early elections, which I believe will give people the experience of participation in elections for the next nine years. They also provide an opportunity for consultation with directly elected people—people with a mandate. I hope that the Secretary of State will acknowledge that there has been strength of feeling expressed from all parts of the House—Liberal, Conservative and Labour Members—in favour of direct elections in 1988. Even those who did not argue for direct elections in 1988 agreed that a timetable for their introduction must be included in the White Paper. That view was unanimous.

I hope that any statement that is included in the White Paper will be clear and unequivocal so that it does not engender the kind of confusion in the mind that caused the unfortunate division of opinion between the right hon. Member for Blackpool, South and the visiting Delegation for Democracy.

In conclusion—I wish to give the Foreign Secretary time to reply to the points made in the debate—one of the essentials of one country, two systems is the existence of a pluralist democracy in the special administrative region. The overwhelming message to be carried from this debate is that we want that sooner rather than later.

6.52 pm

Sir Geoffrey Howe: With the leave of the House, I shall reply to the debate.

I should like to begin by saying that the debate that we have had today confirms the intensity of interest of Members on both sides of the House in the future of Hong Kong. This deep concern has been expressed by hon. Members with many different points of view.

In the context of this debate a number of what I would term "subsidiary issues" have been raised and I shall be able to deal with them only quickly.

The right hon. and learned Member for Aberavon (Mr. Morris), who represents my old home town with great distinction, raised the question of human rights, with particular reference to press freedom and censorship. The joint declaration is explicit on the importance of that, and recent changes in the law represented the repeal of many previously rigorous censorship laws. The matter still remains under review.

My hon. Friend the Member for Bromsgrove (Mr. Miller) asked about defence costs arrangements and he will be aware that that matter is also under review.

Apart from the central issue, the issue that aroused most concern was that of the Vietnamese refugees. My right hon. Friend the Member for Old Bexley and Sidcup (Mr. Heath) made a strong argument on the matter, and he was eloquently supported by hon. Members on both sides of the House, including my hon. Friend the Member for Eddisbury (Mr. Goodlad). I am grateful to my right hon. Friend the Member for Old Bexley and Sidcup for his tribute to my concern about this matter. None of us in the House who have any familiarity with the topic can be other than deeply concerned about it.

Our record in dealing with Vietnamese refugees from Hong Kong is not as bad as all that—we have taken some 13,000 altogether. However, my right hon. Friend is right to urge us to try to do more, not only in respect of our country, but in making attempts in other directions. This is a sustained campaign to which we will remain committed, but it is not easy.

In this context, it is also right to discuss—as we are doing with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees—the possible return of some of these people to Vietnam. A number of refugees are now coming from North Vietnam. The return of such people will, of course, take place only under circumstances and conditions that are likely to be acceptable.

The central question in the debate has been the place of direct elections in the future of Hong Kong. The debate has narrowed itself down to the acceptance of the proposition that the principle of direct elections is acceptable to all sides. Indeed, it is contained in the pronouncement of the People's Republic of China and the joint declaration. There is room for argument about how many and in what respect, but the key question has become when we move beyond where we have already moved in that direction. It is important to note that on that key question different views on both sides of the argument have been expressed strongly from both sides of the House. This has not been a party matter and there has been no clear-cut division. Both views have been strongly and rationally supported.

There has been reference to, or, to be more explicit, charges of, bad faith and broken promises. Those charges were dealt with most notably by my right hon. Friend the Member for Blackpool, South (Sir P. Blaker). I am grateful to him for his repudiation of those charges. Quite apart from my position and that of the Government, it would be wholly unjustified to leave such charges on the record in face of the devoted work that has been done to secure and implement the joint declaration by many people in Hong Kong outside our Civil Service and diplomatic service. Those people are entitled to have such charges repudiated.

I acknowledge the wisdom of the point made by the right hon. Member for Stoke-on-Trent, South (Mr. Ashley), who said that there was no question of falsehood or concoction about the survey. It is important that that untruth should be laid without doubt on both sides of the House. There is no question of falsehood in that survey. It was undertaken honestly, and the questions were not dictated by anyone to anyone. The questions were based upon the Green Paper—perhaps not the easiest way of doing it—and it was all done in good faith. There was no constraint on that survey.

Let us consider the conclusions that many people have drawn from that analysis. It is believed that there subsists in Hong Kong—not resting on any one survey—a serious and big divide in the population's views. Nobody on either side of the debate has said that there is a clear

[Sir Geoffrey Howe]

conclusion emerging in favour of direct elections in 1988. That is the key thing. If one looks beyond the surveys and takes account of the debates in the various councils and boards in Hong Kong, it is clear, as expressed by my right hon. Friend the Member for Blackpool, South, that there is a clear division of opinion——

Mr. Tony Banks *rose*——

Sir Geoffrey Howe: Forgive me, but I have no time to give way.

One comes back to the question of the pace at which we manage this process of change. Two factors have been commended by both sides of the House: a need to take account of the responsibility of Her Majesty's Government and the responsibility of the People's Republic of China beyond 1997, and the need to take account of the aspirations of the people of Hong Kong and also the style of government thus far in the territory. The hon. Member for Inverness, Nairn and Lochaber (Sir R. Johnston) drew attention to the particular features of Hong Kong—the surrogate democracy and the liveliness of democracy. This again suggests that the territory calls for a different conclusion from the conventional one.

The point that we come back to was made by the right hon. Member for Manchester, Gorton (Mr. Kaufman) in his opening speech, when he said that, in the process of analysis before a conclusion is reached, it is clearly not in the interests of the people of Hong Kong for decisions to be taken that are not, in the broad sense, in line with the destination commended by the People's Republic of China.

The same point was made by my right hon. Friend the Member for Old Bexley and Sidcup, when he said that it would be wise not to take action in conflict with t constitution. Such factors must be balanced again other and account must be taken of the particular f of the Hong Kong people, society and institution

I am able to say no more than that the p commended by my right hon. Friend the Mem Blackpool, South was I gather, well supported speeches of my hon. Friend the Member for Christ (Mr. Adley) and the hon. Member for Warley, Ea Faulds). Unfortunately, I did not hear those sp However, I did hear the speech of my hon. Frie Member for Eddisbury, who also endorsed what m hon. Friend had said.

We agree upon the proposition that in due cou need an element of direct elections — a proportion, but certainly not going all the way. T there is agreement on both sides of the Hous question is one of timing, as was emphasised by th Member for Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valle Foulkes). On that there is a difference of views amo contributors to the debate. Even then the Opp Front Bench and this side of the House come togeth need to secure a timetable for progress, expressed i and unequivocal terms. That is the message that I d from the debate more clearly than anything else.

There can be no cast-iron guarantees about the of Hong Kong, but that is true of any country or ter I believe that Hong Kong is well equipped to fa future and——

It being Seven o'clock, and there being private b set down by direction of THE CHAIRMAN OF WAY MEANS *under Standing Order No. 16 (Time for private business), further proceedings stood postpon*

British Railways (London) Bill *[Lords]* *(By Order)*

Order for Second Reading read.

7 pm

Mr. Sydney Chapman (Chipping Barnet): I beg to move, That the Bill be now read a Second time.

I am grateful for the opportunity to introduce the Bill, not only because I am a London Member, but, principally, because I believe it to be a very good measure. It is, after all, about improving and expanding London's transport infrastructure. Unlike the usual general powers Bills brought before the House from time to time on behalf of British Railways Board, this Bill is for the express purpose of authorising new works and improving rail services in London and the south-east.

Hon. Members will be aware that central London commuting on British Rail has increased by no less than 19 per cent. over the last four years. Off-peak travel has increased by almost one third, thanks to the Capitalcard initiative and other discounts. I also remind the House that the pattern of travel is changing significantly throughout the metropolis. Many more journeys are made around the circumference of our great capital city, particularly by road. The M25 London orbital motorway stands testimony to that.

British Rail is rising to the changes and challenges. It is making ingenious use of an abandoned railway section in the City between Farringdon and Blackfriars to link the north and the south of the Thames. From May, the Thameslink service will run from Bedford, Luton and St. Albans—I am delighted to see my right hon. Friend the Member for Bedfordshire, North (Sir T. Skeet) in his place — to the south of London and on to Sevenoaks, Gatwick airport and Brighton. That will bring many benefits and great convenience to passengers who at present have to change trains, sometimes several times, to complete those journeys.

In central London, the trains will also serve King's Cross, Farringdon and Blackfriars while the Gatwick and Brighton trains will also serve London bridge. However, the trains will not be able to serve Holborn viaduct because it is at the end of a short spur line.

There are essentially three parts of the Bill, in the sense of the works to be undertaken. Work no. 1 is to relocate Holborn viaduct station below ground on the new through route. That involves the realignment of the railway line north of Blackfriars. It is intended that the realigned route will run slightly to the east of the present line and, perhaps more important, will descend to run in a shallow tunnel under Ludgate hill.

The other points to note about the proposal are that passengers will approach the new station through the present entrance to Holborn viaduct station, as the new station will be very near the existing station, or use new entrances on Farringdon road or off Ludgate hill. The station will be fully accessible for disabled passengers. I applaud British Rail's initiative in making that a central concern and strategy of the detailed design plans.

Above the line, shop units are planned to cater for the needs of travellers. That major investment is made feasible by releasing the old Holborn viaduct station for redevelopment. All that will be beneficial for travellers and commuters, for taxpayers, for the City as a great financial centre of the world and for the regeneration of that pa of the heart of London. The new station will be named S Paul's.

Work no. 1 also involves demolishing most of t viaduct between Blackfriars and Holborn viaduct and t removal of the bridge over Ludgate hill, thus restoring t great prospect of St. Paul's cathedral. Environmentalis everywhere will see that as a great boon. I do not inte to wax lyrical about it; I only say that, as someone wh qualified as an architect, I have one other thing in comm with Sir Christopher Wren, the designer of that splendi ecclesiastical pile; he, too, was a Member of Parliamen It was realised that there might be a personality clash ar it was eventually agreed between our agents that S Christopher would promise to make no more politic speeches if I promised to design no more buildings. Th arrangement has stood the test of time.

British Rail applied to the Corporation of London la September for outline planning approval. At the sam time, it entered into extensive local public consultation I understand that the planning committee will consider th application shortly. Having examined the detailed plan and speaking as a fellow of the Royal Town Plannin Institute, I commend the planning application to th Committee.

The other works proposed in the Bill——

Mr. Michael Fallon (Darlington): Before my hon Friend leaves work no. 1, will he elucidate further th financial implications of the development at Holbor viaduct? Unlike a public Bill, the measure that he i commending to the House has no financial memorandum I think that I understood him to say that some or perhap all of the costs of the development would be recouped fron the sale of the station and the land immediatel surrounding it. Can he tell us whether the whol expenditure will be recouped or whether British Rail i financing any of the development from its other norma capital or current expenditure?

Mr. Chapman: The House will be grateful to my hon Friend for raising that important matter. I hope that I ca give him all the information now. The works involved in what I will call in shorthand the Holborn viaduct sectio of the Bill will all be financed out of the sale fo development of the Holborn viaduct station area, which is no longer needed for British Rail's purposes. It is important to stress that, if Thameslink is to become a reality, the existing Holborn viaduct station will be outdated because it will be left in limbo on a short spur and no one will use it. Everyone who wanted to get off in the area would alight at the new station.

The new station cannot be provided unless the asset of the old station is realised. The old station cannot be kept if the new station comes into being. There is no question of British Rail being able to proceed with the new station without getting rid of the unwanted old station left on the spur of the line.

British Rail has many priorities and I suspect that if it is in order we shall hear about some of them during the debate. This project will not stand above British Rail's other major priorities and it will be realised by using one of BR's assets. It could not be used for other British Rail projects, because the project would be useless unless the new station of St. Paul's, on the reopened line, comes into being.

[Mr. Chapman]

I also wish to deal with the relatively minor, but important works related to works nos. 3 and 4.

Mr. Nigel Spearing (Newham, South) *rose*——

Mr. Chapman: I shall give way in a moment.

I shall check this fact, but, as I understand it, these works will be financed by British Rail moneys elsewhere. They are relatively small and I am sure that British Rail will confirm that they can be allocated out of the normal funds without damaging capital investment in other major projects.

Mr. Spearing: Perhaps the hon. Gentleman will clarify this point now. As I understand it, the long-awaited and excellent Thameslink will come into use in May, so some trains will be running through. Will they not stop anywhere between Farringdon and Blackfriars? If they are able to go through from May, what is the pressing reason for the changes proposed in the Bill?

Mr. Chapman: I appreciate the hon. Gentleman's great experience and knowledge of the area. The short answer is that, at present, there is no link between Blackfriars and Farringdon. As the hon. Gentleman says, this link will come into being in May, but there will be no station on that line between Blackfriars and King's Cross. I shall check these details in case I have inadvertently misled the House. The station would become useless to those people who presently use Holborn viaduct or who wish to alight from the new link in that area.

Mr. Greg Knight (Derby, North): My hon. Friend said that some of the costs, which he described as relatively small, would not be met. Will he be a little more specific? What does he mean by "relatively small"? How much money are we talking about?

Mr. Chapman: I cannot give my hon. Friend a precise answer now, but I shall seek to do so before the end of the debate.

I shall explain the other works, which may give my hon. Friend a better idea. The asset realised will cover work no. 1 and, if there is any excess, that may cover works nos. 3A, 3B, and 4, which I wish to describe briefly.

Mr. Fallon: I hate to press my hon. Friend on this matter, but what is the normal policy in this regard? What is the normal policy if an asset is sold in a region of the British Rail network and the sum realised is more than sufficient to replace that asset with a new development of the kind described in work no. 1? Is the surplus redistributed among other capital projects in the regions or is it retained within London or Network SouthEast?

Mr. Chapman: That is exceptional, if not unique, because it is rare that an asset is realised on the site where an improvement can be made to the British Rail network.

My hon. Friend is a much greater expert than I on these matters. Perhaps the Minister will be able to give a more authoritative answer. Normally, the money would go into the finances of the British Railways Board, which would put projects to the Department of Transport. The Minister would then approve, disapprove or amend projects and they would be allocated among the many priorities of the British Railways Board.

The minor works—I use the word "minor" advisedly—relating to works nos. 3A and 3B, aim to reopen two short tunnels immediately to the north of K station to achieve a connection of this new route to the south with the east coast main lin the north-east. That will allow the Thameslin be increased, with local trains running from t route through to the south.

Mr. A. J. Beith (Berwick-upon-Tweed) Gentleman mentions linking this line to the main line, as does the promoters' statement, of the east coast main line will allow some L services to operate. Do the promoters see the l east coast main line as a way of providing passengers from the north-east into the Tham

Mr. Chapman: I am grateful to the hon. Ge raising that point. If he is a little more pati explain it to him.

Work no. 4 provides for a new escalator co shorten the interchange between the Thameslin and the main line station at King's Cross. The r east line terminates at King's Cross, although terminate at other stations. It would be imp those trains to bypass King's Cross or to con to the southern regions of the country beca normal 4 ft 8½ in gauge, but narrow width trac being used. It is important for people from the who want a quicker connection to the south-ea of the Thames to have this much more s convenient method of crossing from the main into the Thameslink. The escalators will do ju

Mr. Fallon: My hon. Friend has been generous in giving way, but is work no. 4 a con for works nos. 3A and 3B? He has dese opportunities to make it easier for passengers north alighting at King's Cross to transfer to routes. Just before he introduced work no. 4, to the possibility of local trains from the east line moving through central London. What is th therefore, of east coast main line passengers a the InterCity 125 at King's Cross? Are th discharged and to have the benefit of work no they also to share in the glories of works nos. 3

Mr. Chapman: Again, I am grateful to my ho The short answer is that if he goes to King's C for some inexplicable reason, does not want Westminster but wishes to proceed further sou benefit from Thameslink, with its attendant ph geographical tangential works, and the new connection. When people using Thameslink proceed further north, works nos. 3A and 3B into their own. They are adjacent developm course, they are linked for the direct or indirect passengers. I have attempted to put the matter as as possible. I can put it no more accurately.

The escalator link at King's Cross will prov conveniences for passengers at that great static will also be a great benefit for passengers Northern, Victoria and Piccadilly lines. As High at the end of the Northern line, it will beneficia some of my constituents. Because of the new link, they will have direct access to the main lin

At this stage, it is appropriate briefly to ref tragic conflagration that took place at King's Cr November last. I have made inquiries about the

new escalators. They will provide an alternative access to and from the three London Regional Transport underground lines. Therefore, they will be an additional route that passengers may take other than going through the ill-fated ticket booking office. The detailed design of the escalators is yet to be completed. I am glad that that is so. I assure the House that they will include all appropriate fire prevention measures. Of course, they will be approved finally only after the most detailed discussions with fire services and the railways inspectorate.

Sir John Farr (Harborough): Will the latest fire protection include the provision of sprinklers?

Mr. Chapman: I cannot answer my hon. Friend's question. With the greatest respect, it would be inappropriate for me to do so. I have an assurance that British Rail will take full account of any recommendations that Mr. Desmond Fennell, QC, may make following his inquiry into the King's Cross disaster. My hon. Friend the Member for Harborough (Sir J. Farr) will agree that it is far better to wait for Mr. Fennell's report and findings rather than for me to give my view. If my hon. Friend presses me, my view is that every precaution and every modern piece of technology that is appropriate to guaranteeing maximum public safety, not least in underground areas, should be the first priority.

Mr. Greg Knight: My hon. Friend has itemised some of the benefits that will accrue to passengers from the north who alight at King's Cross station. Are there any benefits in the Bill for passengers from the north who alight at St. Pancras station? For example, is he aware that passengers from Derby are already agitated, concerned and disappointed that British Rail has made no announcement about electrification?

Mr. Chapman: My hon. Friend the Member for Derby, North (Mr. Knight) raises an important point for his constituents. He will know that the electrification of other lines is outwith the provisions of the Bill. Therefore, I would be out of order if I were to comment on that matter. As Chipping Barnet is not on that line, I fear that my knowledge is not as good as that of my hon. Friend. If my geography remains accurate, King's Cross and St. Pancras are not many miles apart. There is an interchange between the two stations. Therefore, the escalator link will be of at least indirect benefit, if not of direct benefit, to people arriving at St. Pancras.

When the Bill was introduced into the other place, seven petitions were deposited concerning the realignment of the Holborn viaduct section. The Committee in the other place allowed the Bill to proceed, subject to British Rail giving an undertaking to Whitbreads, one of the petitioners, to return to it the freehold site of that splendid hostelry, the Old King Lud at Ludgate circus, following completion of the works. Sixteen of the 17 petitions were settled to the satisfaction of the petitioners. Four petitions have been deposited in this House by National Car Parks Ltd., Whitbreads, the City of London Real Property Co. Ltd., and Deloitte, Haskins and Sells. They were concerned about the impact of work no. 1 on adjoining property that they own or occupy.

British Rail has written to the four companies and has offered to have meetings. Indeed, meetings have been held. I am pleased to say that a settlement has already been reached with National Car Parks, and it is hoped that settlements will be reached with the other three companie In any event, as hon. Members know, if the House choos to give the Bill a Second Reading, its provisions and a outstanding petitions can be considered in detail Committee.

The Order Paper confirms that there are concern about the Bill or about British Rail. That is not surprisin If the House gives the Bill a Second Reading, it will be immense benefit to many people. If hon. Members wish pursue points that are without the scope of the Bill, or they wish to pursue any grievances that they may hav with British Rail, I respectfully suggest that it might b more appropriate to do so when the British Railways No 2 Bill, or the general powers Bill, comes before the House I understand that it will do so within the month.

Mr. Beith: I am grateful for that useful piece of advice which, of course, we shall take. For a century and a hal it has been believed that grievances about railways mus be ventilated when railways legislation is brought befor Parliament. That belief was somewhat strengthened whe some hon. Members' arguments about sleeper service were greeted by British Rail's Inter-City marketin manager's insistence that he did not wish to discuss th matter with Members of Parliament.

Mr. Chapman: Obviously, I have heard what the hon Gentleman said. Having been a witness to his considerabl parliamentary skills, I know that he will devise an ingenious and effective way of allowing this beneficial Bil to go through the House while pursuing his grievances in another parliamentary way.

I am sorry for taking up the time of the House. I have tried to deal with the various points that have been raised. I believe that the works represent positive, sensible steps by British Rail. The works at Holborn viaduct show great initiative and enterprise. They will benefit London and many other parts of the country, particularly the north-east. If it is passed by the House, the Bill will be good for passengers and good for British Rail.

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Mr. Harold Walker): Order. I should inform the House that Mr. Speaker has not selected either of the motions relating to the instructions on the Order Paper.

7.29 pm

Mr. Andrew F. Bennett (Denton and Reddish): I welcome the opportunity to raise briefly the issues in the Bill and to contrast the way in which British Rail seems so enthusiastic to invest in London and the south-east with its attitude to the north-west.

I did not intend to speak on the Bill, but just before Christmas the north-west group of Members of Parliament asked for a meeting with the chairman of British Rail to discuss the deterioration in the service to the north-west. We were told that the chairman was too busy to see Members of Parliament and that we would have to make do with the midlands' director, Mr. Bleadsdale. When he met north-west Members of Parliament, he treated us with complete contempt. He came with no answers to our questions and made it clear that he was not prepared to listen to our views, but was prepared to allow the deterioration in the service to continue, and that we were a nuisance. I think that that was an insult, and British Rail must remember that if it

[Mr. Andrew F. Bennett]

wants to pass legislation through the House it must be prepared to talk to hon. Members and answer their questions.

I find it amazing that British Rail can make substantial investment in London, yet every time we raise the issue of the deterioration in the service to the north-west the argument put forward is that it does not have the money to invest in that area. We have experienced a continual running down of that service. How on earth can BR talk, as it does in this legislation, of the advantages of travelling across London from north to south when it is doing its best to get rid of passengers who want to come from the north?

A similar proposal for a cross-London route was announced with a great fanfare three years ago. Trains from Manchester and Crewe, instead of arriving at Euston, were to go to Kensington Olympia and would be able to go on to Gatwick, Brighton and Dover. British Rail said that this would be a great improvement and that it required parliamentary approval for that development. It is now saying that from May it will discontinue most of those services.

The reason given for that decision is that an insufficient number of people want to use the services. There obviously have been problems, and one of the fundamental——

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. At the outset the hon. Gentleman said that he would refer to the services in the north-west of which he has knowledge for contrast. He is now starting to argue the case for those services, which is out of order in the context of the debate.

Mr. Bennett: I am talking about the cross-London routes. It is perfectly all right for British Rail to tell us how desirable it is to have another cross-London route, but it is very odd that, having tried one for three years, it is now in the process of abandoning it. We must ask to what extent BR will be prepared to maintain this cross-London route, having invested a lot of money in it. I would argue that it should have invested that money in better rolling stock for the north-west and in maintaining services.

The fundamental flaw in BR's route across London was that services to the north of London had one system of electrification, while those to the south had another. A substantial amount of extra time had to be added for the changing of engines at Kensington so that trains could continue through to the south. It has been disappointed by the failure to attract passengers to that service, which is why it may be discontinuing it.

The question that we must put to the promoters of the Bill is how far they will be able to ensure that it is easy for passengers to travel on east coast lines down to the south. BR is obviously considering this improvement with a view to the Channel tunnel. There is still the fundamental problem that the railway system on the east coast line, like that on the west coast line, is incompatible with the engines that travel to the south. I hope that the promoters will tell us how they will get round that difficulty. If they cannot, I suggest to them and British Rail that it would be far better to invest the money in improving services from the north-west.

Mr. Beith: What worries me is that when British Rail is confronted with a difficulty such as the apparent incompatibility of running two services, its answer is that one of the services will have to go. That has been its argument on sleeper services. It has said there must be a transfer from diesel to electr diesel service will have to be removed alto that must have implications for the matter Gentleman is describing.

Mr. Bennett: I am unaware of what Britis about the east coast sleeper service. development for the Manchester service is not intend to get rid of the whole service, service in one direction. Sleepers will go up and return with passengers. British Rail sa more economical than having trains carryi in both directions. When we asked for deta could not produce them, which is amazing. to plead the case for sleepers too strongly—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. I hope Gentleman will not want to plead that case as I can see, it has precious little to do wit

Mr. Bennett: If BR cannot maintain a from Manchester to London, it is doubtful be able to provide a service which, in the futu people to catch sleepers that will run on the through London and on to the continent. thought that one of the arguments for the to make travelling far easier. It is not proposition at any time to have to chan London if one is travelling to the south, but it in the middle of the night, that is very un

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. I do not see a Bill that relates to, connects with or has any sleeper services of British Rail from M London. I hope that the hon. Gentleman wil Bill.

Mr. Bennett: If I were trying to build a north to the south, which is what the Bill ai of the services that I would consider usi sleepers.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. The hon knows that I am familiar with the north of th knows as well as I do that trains from Man south do not go through King's Cross.

Mr. Bennett: I accept that argument, bu through Doncaster. I would have thought t Deputy Speaker, would be the first to accept be more attractive to catch a sleeper from Do centre of London, and on to the contine Channel tunnel is open, using this route, tha at 2 am or 3 am, get out at King's Cross, an Victoria, when services across London are good.

The question whether sleepers will be through this new link on the east coast route the Bill. British Rail seems determined to sleepers to the north of England—not only coast route but on the west coast one suggests that it does not want to run sleepe Scotland. There is a good argument for it to develop its sleeper service so that, when th through London and the Channel tunnel is start to use the sleeper service as a major part within western Europe.

I hope that British Rail will reconsider it hon. Members and the representations th

making. I hope that it will reconsider its investment programme. If it can find the money for this link, and could find the money for the Kensington link, it has a duty to find the money to invest in rolling stock so that the many passengers who use its services from the north-west and north-east of England are not deterred from doing so.

Last Friday, having remained here to vote, I went to Euston and was appalled to find that the 3.20 pm to Manchester had no seats left in the first-class accommodation—fortunately, I had booked a seat—and that about 10 first-class passengers had to stand all the way to Manchester. The reason was clear. The guard, for whom I had every sympathy, made the apologetic point that British Rail did not have sufficient rolling stock.

How can British Rail consider this sort of investment when it cannot invest in the rolling stock necessary to provide a decent service from Euston to the north of England? The first priority must be to get decent rolling stock. Many commuter trains in the north-west of England provide a poor service—again because of the lack of rolling stock.

I plead with British Rail to invest in the north of England, on the east and west coasts, with the same enthusiasm as it seems to have to invest money in London. One has the feeling that British Rail's only interest is in providing a service for the people in and around London, rather than one for people such as my constituents in the north-west of England.

I shall continue to take every possible opportunity to make legislating difficult for British Rail until it accepts the fundamental principle that it should talk to Members of Parliament about the problems that face them and their constituents. British Rail should re-examine its investment programme to ensure that a good service is provided for the people from the north of England who have to come to London before it invests too much money in transporting people across London. If British Rail does not invest in transporting people from the north of England, it will find that it will have a network across London, but no passengers because they cannot afford to get there.

7.41 pm

Sir Trevor Skeet (Bedfordshire, North): I am surprised that the hon. Member for Denton and Reddish (Mr. Bennett) has taken a narrow view of the Bill. I support the Bill. But why does British Rail need to obtain powers by using the private Bill procedure? The purpose of the Bill is to execute certain works, which have been well explained by my hon. Friend the Member for Chipping Barnet (Mr. Chapman). British Rail already has a lot of legislation on the statute book and has many powers concerning the acquisition of land. I should have thought that most of what British Rail wants done could be done under existing legislation and that this Bill was not necessary. But, since British Rail has this special legislation, it will be considered, of course, and supported by many Conservative Members.

Mr. Peter Snape (West Bromwich, East): I apologise for interrupting the hon. Gentleman so early in his speech. We all feel sometimes that it is an inconvenience for comparatively minor works to be the subject of a Bill. What alternative means of providing anything new does British Rail have, given that it must first seek a statutory right from the House?

Sir Trevor Skeet: A committee is ascertainir the procedures can be modified to enable comp ahead without facing the general expense of the procedure. The Bill's promoters know how ex procedure is, especially when there is oppo relevant points are raised. If a group wanted t Sizewell B, it could do so by way of the p procedure, but it would be much better to hav Act and obtain powers by other routes. I mer that the private Bill procedure is a rather heavy to use on this occasion.

Some time ago I walked through the tunn Farringdon and Blackfriars. I was amazed at the route and the perspective that British Rail in reopening it. The tunnel was in use in the s It will be useful, to my constituents at least, to travel from Bedford through to Brighton and t

Two motions have been tabled, although been ruled by you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to be They simply reflect the protests in other pa country and the wish for more electrification in Kingdom. I think that that is generally accepte British Rail to some extent. Although there w delay in starting operation of the line from St. Bedford, once it began it proved to be succes moneyspinner for British Rail. Such developme most useful.

When the proposed line is completed, will the inter-city lines from Bedford to London, perh through the tunnel to Brighton and to Gatwick? be faster trains to London? I assume that there Is there any prospect of a spur line from Bedford to bring more people into London and other p south-east?

My hon. Friend the Member for Chippi referred to escalators. Two weeks before the King's Cross, I wrote to the chairman of London Transport complaining about the filth of th Surprisingly, I did not receive a reply until accident——

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. It is difficult t these matters arise from or are connected with

Sir Trevor Skeet: With all respect, Mr. Deput the transport authorities are constructing an between the stations. There must be prop provisions.

Sir John Farr: It is critical.

Sir Trevor Skeet: It is critical: I am obliged t Friend.

Even if the escalators are not made of wood, not swept, as I feel happened at King's Cros Pancras, an accumulation of dust could lead problems for future travellers. British Rail mu itself that the highest standards are introdu maintained and that the right cleaning faci provided to protect the public at all times.

I give the Bill my full support. It will impro through London to the south-east. I hope provisions will be extended to cover other peopl those mentioned by Opposition Members w certain additional work done. We hope that Br can secure investment from the sale of the assets t in mind so that there will not be too great an i on the taxpayer.

7.48 pm

Mr. Archy Kirkwood (Roxburgh and Berwickshire): I am grateful for the opportunity to participate in this important debate. We have seen from the speeches of the hon. Members for Bedfordshire, North (Sir T. Skeet), for Denton and Reddish (Mr. Bennett) and for Chipping Barnet (Mr. Chapman) that the debate has national as well as local, London significance.

I declare an interest, if I need do so. The hon. Member for West Bromwich, East (Mr. Snape) has a more direct claim than I have to the fame of being part of a long-serving, loyal, traditional railway family, but my father was a railwayman for many years. I spent many summer vacations in signal boxes, until an inspector came along and I was put quickly over the dike. My uncle and namesake, Archie Kirkwood, was a long-serving member of the National Union of Railwaymen. Sadly, he died some years ago. He was a mentor of mine, and my family's experience of trade unionism in the railway industry percolated through the fabric of our family life. I benefited from that and, if I have no other claim to speak in this debate, I feel that my family background entitles me to do so.

Mr. Fallon: May I intervene on precisely that point? The hon. Gentleman has touched on an aspect that has not yet been considered, which is the attitude of the National Union of Railwaymen to the proposals and to the differing effects of investment in different parts of the network. Has he received representations from the union?

Mr. Kirkwood: That is an extremely important point, to which I intended to refer. I must say that I am not one of the most obvious constituency Members for the NUR to contact and I do not hold that against it. I make no complaint about that because this is a major Bill—indeed, I commend the hon. Member for Chipping Barnet on the way in which he opened the debate—but one or two gaps have been left and several questions still need to be answered.

For example, what consultations were there with the NUR—a very responsible union with a direct interest in the Bill? The Bill will affect NUR staff who operate from King's Cross and, from a more strategic point of view, the investment deployed could perhaps have been deployed differently. Perhaps the hon. Gentleman or the Minister will give us the benefit of the view of the Government and British Rail on that point.

The hon. Member for Bedfordshire, North made a strong point about the procedures adopted. As you know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I serve on the Committee that considers unopposed private Bills, under your own eminent chairmanship, and I therefore have some experience of these matters. I am surprised that the British Railways board should need to have recourse to such machinery. The pressures on Back-Bench Members inevitably mean that some of these important measures do not get the attention that they deserve, and that operates to the detriment of some of the projects that come before us. I am surprised that the board does not have available to it other means of achieving the ends set out in the Bill.

That leads me to one of my other concerns about the Bill. Are any short cuts — to put it pejoratively — employed in the Bill? Does it circumvent any of the normal planning processes under the planning legislation? I ask that neutrally. I do not suggest that BR is taking short cuts or that, if it is, it is doing so in a consp
However, the House has a right to kn
procedure circumvents any of the planni

That is an important question for loc
people have proper rights, obligations a
to have their say and make prope
representations through the planning p
the Bill deprive them of any of their
planning Acts? British Rail would be
ensure that it has recourse to private Bill
essential.

It is obvious to everyone that King's C
national significance. That is why people
are taking an interest in it. King's Cross
the south. Hundreds, perhaps even th
constituents from the borders of Scotla
just on business but for family outings, visi
so on. The station has a direct link with
route, which has a fine history and traditi
that obtain in King's Cross are vital not ju
who use it daily but to people from ver
afield who use it for a variety of purpose

We are entitled to ask what inconv
caused during the construction of the w
Member for Chipping Barnet lucidly expla
and we have all had the benefit of the
promoters helpfully provided—I am gra
but what inconvenience will be involved? W
time scale? Will it be weeks, months, or, as
Some of the works may take many m
happens, how much inconvenience will
station suffer? Will they have to go to oth
concourse—with which they are familiar—
Will large chunks of the concourse be
substantial periods?

That important question was mad
important by the remarks of the hon. Mem
and Reddish, who recounted his problems
Friday. I have experienced similar pr
explained earlier, my commitment to the
that I try to use as many of my parlia
warrants as possible on land-based transp
and from my constituency via the east coa
than traitorously using aeroplanes, which
softies and jet-set yuppies. The mark of a tr
traditional Scottish Member is that he str
the hassle at King's Cross and sits on his
hours and enjoys it because he knows tha
for a greater cause——

Mr. John Home Robertson (East Lothian

Mr. Kirkwood: He does it for Britain
taking the easy way out by drinking a gin
757 from Heathrow.

Congestion on the concourse at Ki
worrying. In the short term, congestion w
are being completed may be relevant becau
custom away. I might even be driven to my
on the 757 until the concourse is put right.

Mr. Home Robertson: I look forward to
the hon. Gentleman's drinking habits in th
News and East Lothian Herald.

Mr. Kirkwood: It is always difficult when
who represents another constituency is si

elbow taking notes for one's local newspaper. I would prefer references to gin and tonic and aeroplanes to be deleted from the record. Alas, I know that that is not possible; the cat is out of the bag.

Perhaps a more serious question concerns the long-term effect on congestion on the concourse of the new escalator and the ticket office and the rest of the works planned in the Bill.

Mr. Fallon: On the question whether congestion will increase while the works are being carried out, has the hon. Gentleman yet studied clause 22? I know that his mind has been on other matters for the past week or so, but if he studies it he will discover that the compulsory purchase powers taken for the various works at King's Cross last until 1992. It is therefore possible that British Rail will carry out the works over a period of years, as the hon. Gentleman has warned, rather than over a period of months.

Mr. Kirkwood: That is an important question, and I hope that if it is not directly addressed this evening it will be addressed in Committee—although the hon. Member for Chipping Barnet may be able to elucidate.

Mr. Chapman: I am grateful to the hon. Member for Roxburgh and Berwickshire (Mr. Kirkwood) for giving way, because it may be for the convenience of the House if I deal with that point now. My understanding is—again I shall get confirmation of this — that it is anticipated that the works will take about two and a half years. It may be between two and three years——

Mr. Kirkwood: Two years?

Mr. Chapman: It will take about two and a half years from the date of the passing of the Act. I believe that it was hoped that, with Parliament's approval, work might start this May. Of course, that is now out of the question because of the length of time over which, rightly, we conduct our proceedings. I shall take further advice on that point but when I asked that question myself, I was told that it would take about two and a half years to complete all the works that are the subject of the Bill.

Mr. Kirkwood: That answer has taken me slightly aback. My initial reaction is that the works are much more extensive than the House had perhaps been previously led to understand. I do not mean that the House has been misled. Do I understand that if the works were to start immediately they would take a full two and a half years to complete?

Mr. Chapman *indicated assent.*

Mr. Kirkwood: Well, that adds extra point to my fears about congestion and the temporary transitional difficulties that will accrue.

Mr. Chapman: I was careful to say, "all the works that are the subject of the Bill". The substantial and major work is no. 1, the Holborn viaduct section.

In reply to the hon. Gentleman's question about the King's Cross works and the new escalator link, I shall find out how long those works will take to complete. There would be no point in starting the works on the day the Bill becomes an Act—nor would British Rail want to do so — unless and until Mr. Desmond Fennell, QC, has reported and the proper discussions and deliberations have taken place with the railways inspectorate a service. I am sure that hon. Members will think th and adequate.

Mr. Kirkwood: I am grateful to the hon. Mem is being most helpful to the House. We appreciat brings me to a question relating to the exter scale——

Mr. Beith: Before my hon. Friend turn consequent question about congestion at King' wonder whether it has occurred to him—I just realised this as a result of what the hon. M Chipping Barnet said—that the time scale th described—from May this year until 1991— the period from which sleeper services are inter diverted from King's Cross to Euston u introduction of full electrification at King's Cr is to say, the date at which sleeper services co introduced without any significant element o Perhaps it was not planned that way, but it w up the opportunity to regard the period during sleeper service is not there as one for reducing c with the hope of reintroducing sleepers as soon is open.

Mr. Kirkwood: I hope that my hon. Friend comment will be taken on board by the power His suspicions are similar to my own. We a about——

Mr. John McWilliam (Blaydon): Will Gentleman give way?

Mr. Kirkwood: I shall be happy to give way t Gentleman.

Mr. McWilliam: I should be grateful if Gentleman would direct his mind to the tho perhaps the Bill is premature. Given the works Cross, it might be better to introduce the Bill on the report and know the work that must be c there, rather than in advance of the report.

Mr. Kirkwood: I assume that that important relates to the fire inquiry that is being conduc eminent Queen's counsel. Obviously, the Bill w before the recent tragic event at King's Cross, b event been considered? Suppose there are fa consequences in terms of the design of escalat requirements and fire requirements on the ma described in the Bill. It may well be good counse slowly. That may not involve terminal delay. will involve a delay of only between six and ni and perhaps the Bill could be brought back to then. It would be sad and unfortunate if the through all its parliamentary stages only to fi report produced by the eminent Queen's couns substantial amendments to be made.

If that happened, can the hon. Member fo Barnet tell us whether the British Railways Bo appear on the doorstep of the House to ask amendments to what would then be an Act of P Would the board require secondary legislation of the report, because that might cost a dispro amount of British Rail's budget in terms of the has been set aside for the project? That importa requires attention and some answers in Comm if the hon. Member for Chipping Barn Government cannot give those answers this e

[Mr. Kirkwood]

House will want to know the implications of the report before it gives its final view. Of course, there will be opportunities not only in Committee, but when the Bill returns to the House on Report.

Mr. Fallon: If my hon. Friend the Member for Chipping Barnet (Mr. Chapman) is not prepared tonight to offer to withdraw the Bill for several months to take account of the timetabling points, the hon. Member for Roxburgh and Berwickshire must consider whether the Bill could at least be withdrawn for a short period so that we may prepare a more extensive Report stage, bearing in mind that the works are not urgent, and bearing in mind that other major Bills, such as the York and London Bill of the last century, were considered by the House for 82 days. Even if the Bill has to become law reasonably quickly, there is no reason why we must rush through our considerations.

Mr. Kirkwood: Eighty-two days is a long time in politics, especially if one has been in the Liberal and Social Democratic alliance during the past week.

The hon. Member for Darlington (Mr. Fallon) has made a good point. What is to prevent the Bill being put on ice? In terms of parliamentary procedure, presumably it would be possible to stage it over from one parliamentary term to another. I am an inexperienced hand at the parliamentary game, as you know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, but I think that it is possible that there is some procedure for staging over a private Bill until the next Session. We had experience of that with the Channel Tunnel Bill, which was a hybrid Bill. This is a purely private Bill. There is nothing to stop us stopping the clock of parliamentary procedure on the Bill until we can see whether there are implications—and there are certain to be implications—as a result of the safety report by the eminent Queen's counsel who has been charged with the responsibility of investigating the causes and long-term effects of the King's Cross disaster. I hope that that important point will be given serious consideration.

I return to the point that I was about to make, having heard that the works will take two and a half years to complete. That suggests that the works are of an entirely higher level than I had anticipated, and that leads me to the question of cost. Although the hon. Member for Chipping Barnet was comprehensive, helpful and lucid in his introduction, he left out the question of the total cost. I listened carefully to his remarks and he said that the cost would more or less be met by the disposal of other assets on the site.

It would be helpful to know the gross or, indeed, the net sums involved. A course of public works over a two-and-a-half-year period will involve a different level of expenditure. If it is true, it brings into a new perspective the arguments that were deployed earlier by the hon. Member for Denton and Reddish about the respective and relevant merits of investment on the south-eastern route, let alone the east coast route. I can tell the hon. Member for Denton and Reddish that there is life well north of Manchester.

We need more detail on costs. The House is entitled to know how much money will be spent in every category of the expenditure—not only the money being set aside for investment, but the money that it is hoped will be made from the sales of assets. What is the state of play on those sales? Have brochures and prospectu
Are the heritable items that are
disposals ready to be put on the pu
their asking price? All these details a
House can decide whether we are ge
for this significant investment in the f
take two and a half years to comp
information on costs before we
judgments.

I heard what the hon. Member
said about the extent of the usefulnes
He will correct me if I am wrong, bu
running over the route will be runn
Presumably those tunnels are many
narrow to take the InterCity 125
different——

Mr. Chapman: I told the House th
normal 4 ft 8½ in, but the coaches a
type because of the size of the tunnel
bends.

Mr. Kirkwood: I appreciate the hon
about the bends—I have been suffe
the past week in my party.

Mr. Spearing: It might be useful t
now. There is an abiguity about fhe w
is a gauge for the width of lines and
are not yet clear whether the new tun
will be wide enough—wider than th
take not only 125s but also, perchanc

Mr. Kirkwood: I see we have a pleth
talent in the House and I am gr
Gentleman for his help. What he said
it leads me to another question.

The hon. Member for Chipping Bar
cost would be astronomic, but how m
link from the east coast route cost? T
may say that the sums have been done
millions of pounds are involved; I
benefit analysis must be done. Howe
have merely to be slightly widened in
rolling stock through, doing that migh
realms of commercial possibility in th

In view of what has been said about
and the opportunity that it would prov
return and for passengers, the question
any calculations been done of what it
a direct link? The figure may be imp
are not unreasonable people and we w
on the commercial viability of such a
produced — but we cannot thin
conscientiously representing our consti
at least ask that question so that a judg

If it is too expensive to widen the tun
case, what is the possibility of co-ordin
that people coming from Berwick-upon
at Stevenage, for example, and take a tr
advantage of the link? What active cons
given to that eventuality so that pe
Berwick-upon-Tweed would not need
terminal station at King's Cross, but c
in a co-ordinated fashion without chan

Mr. McWilliam: Would the hon. G
reflect on the problems of freight from

tunnels and the loading gauge are not such as to be able to take freight from the north, there is no advantage to the vast areas of this country in allowing the Bill to pass. Freight is of the essence in the economics of opening up the tunnels to national use. If we cannot receive the assurances that we would like on freight access, there is no reason why the House should pass the Bill.

Mr. Kirkwood: I was coming to that point, and I shall reinforce and underline it now. Freight is an essential part of the viability and continuing prosperity of the east coast route. The hon. Member for Chipping Barnet may not know — the Minister will — that important freightliner depots just outside Edinburgh have recently been closed. A route such as this could have saved the depots and made them commercially viable. That is how important having a direct route is, rather than an indirect link such as the Bill proposes.

I return to my point about co-ordinating timetables for passenger journeys. How far up the east coast route does the ability to link through the tunnel go? I assume that passengers from places such as Stevenage, Huntingdon and Peterborough can go all the way through the link. How far up the route is it proposed that the service will extend—past Doncaster, as far as York, to Darlington or even the nether reaches of Newcastle and beyond? How far down the east coast route will people be able to get on British Rail trains that will take them directly through the route that is proposed in the Bill?

As regards commercial viability, British Rail tells us a great deal about the new ethos that now prevails in its commercial judgments. We are told a great deal about ratios of profitability, investment returns and so on. I did not hear the hon. Member for Chipping Barnet say anything about the commercial return that is expected on the investment. What is sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander, and the sums must be done. The House is entitled to know what money it can expect in return for this substantial two-and-a-half year building investment.

Mr. Beith: It is also true that we have heard nothing about the revenue implications of the investment that we are discussing. There seems to be an assumption running through the debate that the project is viable in terms of capital invested because of the return on the land. There has been no reference to whether passengers using the route will be receiving a public subsidy in order to do so.

Mr. Kirkwood: I agree with my hon. Friend. The commercial return is closely linked to the terms of the subsidy—if there is to be any. Some hon. Members are worried about the disparities in the subsidies between one route and another and one area and another. The hon. Member for Darlington and other hon. Members advanced cogent arguments about the disparity in the subsidies that are applied per passenger journey in different parts of the rail network. These are all important matters.

The aims of the Bill are set out in the brief supplied by the promoters. The Bill seeks powers to alter the alignment of the railway. Among other things, the Bill seeks to replace Holborn viaduct and to provide a through bus interchange and better access for taxis, especially for disabled passengers. That is an important part of the Bill's provisions. From my own experience, I commend British Rail for its improvements to stations, especiall stations, and to Waverley station in Edinbur Glasgow stations.

To a certain extent, British Rail has not mad provision for services for the disabled and has ship for a ha'p'orth of tar. I hope that British R careful attention in this major development t facilities that will enable disabled people to tra let or hindrance. That is an important matter t considered.

The safety aspects of the escalator that wil quicker alternative at King's Cross for Tham underground passengers was mentioned by Member for Bedfordshire, North. I am also about that. I was a bit uncertain about the d objections mentioned by the hon. Member fo Barnet. I think he said that 17 objections had b in the House of Lords.

Mr. Chapman: Seventeen petitions.

Mr. Kirkwood: I am grateful to the hon. Gen that correction. The hon. Member for Chipp skated over those. It follows from what I said ea the planning Acts that the position of objectors The hon. Gentleman dealt with some of the pet the sponsors' brief tells us that there are four p the Bill. I was left in some uncertainty about state of the 17 petitions in the House of Lords

Mr. Chapman: The hon. Gentleman is qui recall that I said that 17 petitions were presen other place. Of those, 16 were settled and a rec tion was made about the 17th, which I shall shorthand as the Whitbread petition. Four peti presented to this House and one has been sett are outstanding and are at an early stage considered. Negotiations are continuing. outstanding ones include the Whitbread petitio

I hope that the Bill is given its Second Readi those three petitions, if they are still unsettled, w with under the procedures of the House by the examining the Bill. There is no question of the being able to pass judgment, to make its view to impede the progress of the measure if it is no with the settlements that are made, not undetermined on the three outstanding petitions. possible and, according to precedent, likely to b that the three outstanding petitions will be se were 16 of the 17 petitions in the other place the Bill reaches Committee, even if it is given Reading.

Mr. Kirkwood: That intervention was extreme and substantially sets my mind at rest. I listened to the hon. Gentleman's speech and was uncle intervention somewhat alleviates my worries. I like it to be thought that I am antipathetic to th I do not want to do anything to impede its Deloitte Haskins and Sells and firms like Whitt look after themselves and their property inte important. They have the right to make their pro representations in their own way and in their ow am quite happy to let that happen and I do not interest to impede the Bill. However, I was worr the number of petitions in the other place, but hon. Member for Chipping Barnet said about tha my mind on the issue.

Mr. Jack Thompson (Wansbeck): The hon. Gentleman has spoken about the petitions submitted to this House. The petitions could include what is described in the promoters' statement as

"the comprehensive and sensitive redevelopment of the prime area to the west of St. Paul's Cathedral."

Hon. Members will know that for the last few months this has been a most contentious issue. The sensitive development of that area is of prime importance not only to the people of London but to people all over Britain.

Mr. Kirkwood: I entirely subscribe to that view. That was a helpful intervention and if the hon. Gentleman has any other thoughts I should be happy for him to share them with the House.

I was talking about petitions and objections. I do not think that the hon. Member for Chipping Barnet told us what the Camden borough planning department had to say about this Bill. It would be of interest to the House to know whether it was negative, positive or antipathetic to this proposal. That is an important issue and it is part of the democratic duty of Camden borough to comment on that.

Earlier, I spoke about the difficulties of defining the interface between this parliamentary procedure and the planning Acts. What is the view of Camden borough planning department? Does British Rail know, or has it asked? If it has asked, I and the House would like to know the reply.

The London Regional Passengers' Committee also deserves to be consulted in this process. I am not an expert about the duties and responsibilities of British Rail in this context. I understand the parliamentary procedure in the House, but it would be remiss of the House if it did not ask what bodies such as the London Regional Passengers' Committee feel about this. Is it antipathetic to the proposal, or does it support the proposal as a positive benefit to the people it represents? The House would like to hear about that.

The Bill considers the possibility of opening railway lines. That is good, and I am in favour of it. I hope that it catches on, because some hon. Members could make a few suggestions about it. The Borders have never recovered from the stupid and incompetent closure in the 1960s of the Waverley line. That had a dramatic and traumatic effect on the communities in the south-east of Scotland. Railway lines can have good or bad effects on communities.

My fervent hope is that the measure will eventually go ahead, and I hope and believe that it will have a positive effect. The House would be derelict in its duty tonight if it did not pose questions such as we have heard so far in the debate, and received realistic answers which it was prepared to accept, before allowing a measure of such magnitude to proceed. Against that background, I am happy to commend the Bill's Second Reading to the House.

8.30 pm

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Transport (Mr. Peter Bottomley): There have been one or two references to the events of the past few days. If the alliance returns from "Voices and Choices" to give 42 minutes to a Bill that it supports, heaven help the rest of us if we ever become involved in public debate with its members in the next general election.

We have considered the content of the Bill, and have no objection to the powers sought by the British Railways Board. Indeed, we support the Bill's aims. We note that it will enable the board to provide a new, modern station on the Thameslink line. Starting later this year, commuter services will run directly between north and south London for the first time since the first world war. We have told the board that we will always support worthwhile investment to enhance the quality of service to the passenger, and this is such a case. We approved the necessary investment for the scheme in December.

The proposed new station will be funded by redevelopment, with the private sector, of the Holborn viaduct site. We are pleased to see that the board is involving the private sector in this way, in line with our requests that it should broaden the participation of that sector in the development of its property.

I hope that the House will support the Bill and enable the British Railways Board to carry out this exciting and worthwhile development. The Department of the Environment has one outstanding point on the Bill, on which negotiations are continuing with the promoters. It is hoped that the matter will be resolved satisfactorily.

Mr. Beith: I hope that the Minister will forgive me if he is about to deal with this point. However, I hope that he will give us a Government view about the prospects for through running from the east coast main line through Thameslink, and about the value or otherwise of British Rail's providing an interlinking service at this point. That must surely have played some part in the decision on whether the investment should proceed.

Mr. Bottomley: It did not. One of the differences about the present Government is that we set objectives for British Rail and then expect it to carry them out. Business interests that have petitioned against the Bill will have the opportunity to present their objections to the Select Committee. The Committee will be able to examine in detail the issues involved, and will have the added advantage of hearing expert evidence.

I recommend to the House that the Bill be given a Second Reading, and allowed to proceed to Committee for such detailed consideration.

8.32 pm

Mr. Peter Snape (West Bromwich, East): Let me first congratulate the hon. Member for Chipping Barnet (Mr. Chapman) on the detailed and comprehensive way in which he moved the Second Reading. I do not know whether this is the first Bill for which the hon. Gentleman has had responsibility, but I am sure that it will not be the last, given the detailed way in which he explained it for us.

The first and most serious point that I should make, particularly in response to the hon. Gentleman's speech, is that I support all that he said about new escalators at King's Cross. All of us were appalled and horrified by the tragedy of 18 November. I know that whatever criticism may be levelled at the management of British Rail or, for that matter, that of London Regional Transport—I am never "behind the door", as the saying goes, in levelling such criticism myself — the lessons of that appalling tragedy will be learnt, and that new escalators, incorporating all the necessary fire prevention devices that are available, will ensure that it is not repeated.

I also congratulate the hon. Member for Roxburgh and Berwickshire (Mr. Kirkwood) on his epic speech. As the Minister said, for the Liberal party to support a Bill and take 42 minutes to tell us so——

Mr. Beith: Front Benchers always take 42 minutes.

Mr. Snape: They do not, as I shall show the hon. Gentleman in a moment.

There are exciting times ahead for the Liberal party, and I hope that, although his speech of support might be a little shorter than that of his hon. Friend, the hon. Member for Berwick-upon-Tweed (Mr. Beith) will do nothing to detract from his prospects in the competition to which we all look forward with such enormous interest. If I can do anything to assist him, he need only ask.

My hon. Friend the Member for Denton and Reddish (Mr. Bennett), who explained that he had to leave early tonight, had some valid and trenchant points to make about cross-London railway traffic in the context of the Bill. I think that we would all regret the lack of success of the north-south services which were diverted through Kensington Olympia. There are reasons for that, which we hope will not be repeated with these new services.

The service to which my hon. Friend referred in detail was started up along a fairly old railway line, which British Rail's management had been unwise enough to run down considerably. The speed of the trains, most of which are to be withdrawn in the May timetable, averages about 44 mph, which hardly provides any marketing appeal in the latter part of the 20th century. We hope that average speeds on the new link line will be considerably higher.

I think that I can prejudge at least part of the Minister's reply, particularly in regard to the InterCity prospects for the new tunnel——

Mr. Spearing: It is not a new tunnel.

Mr. Snape: As my hon. Friend accurately, if somewhat pedantically, reminds me, it is not a new tunnel. It was closed as long ago as the first world war. The new services to the old tunnel will be confined to local trains, because of the problems with the width of the loaded gauge. I do not know whether the Minister has the figures that were requested by the hon. Member for Roxburgh and Berwickshire about the cost of doing a proper widening job on the tunnel to allow InterCity services to pass through, but the House would be interested if they were available.

Mr. Beith: The hon. Gentleman mentioned the Kensington Olympia link, which is used as a link through London. He seemed to imply that it had not been successful and might disappear. I am sorry to hear that, because I had not realised it. My wife travelled on the line recently, and found it a useful service. She did, however, come across a group of passengers who had alighted from a plane from Nigeria at Gatwick, and were now at Milton Keynes still hoping to reach Victoria.

Mr. Snape: I do not know whether the Bill will offer them much consolation. I do not suppose that, having embarked on such a journey, they would be over-impressed with the link via Kensington Olympia either. As I have said, I think that its lack of success was partly due to the short-sightedness of previous railway managements who ran it down. As there is only one platform available for the trains, if one train runs late—as occasionally happens, even with an average speed of 44 mph—it must wait outside the station if any other train going in either direction is occupying that platform.

One of the problems behind the introduction of Bills such as this is that London suffers from the rabid competition of the old railway companies 150 years ago. It may be a salutary lesson—I do not expect the hon. Member for Chipping Barnet necessarily to agree with me, although he will probably do so secretly—that such unbridled competition all those years ago necessitates the sort of Bill that we have before us. However, the Government are planning to unleash such competition on Monday in relation to road transport in the next two or three years. I hope that Conservative Members who tell us about the supposed benefits of unbridled competition like some ritual incantation will remember the problems when they are next tempted to throw their somewhat infantile ideology around the Chamber.

In one of his many interventions, the hon. Member for Darlington (Mr. Fallon) asked about receipts from the land development mentioned in the Bill. That is a valid point. The problem with sectorisation in British Rail is that often, and for understandable reasons, sector directors, having acquired receipts, are unwilling to release them to other sectors.

The balkanisation of what should be a national railway system should be resisted. I am not suggesting that the hon. Member for Darlington ought to resist it himself, because, perhaps unlike the hon. Member for Chipping Barnet, he has enormous ambitions which will no doubt be realised during a long and distinguished parliamentary career. The fact that sector directors do not like parting with receipts leads to difficulty. I do not know whether the hon. Member for Chipping Barnet can answer that point, but it is a matter which we should like explained.

As for the marathon speech of the hon. Member for Roxburgh and Berwickshire, I had not realised that he was so well connected, so to speak, in railway terms. Like his uncle, I am a member of the National Union of Railwaymen. I am glad to say that his uncle had a reputation for brevity, which the hon. Gentleman does not share. His uncle was much more sensible with regard to politics as well. Nevertheless, we welcome converts from wherever they may come. Perhaps it would be more accurate to describe them as enthusiasts. I am sure that, given his railway background, provided that he renounces those false political doctrines that he has embraced for some years, and if things get too rough for him in that group of Kilkenny cats that he belongs to at the moment, the hon. Gentleman might be welcome elsewhere. He could join the calm and placid listening party which I have the honour to represent.

The hon. Member for Bedfordshire, North (Sir T. Skeet) referred to the improved services to his constituency as a result of what Sir Peter Parker called—and which continues to be known as—the bedpan service. He will acknowledge the good fortune of his constituents which will arise out of the Bill—good fortune which is unlikely to be shared by passengers from further north because of the apparently insurmountable problems associated with passing InterCity trains in the tunnel.

We have heard the good suggestion that we should look at the timetable to see whether, instead of passengers having a cross-London journey necessitating a change to the underground to get from one terminus to another, provision could be made at Bedford or Stevenage, or

[Mr. Snape]

wherever else BR thinks would be most suitable, for InterCity passengers to change to modern electric multiple unit trains such as it is envisaged will travel from Bedford to Croydon, Gatwick airport or Brighton. It is well worth exploring that idea. I hope that BR management, which is not always adept at snatching business opportunities, will listen to what I think appears to be an eminently sensible suggestion, which would benefit a considerable number of passengers.

There are a number of outstanding matters which the Opposition would like to pursue, but, as your predecessor in the Chair reminded us, Mr. Deputy Speaker, a general powers Bill is to follow — the debate on which will enable most of us to get most of our moans about BR management off our chest. We can talk then about the missing, diverted and empty sleeping-car trains — the new ghost trains of the modern railway.

While the Opposition welcome the Bill, we want the Minister to know that our misgivings about these other matters will receive a full airing when that Bill comes before us. If he is charged with taking it through the House, he will have a rougher ride than he has had tonight.

8.45 pm

Mr. Neville Trotter (Tynemouth): I should like to give some background to the Bill. The House is aware that the railways took powers a little while ago to construct Thameslink and run trains from the midland main line at St. Pancras to the southern side of the Thames. I should like to consider those powers in the Bill which will link that system, which is now under construction and nearly open, to the east coast main line at King's Cross. They are works nos. 3A, 3B and 4, and also involve clause 11.

I find it surprising that there is little in the notes that the promoters have circulated about the powers being sought at King's Cross. There is considerable reference in the notes to the works at Holborn to build a new station on Thameslink. We are told that those works will provide a direct connection between Bedford, Luton and St. Albans to the north, and south London, Gatwick airport, Brighton and Sevenoaks to the south; in other words, there will be services right down to the south coast. As for works nos. 3A, 3B and 4, there is no explanation of the sort of service that it is proposed to run through that link. It is unfortunate that we were not told before Second Reading the aims of three of the four works in the Bill.

Mr. Fallon: Does that not reinforce something that has emerged throughout the debate? I refer to the inadequacy of the information that accompanies the Bill. Had this been a Government Bill, we would have had a financial memorandum outlining the expenditure and detailing the cost to be defrayed on the works, and we would have had an explanatory memorandum giving much greater detail of the powers sought and the works to be undertaken. Should the promoters not now consider whether a much fuller statement should be given? Should there not be details of costs of each work and, who knows, maps and plans as well?

Mr. Trotter: I entirely agree. I was amazed that we were not supplied with that information. I hope that the matter can be put right.

If we read the proceedings in another place, where the Bill started life, we find that the sponsor, Lord Marshall of Leeds, explained that works nos. 3A, 3B and 4 are needed to connect the Thameslink direct to the east coast main line. Lord Taylor said that many people would use the service, which would establish an essential link to the rail service north of the border. He described it as an imaginative and energetic example of the management of British Rail. Many of us who have occasion to use the east coast service would not describe the management of BR as energetic and imaginative on the basis of recent experience.

It has been made quite clear, however, that the works at King's Cross are in connection with establishing a link with the east coast main line. There were many references in the other place to the large number of people who would join the main-line services from King's Cross to the north of England and to Scotland as a result of the proposed link through the Thames tunnel.

I was interested in comments earlier in the debate about the narrow gauge of the tunnel. It could not be the track, for it would have been of little use indeed if that were the case. One cannot help asking, however, what used to go through the tunnel when it was previously used. I am sure that the tunnel was not used by special freight trains in the old days. There were not special narrow wagons to pass through it.

A great opportunity will be lost if main-line passenger trains do not pass through the tunnel in future. We are led to suppose that specially thin or specially shortened trains will be built for the service, but we have been given no information on that. We do not know where these trains will come from or where they will go. With respect to my hon. Friend the Member for Chipping Barnet (Mr. Chapman), I do not think that there is a station at Chipping Barnet. However, I suspect that there are stations close to Chipping Barnet. Will trains passing through the tunnel go as far as Stevenage and Peterborough, or will they go all the way to Newcastle and Edinburgh? Where will they go in the other direction? Will they go to the south coast, or will they stop somewhere in south London?

Mr. Fallon: Does my hon. Friend agree that it is extraordinary that such a Bill should be promoted for works that will last for two and a half years, involving the expenditure of hundreds of thousands of pounds, yet we have not been told by the promoters whether the tunnel will take 125s or whether it will accommodate freight trains?

Mr. Trotter: That is absolutely right. I am certain that the tunnels will not take 125s, because the new service will be electrified. A great opportunity will be lost if the link is not constructed in such a way that it can be used by through main-line trains. Perhaps there is a need to iron out the bends in the tunnel as well as in the Bill. It would certainly be more sensible for a proper long-distance through service to be provided through the tunnel.

Reference has been made to the link to the southern region from the west coast main line. I had hoped that the aim now was to provide a similar service from the east coast main line. The east coast main line is of great historical importance. The first sleeping car ran on the line from King's Cross in 1873. As far as I know, that event has not been celebrated by the present management of British Rail, and, sadly, we face losing this service in the near future.

I believe that there are doubts about the future of King's Cross and over important parts of the east coast main line service. It is amazing that we are being asked to give a Second Reading to a Bill to deal with the interchange of large numbers of passengers between the Thameslink service and the east coast main line, yet we do not know the details of the future service on the east coast main line.

Recently, as one of its initial excuses for removing the east coast sleeping car services, British Rail said that Euston was a superior station to King's Cross for passengers to use. Obviously, if King's Cross is so inferior, we must sort out the inadequacies there. I do not believe that the provisions in the Bill will tackle the inadequacies. We need a more thorough re-examination of the position at King's Cross.

Does the future of King's Cross justify the works set out in the Bill? Will they be sufficient to improve King's Cross to provide an adequate level of facilities, which British Rail clearly feels are at present inadequate, in the light of the action that it has taken in respect of the overnight services? My colleagues from the north are well aware that Lord Taylor's description of the management of British Rail as "imaginative" and "energetic" is not a fair description of our recent experience in connection with services to the north-east. Indeed, I would say "insensitive" and "negative" are more accurate descriptions. There has been a refusal to accept the inadequacies of the proposed changes for the most important overnight services, and that is clearly relevant to what we are now talking about.

British Rail seems prepared to lose its share of the overnight market and has refused to reconsider its plans, which I believe calls into question its judgment as well as its public relations. That must make us doubt whether the plans behind the works in the Bill have been well thought out and considered.

I want to give an example of the inadequacy of the marketing on the east coast main line. The present overnight return fare from King's Cross to Newcastle is £149. I was astonished to find that the fare to Edinburgh is only £109 for the overnight journey, and the Edinburgh journey is 50 per cent. longer than that to Newcastle. To add insult to injury, I understand that one can leave one's car for a week at Waverley station. One would be lucky to get away with leaving it for one day at Newcastle.

Mr. Home Robertson: One would be lucky to get a place.

Mr. Trotter: I accept what the hon. Gentleman says. I am, however, advised that the facility is offered at Edinburgh.

One of our great criticisms in the north-east about the service out of King's Cross at present is the complete lack of marketing and initiative that has been shown by the east coast management with regard to the overnight services. We are being asked to incur a great deal of money in this Bill on major works at King's Cross when the management appears to be unable to market the product that it already possesses.

In the near future there will be 400 miles of main line from Kings Cross on which, for the first time in history, there will be no overnight service. The sleepers will go and people coming out of the interchange with Thameslink to use the sleepers will find that the overnight sleeping trains have been removed. We must doubt whether the sums on which the plan was prepared and is now put to the House are still accurate.

Mr. Beith: Another possibility that is closed off by that decision is that at the moment newspaper contracts go north from King's Cross. There might even be a facility for loading the papers closer to the centres where the papers are produced through the use of the link line. However, British Rail seems to be surrendering completely.

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Sir Paul Dean): Order. Before the hon. Member for Tynemouth (Mr. Trotter) pursues that point, I remind him that we are dealing with work in London. It would be out of order for the debate to stray beyond that.

Mr. Trotter: As I said at the beginning, we are being asked to give a Second Reading to a Bill a large part of which concerns the provision of a link between the service under the Thames and that from King's Cross to the north. If we consider only one half of that link, the House cannot properly consider the Bill. I would certainly not want the Bill to receive its Second Reading tonight on that basis.

The carriage of newspapers is interesting, even if that only happens between Holborn and King's Cross—to keep the point within the context of London. We may allow our imagination to look further afield. The whole question of sector costing must be considered carefully. The Select Committee on Transport, on which I have the honour and pleasure to serve, drew attention in its report on the railways to its concern over this type of case

> "where InterCity . . . in an attempt to shed costs, moves its services away from lines or stations which it might more sensibly continue to use."

That has been happening with the east coast main line. The removal of the overnight passengers to Euston, or more likely to the competing air services, will mean that those passengers will no longer help to fund the movement of newspapers, post or parcels on the east coast main line. These services will in turn become less competitive and a vicious circle will be created as a result of the odd costing between various sectors of British Rail.

Before we proceed with the Bill, it is important to know the long-term plans for the service out of King's Cross. It is ridiculous to suggest that there should be a link for passengers using those services if we do not know what plans there are for the future. While it has been suggested by British Rail that King's Cross is an inadequate station for passengers to use at night, the latest reason for removing the overnight services is that the diesel locomotives needed to run it are so worn out and expensive that they can no longer be justified, and that electrification is the answer.

We are being asked to agree a system of works that will link up at King's Cross with the now being electrified east coast main line. The argument now advanced for using electric trains from Euston will be removed by the electrification of the route from King's Cross to the north-east and Edinburgh. There will no longer be any need to use clapped-out expensive diesel locomotives. Indeed, if those overnight trains continue to run from Euston rather than from King's Cross, not only will the passengers not have the advantage of the link to the Thames, but several of the clapped-out, expensive diesel engines will have to be maintained to run the service on from the electric wires at Carstairs to Edinburgh.

[Mr. Trotter]

There is thus a strong argument in favour of returning the Edinburgh service to King's Cross after electrification in only two years' time. That would bring more passengers to King's Cross and more people would use the works that we are asked to agree tonight. That would be logical, but however obvious and sensible it might be, British Rail has refused to give a commitment and we are left in complete doubt about the future. It is no good saying that the alternatives that British Rail has suggested will be adequate.

Dr. David Clark (South Shields): To substantiate the point that the hon. Member for Tynemouth (Mr.Trotter) is making about the type 47s and the switching of trains from Carstairs to Edinburgh, when the point was put to British Rail about running the type 47 from Carlisle to Newcastle, it said that it was too expensive. The point that the hon. Gentleman is making about the link is quite right.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. Carlisle and Newcastle are a long way from London. The debate must be directly related to London, as that is what the Bill is about.

Mr. Trotter: I am talking about people who want to go from the middle of London up to the north using the service at King's Cross. That is what the Bill is about. People want to get to King's Cross on the link line at night, so that they can go home. On the railways' present plans, they cannot do that. I believe that this should be put right.

People who wish to make an overnight journey to Newcastle now have to go to Euston instead, without, of course, being able to use the link line. They must then go all the way to Edinburgh and back to Newcastle—a total of 525 miles instead of 268. In the other direction, they must leave home at 5 o'clock in the morning to get there in time for their engagement. That is wholly unsatisfactory. One of the most astonishing features of the management of British Rail is that it has failed to accept that this is unsatisfactory. This throws doubt on the judgment of the senior management of British Rail.

Mr. Fallon: What would the position be if one of my hon. Friend's constituents wanted to return from a meeting in Holborn and be at an early-meeting on Tyneside in the centre of Newcastle? If he could not use the link and had to travel by that circuitous route through Euston and Edinburgh, what time would be available to him for the meeting at Tyneside?

Mr. Trotter: He would have to get off the sleeper in Edinburgh at dawn, to catch the first train to the north-east from Edinburgh. It is astonishing that one of the senior managers of British Rail was quoted as saying,

"He could enjoy . . . the view on the way."

Mr. Snape: That gentleman said:

"He could enjoy a great British breakfast and the view along the way."

Mr. Trotter: That is the full quote. The person concerned would arrive in Newcastle at 8.30 am, provided that he got up in Edinburgh at 6 o'clock.

Mr. Beith: Assuming that the sleeper was not late.

Mr. Trotter: We are talking about an unknown quantity of money for work at King's Cross, and it is difficult to see the costs in context.

The energy wastage by British Rail on the eastern region is said by its energy manager to be £7 million a year. I do not know whether the cost of these works will b or less than that. Losses on the sleepers have variously estimated at £1 million, £700,000, £5 £355,000, £250,000 and £200,000. If we keep pressure they may disappear altogether. However, Rail's determination to close the service at nig prevent people from Holborn or elsewhere in L making an overnight journey to the north-east ha unchangeable.

The Transport Users Consultative Committee ta interest in all passenger services, whether from Holb from King's Cross. Both the north-east committee a national committee are concerned about British proposals on this issue.

The link envisaged in the Bill must raise the qu of through trains to the continent. On the very di the other place passed the Channel Tunnel Bill, consideration to the Bill before us tonight. Man Members who come from the north-east agreed v construction of the Channel tunnel only becau envisaged a through rail service from the nort already suffer from the north-south divide. It is es that we have proper rail communication in Brit through service by rail to the continent will be esse future.

I had hoped that this Thames tunnel would be a way of providing such a service from the eastern p England down under London and through continent. Are we to be deprived of that oppor Perhaps my hon. Friend the Member for Chipping will be able to tell us whether there is a possibili service through the tunnel to the Channel tunn should know whether British Rail is considering th

Hon. Members have referred to other through s in London. Those services have been reas successful, whatever the Opposition may say abo slow speed of such trains. I do not believe there is an for the overall speed to be as low as it is. I suggest th slugishness is due to these trains being badly elsewhere than through west London. I hope that t link will mean we can do better in the future.

There is to be a new, experimental, sleeping ca that will run from Edinburgh to Poole that will miles off the main electrified line. I do not know wh money has been found to pay for that service. I have thought that there were far fewer people wis travel overnight from Poole to Edinburgh than the wishing to travel from King's Cross through to New Will that costly new service use the tunnel? I do not that it will, but my hon. Friend the Member for Ch Barnet should tell us.

Earlier in the year, the director of InterCity refe the closing of two uneconomic night routes, one o was the service from King's Cross up the main eas line. He went on to say—I believe that his word rather unfortunate—that InterCity planned to ad new ones. I do not know whether he intended that to merit my interpretation, but I believe that a servi as that from Poole to Edinburgh — whether through Holborn or not — is likely to be f successful than the services that we are to lose from Cross.

Mr. Jack Thompson: Has the hon. Gentleman account of the fact that the distortions that alread

in fares, particularly on some of the services that we suffer on the east coast, may be applied to services down to places such as Poole?

Mr. Trotter: The hon. Gentleman is absolutely right. Earlier I referred to the incredible lack of marketing. The impression formed by many is that a decision was taken to withdraw the service from King's Cross up the east coast line and that more passengers would be an embarrassment and get in the way of taking that service off.

I do not know whether it is intended to run lounge cars on the Thameslink. I was astonished to read that 31 lounge cars are to be introduced on the overnight sleepers from Euston and elsewhere. It seems that the idea is that business men will spend half the night drinking gin and will then get up before dawn to have breakfast. I believe that providing and running these cars is an astonishing use of money. One cannot help but wonder whether the cost of hauling those 31 lounge cars over Shap and the rest of the system will be fully remunerated out of profits on the gin or the breakfast.

I believe that there are grave doubts about the present management of the British Rail InterCity system. Those doubts are relevant tonight, because one of the aims of the Holborn link is to feed passengers to InterCity services. Before we agree this Bill we need to be satisfied about the plans for future services out of King's Cross that are intended to be used by those coming from Holborn on the link. We need to know the complete plans for the future of the station and the services out of it.

9.8 pm

Mr. Nigel Spearing (Newham, South): I am inclined to support the Bill, but I wish to ask a number of questions. I believe that a number of anomalies have appeared in the course of this valuable debate.

My first hesitation is that the Bill appears to accede to the Government principle—confirmed by the Minister—that substantial investment by British Rail in new routes, new lines—or, to be more accurate, reopened lines—will be paid for only by some form of localised property development. I cannot stomach that doctrine. The Minister may look puzzled, but I understand that that is the policy in many parts of London and in particular in respect of extensions to the docklands light railway. By the time I have finished my speech it will be clear that such a Government policy has also been adopted for other extensions, not only in London but elsewhere. If it is not, I shall be glad to hear from the Minister later by letter.

I apologise to my hon. Friend the Member for West Bromwich, East (Mr. Snape), who thinks that I am being pedantic, but these are not new routes. They are routes which are being reopened and refurbished. Tunnels built in the 19th century are being reopened. Although the railway routes that the trains will use may be new, the works themselves, with one exception, are not new railways. Therefore, I am not being pedantic. A principle is involved. The House is not being asked to authorise a new route.

I sympathise with the hon. Member for Tynemouth (Mr. Trotter) who is interested in the east coast main line. Many Londoners use that line. I shall not dwell on the topic at length, because it does not come within the scope of the Bill, except that British Rail wants to run it almost as a semi-commuter railway, certainly as far as Grantham, which British Rail boasts is now part of London's commuterland. It appears that British Rail wants to squeeze out other services, particularly sleeper services, which seems to be an extraordinary decision.

Even more extraordinary is the lack of assistance for the Kensington route, which is a cross-London route. We heard about that from my hon. Friend the Member for Denton and Reddish (Mr. Bennett). I am sorry that British Rail has not persisted with that route, because it has the advantage of no loading gauge problems. One would have expected British Rail to persist with the welcome cross-London services which it started. Perhaps those services could go faster, but they were an innovation. It will be disadvantageous to the image of British Rail if they are cut after May.

I wish to ask some questions of the hon. Member for Chipping Barnet (Mr. Chapman) about Snow hill in particular. That is the site of the main work and there is a proposal to abandon and, in effect, rebuild the Holborn viaduct terminal. The Snow hill route was used in the post-war period, particularly for goods traffic going through London. It has been closed relatively recently, much to the chagrin and criticism of many railway-minded people.

I thought that there was a Snow hill station. Why could not that be refurbished relatively quickly at a fairly low cost? Why was that not done for the service which is to start in May to give access to Holborn viaduct to people coming through on the widened lines?

Mr. Jack Thompson: I bow to my hon. Friend's knowledge of the area. Can he tell us about the condition of the tunnel?

Mr. Spearing: No. The point I am coming to is that the works which we are being asked to authorise are not necessary for the service which is starting in May. That service will be from Bedford to various destinations south of the Thames, particularly Bromley South, Gatwick and perhaps Brighton. Therefore, those tunnels will be in operation in a few months' time. That is not what the Bill is asking us to authorise.

We are being asked to authorise additional works, first, for the elimination of Holborn viaduct and, secondly, for the refurbishment of tunnels at King's Cross which will give a second outlet to the north. I am mystified why we need to spend a lot of money on redeveloping the Holborn viaduct area to provide a terminal on a station below, which I believe exists and through which trains will be running in the next few months.

In addition, I do not understand why there is an apparent need to remove the viaduct between Blackfriars and Holborn and the Snow hill route which will start in a few weeks. I appreciate the architectural feature which may be an advantage if the railway is to go beneath the ground, but it is an expensive change which, apparently, will be paid for by the abandonment of Holborn viaduct. I assume that Holborn viaduct will be demolished because, ultimately, the balance of traffic north and south will eliminate the need for a terminal there. If Holborn viaduct is no longer required, surely it would be relatively cheap to put a station beneath it on the Snow hill line.

I now wish to turn to the mystery of works nos. 3A and 3B at King's Cross. I have made inquiries of British Rail about those and it has confirmed the relatively well-known fact that the York road tunnel and the Hotel curve tunnel will not take standard gauge coaches. Specially short or

[Mr. Spearing]

narrow coaches and limited gauge locomotives were used on the Moorgate service until a few years ago. I have ascertained that they will not be available for 125s, sleeping cars or the new mark 4 coaches which will be used when electrification of the east coast main line occurs. Therefore, suburban services from the Peterborough or Stevenage areas will go to the various destinations in the south.

Mr. Trotter: I am grateful to the hon. Gentleman for that explanation. Surely, if the main part of Thameslink will take proper main line stock, it would be sensible to open up the curves on the tunnels at King's Cross so that we get all the advantages of running through services from the farther ends of the country.

Mr. Spearing: Yes, that would appear to be an attractive solution, but, from what little I know about this line, I believe that the loading gauge restrictions are not only on those tunnels but found elsewhere on the line.

How expensive will it be to make the so-called widened line even wider and provide the facilities that the hon. Member for Tynemouth (Mr. Trotter) mentioned? What about something more ambitious still?

My closing points relate to plans for rail traffic through London, which were produced in the mid-1960s. Under the strategic plans, there were proposals for main-line tunnels through the centre of London linking some of the mainline railways to the standard gauge size of bore. That would have been of vast benefit to Londoners. There would have been relatively short tunnels. If I remember rightly, there was a suggestion for tunnels between Paddington and Liverpool street and between Euston, Battersea and Victoria. British Rail revived such proposals not long ago in a scheme called CrossRail, but the Minister said that he was not concerned with it as British Rail had not produced any plans. He said that the Department of Transport would consider the proposals only if they were profitable.

We are now left with this limited proposal. It would be much better for strategic transport in London, where overcrowding on the underground is now a problem, for the Government to have invested in a much more ambitious scheme of standard gauge routes, either on the CrossRail principle introduced by British Rail some time ago or as envisaged in the strategic plan studies for London in the mid-1960s. That would have provided a better service for suburban traffic in London and for through-London services requested in the debate by hon. Members from the north.

9.18 pm

Mr. Michael Fallon (Darlington): The House is indebted to my hon. Friend the Member for Chipping Barnet (Mr. Chapman). Some hon. Members referred to him as the hon. Member for Chipping Norton. I would not ask him to choose between those two constituencies. I simply wish to put that on record. I am indebted to him for his clear explanation of the purposes of the Bill. I hope that he will not take it amiss if I now criticise to some extent the promoters of the Bill. We understand that he is not a promoter of the Bill. He is acting on their behalf and he has done his duty in as full and frank a way as possible.

The promoters of the Bill have not effectively discharged their obligations to the House. The statement circulated by the promoters—I received a only this morning—is a tatty, two-page, p document. It contains neither a financial exp the cost of the various works to be undertaken powers are sought, nor a proper explanation, two sentences in paragraph 4, of the various wo described in clause 5. It would be almost impo layman, looking at a copy of the Bill and a tatty statement, to have any idea of what is of the purpose of the Bill.

I draw that point to the attention of the Ho reasons. First, the House is considering private Bills procedure. I should have thought Committee, which is sitting during this Sess want to examine the statements that are ci support of private Members' Bills and whether promote them could get a little nearer to the was set by the Government, and, at the outse private Bills much fuller explanatory and memoranda.

Mr. Chapman: If the opportunity arises, I sh the points that have been made. I should like my hon. Friend the Member for Darlington (about the financing of the schemes. I hope to precisely as I can, to give hon. Members the they want. They were published when the Bil before Parliament. Of course, that was the last I take to heart the criticism that the figure presented with the memorandum. They are av

Mr. Fallon: My hon. Friend, courteously attempted to respond to my point. It is no re him; it is a reflection on the promoters. I am be that it will not do to tell us that the financial i was produced in the last Parliament. There Members present who were not in the last Parl financial information is attached to the prese Order for the Second Reading of which the Cle It will not do to say that financial inform published at the time or that it was available Parliament.

It will not do for another reason. When began at 7 o'clock, somebody straying into it been under the impression that we were relatively minor works. It was only when we ex full implications of clause 2 that we discovered discussing works to be undertaken over two to We are discussing a major infrastructure project in the heart of our capital city. We re fuller financial information.

We require such information for a second rea is a growing, damaging imbalance of public e on the railway network as a whole. Some of th clause 5 are self-financing. The return from the of the existing Holborn viaduct site will cover My hon. Friend has already made it clea remaining works, works nos. 3A, 3B and 4, will financed and will require support from central funds. That means that they will require suppo taxpayer. The most heavily subsidised part of is Network SouthEast in which the works constructed.

My hon. Friend the Under-Secretary of S supplied me with the figures before Christmas. passenger service obligation grant to Network

is about £232 million. That is almost as much as the entire regional aid budget. Let us leave that out of the Bill for the moment. Let us simply remind ourselves that the money for the construction of the works at King's Cross, through Snow hill, will come from that central Government subsidy. Those works will be financed not simply by London commuters such as my hon. Friend the Member for Chipping Barnet, but by taxpayers throughout the country who may never witness them being undertaken.

Mr. Home Robertson: Would the hon. Gentleman have more confidence in the ability of British Rail to finance these works in the medium or long term if it had not gone to such strenuous lengths to deter many of its regular passengers and to sabotage the night services that serve the hon. Gentleman's constituency and my constituents from the Dunbar area?

Mr. Fallon: That is a very strong point. I was always taught at school that those whom the gods would destroy they first make mad. I have now discovered that British Rail's motto must be, "Those services that it wishes to eliminate it first makes secret."

With regard to clause 5, as I established in my reference to the taxpayers' subsidy of these works in London, it would be wholly unfair to proceed with the construction of such a link across the centre of London unless all those who use the railway network and all those who are technically able to do so, commuting on the railway network from those parts that are connected to the London link, have equal access to it. It would be wrong to construct such a link and deny those who had paid for it to the right to travel along it. That means not only equal access but access on a regular and continuing basis, not simply at certain times of the day. This is not a London link for yuppies. It should be used by all those who use the railway network and are able to transfer at points on the east coast line. We shall learn where those points are when my hon. Friend the Member for Chipping Barnet replies to the debate.

It is right that, if the taxpayer is subsidising this link across the centre of the capital, all those who wish to have access to the King's Cross line—in particular, the east coast main line—should have access to it at whatever time of day they arrive or leave. Somebody in the north-east — on Tyneside or Teesside — may wish to reach Holborn for a breakfast meeting at 8.30 or 9 am. We are also entitled to consider the position of somebody leaving Holborn who wants to make a business trip to the north-east, the Borders or Scotland.

We are entitled to ask why this appears to be a metropolitan Bill. It has been drafted by people who have no conception of the huge distances involved for those who have to leave London and do their business in the borders or the north-east, or those who live in the Borders or the north-east and have to do their business in London.

Those who drafted the Bill do not understand the implications of not allowing those who live further away on the railway network to share in its benefits. I was not surprised that the metro-cats of Marsham Street could not find much for the Minister to say in support of the Bill. They have no understanding of the huge distances involved or the rights of those in the railway regions that we from the northern constituencies are determined to protect.

We do not find work no. 2 in clause 5. Is that another British Rail service that has somehow become secret? We seem to leap from work no. 1 to work no. 3A. What happened to work no. 2? Was it considered at some earlier stage? Was it something that was included during the last Session that we are not entitled to see during this one? Should inquiries be made at the Vote Office to discover whether part of the Bill became detached in the excitement of the general election? I leave my right hon. Friend the Member for Chipping Barnet to ponder that point.

Works nos. 3A and 3B pertain to King's Cross and, in a sense, lie at the heart of the Bill. As has been said many times in the debate, King's Cross is much more than a station for London commuters, enabling the yuppies who live on the outskirts of London — for example, Huntingdon — to make their money in the centre of London. It is a national station, as has been recognised from E. M. Forster onwards through the pages of our literature.

In undertaking works at this station whose benefits would not be available to those arriving overnight from Scotland or the north-east, the Bill's promoters are depriving King's Cross of part of its historic role in our railways network. They are also depriving the very people whom they seek to help—Londoners and City businessmen—of the opportunity to get out of London into the northern regions to see what is happening there. The promoters are doing no service at all.

I come to work no. 4. The serious point has emerged that it would be inappropriate to proceed with the development of subways and escalators in the vicinity of King's Cross when an inquiry into the tragic events of 18 November has only just been established and it will be months before we know what is recommended by the public inquiry set up under statute to be conducted on a judicial basis by Mr. Desmond Fennell QC. There is a range of issues to be considered — not simply fire detectors and sprinklers but the design of the subways and escalators.

If my hon. Friend the Member for Chipping Barnet cannot reconsider works nos. 1, 3A and 3B, I urge him to look again at work no. 4 to determine whether it is right to ask the House to grant powers to authorise these works before the public inquiry into the tragic events of that fire has even begun.

Mr. Chapman: My hon. Friend raises a serious point. I tried to reassure the House in my opening remarks. However great the speed with which the Bill progresses through the House, it will be some months before it reaches the statute book. As my hon. Friend has said, it will be some months before Mr. Desmond Fennell QC reports. The detailed designs of these escalators have yet to be completed. Obviously British Rail will wait on the inquiry's findings. Quite apart from that, British Rail will closely consult the railways inspectorate and the fire services.

Whatever else I cannot do, I hope that I can reassure my hon. Friend on that important point. We are talking about the time span between the Bill being passed by Parliament and these works at King's Cross being completed — under two years. Some people complain that the works should be completed more expeditiously. Others, such as my hon. Friend, who refer to escalators rightly say that we should wait. I hope that I can assure my hon. Friend on that point, which is central to the questions that I asked before preparing to introduce the Bill.

Mr. Fallon: No one could have been more forthcoming and co-operative during this debate than my hon. Friend. He has sought every opportunity to reassure those of us who have had some reservations about the Bill's detailed provisions. His remarks are, to some extent, reassuring.

However, we are talking not just about escalators but about subways and the additional congestion that will be caused precisely because it will take at least two years to complete the work. A large number of additional passengers arriving at and departing from King's Cross may be rerouted along the subways because of the other works to be undertaken under the Bill.

I hope that my hon. Friend will consider carefully the import of his remarks and consider whether it might be better to separate work no. 4 from the others in the Bill, at least until the public inquiry report is available, which I understand will not be until the summer at the earliest. No one has provided any information to the contrary tonight. My hon. Friend might be better advised to return to the House with fresh legislation to seek powers in respect of work no. 4.

I conclude by making two general points. First, I return to clause 22. The Bill takes important powers of compulsory purchase—we have heard nothing of local authorities' response to them — for four years, until 1992. The Bill would allow major works in the heart of our capital city. My hon. Friend and his supporters must make their case for the importance of those powers and justify them.

Secondly, the Bill deals with improvements that will make it easier for those commuting to London—those who enjoy the benefits and southern comforts of the largest subsidy in the provincial rail network. If such benefits are to be conferred on London, it is surely right and proper that they should be enjoyed equally by the rest of the United Kingdom—the taxpayers who are forking out the money. Those who seek power to construct the link must ensure that, as far as practicable, all parts of the country have equal and regular access to it at all times of night and day.

9.37 pm

Mr. A. J. Beith (Berwick-upon-Tweed): This has been a very interesting debate. Hon. Members on both sides of the House have referred to matters that had not struck some of us until we set to work on the Bill. That shows the value of the debate, and those who suggested that we should let the Bill go through on the nod at 2.30 pm, with not a word spoken, ought to pause and reflect that complex legislation such as this needs to be discussed in a reasonable way.

Had more time been available for the debate, other hon. Members might have wished to speak. The hon. Member for East Lothian (Mr. Home Robertson) is a regular user of King's Cross and the hon. Member for Wansbeck (Mr. Thompson) takes a similarly close interest and makes full use of the service. Indeed, the hon. Gentleman would probably use the link line if the transfer arrangements between the main line and the link line proved satisfactory. However, it has not become at all clear that those transfer arrangements will be satisfactory.

I know that the hon. Member for Chipping Barnet (Mr. Chapman) would have liked to deal at length with a number of the worries expressed during the debate. Let me say in passing that the promoters could not have had a better or more helpful advocate than the hon. and that we are grateful to him for the way has conducted himself.

Many of us would welcome the opportuni to these discussions at a later debate—we adjourn this debate or discuss the Bill at a l its proceedings if the difficulties have not beer Indeed, we may meet again to discuss a Briti (No. 2) Bill if British Rail does not find it po am sure it could—to deal with Members of more directly and allay their fears so that it necessary to discuss the issues in debates such

The attitude of some in British Rail ha conducive to achieving such an object. If one on the long, tortuous history of railway legi discovers that railway Bills generally pro satisfactorily when the railway company has trouble to ensure that it is meeting the wi service needs of those represented in the Hous it has not.

I was particularly struck and, indeed, distu Government's attitude to the Bill and the reasc advanced for saying so little about it. I do whether the Under-Secretary of State had don of deal with the promoters to keep his re minimum. I was surprised to see him in the thought it was a victory for the "Convert the r roads" lobby. I had expected to see the Minis at the Dispatch Box, because he normally railways and takes such a close interest in the

When the Government's doctrine was en became even more surprised. The Minister s Government's attitude was that the inves justified solely because of the return that coul from the redevelopment opportunities that Basically, the Government are happy about th because they are self-financing. I agree Government that the fact that they are self-fin be welcomed. However, the idea that the Go attitude should be confined to saying, "Well d Rail, you have found a self-financing proj extraordinary when one considers the reven tions that might flow from the continued run services, the rolling stock that will have to be p maintenance of that rolling stock, and the exte the receipts from the service are needed, when of Network SouthEast, one is not surprised deficit or a difference between the revenue ea service and the cost of running it.

Another reason why I was struck particula was that in reply to my intervention the M "Basically it has nothing to do with us." Government who tell British Rail to go away with the job. All that we are concerned about that any deals that it does are self-financing."

I should find that attitude easier to understa taken consistently by the Government. Whe Friends and I, and hon. Members of other p raised other service issues relating to the east line, Ministers have been only too keen to wellington boots, into all the details of the comment on them as if they knew precisely h cost to open a train door at Newcastle centra for a passenger to alight at King's Cross. figures of alleged subsidies to passeners as i intimate with the day-to-day workings of the

Indeed, I have advised Ministers that that is not what hon. Members expect of them because we understand that the Government are somewhat removed from the day-to-day operations of the railways.

However, the Government now seem to have got themselves in the ambiguous position that if British Rail proposes to remove a service, they weigh in with all the arguments that they can muster, but if British Rail is launching a new project, the Government's sole role will be to assess whether it can be financed out of the property development deal upon which it is based. Any railway finance implications, let alone implications for the customers of the railways, are of no concern to the Government. I find that profoundly worrying.

Mr. Jack Thompson: This is an important point. It has not yet been clearly stated that at the time of the sale of the land that is now to be sold to provide the finance for the new project, market forces may be totally different from the way in which they are identified now. Present values may not be applicable 12 months from now when the sale takes place. Has that fact been taken into account?

Mr. Beith: The hon. Gentleman can make his point with even more force having been told that the key figures that are the basis of all this were produced when the Bill was introduced in the previous Parliament. Quite a lot has changed since then, not least in the vicinity of Holborn viaduct station. City firms are shedding labour at a considerable rate and the calculations about the value to the link line of its passing close to the City will need to be reconsidered. Clearly, many other financial factors will change over time.

Mr. Chapman: I want to be as helpful as I can to the House. I may not have the opportunity before 10 o'clock to give all the information that has been asked of me during the debate. However, it may be helpful for the House to know that work no. 1 was estimated on 1 December 1986—that is 13-plus months ago—at about £36 million. A complete schedule was presented to Parliament. The hon. Member for Wansbeck is perfectly correct to say that British Rail does not know the value of the assets on the redevelopable land in the proximity of Holborn viaduct, because the value can change at any time.

Of course, the planning application is pending with the City of London corporation, and quite properly, it is not yet known whether those plans will be acceptable to that local planning authority.

One final point is that the House will be pleased to know that these plans will, I think, commend themselves to the local planning authority, if only because they have just been given the approval of the Royal Fine Arts Commission.

Mr. Beith: The hon. Gentleman makes an interesting point. I shall turn later to the planning issues. I wonder whether the plans have obtained the approval of the royal family, too. Its members take a close interest in developments in the area around St. Paul's.

I am glad to see that the Minister of State has joined us; I hope to come to what he said about the level of subsidy that he thought—incorrectly, as it turned out—applied to certain other British Rail services as compared with the level of subsidy that applies to passengers travelling on this link route from north London through to the southern counties.

One cannot now think of King's Cross station remembering the horrible tragedy that took pla and which so shook the nation. Those of us who station regularly cannot but be moved by the sig bank of flowers that stands outside it, and by the which people have added flowers and messages bank of flowers as the weeks have gone by. I h there will be some sort of permanent memorial, so within the precincts of King's Cross, to those their lives in that terrible tragedy. I hope, too, tha will be learnt from it. It was a horrifying experie many people were directly affected by it.

The fire changed many people's perception station. For many people in the north-east, King has always been the gateway to London, and the if it were properly organised, to travel to other London directly, possibly without even changin —as we had hoped—or at least by making connection, would be welcome to such people.

Many of my constituents come through this ga to London—farmers coming to the Smithfield s instance, although I notice that not so many are this year. Times are not so good for the farming fr as the hon. Member for East Lothian knows from experience. Ministers and church members com numerous church conferences that seem to take London; women's institute members come, as d of schoolchildren, who go to the Tower and see the sights of London. King's Cross is also a gateway o from London, which illustrates the importanc station, upon which so many of these works will b out.

I had not spotted, until the hon. Mem Darlington (Mr. Fallon) pointed it out, the disapp from the Bill of work no. 2. Perhaps, one day, discover what happened to work no. 2 and why, disappeared, works nos. 3 and 4 were not ren accordingly, as would be the normal practice. I that hon. Members will be familiar with E. M. novel, "Howard's End", to which the hon. Me Darlington referred. In it, Margaret Schlegel is me

"To Margaret . . . the station of King's Cross ha suggested Infinity."

I am not referring to the Prime Minister, who does King's Cross as frequently as I would wish; neit she travel on the trains as often as I would wish

"Its very situation—withdrawn a little behind spendours of St. Pancras — implied a comment materialism of life. Those two great arches, c indifferent, shouldering between them an unlovab were fit portals for some eternal adventure, whose iss be prosperous, but would certainly not be expres ordinary language of prosperity."

That is rather a dated view of King's Cross, bec buildings on which the works are to be carried out recognised for their enormous architectural val present a marked contrast between King's Cros Pancras, where Giles Gilbert Scott worked frustrations of not having been allowed to build Foreign Office — instead, he built a Gothic Lewis Cubitt, who had been told that a good stati be built at King's Cross for less than the co ornamental archway at Euston square—its rem one of the early tragedies of modernisation—s produced a remarkable building which was per first great essay in functional architecture. It

[Mr. Beith]

precursor of a whole generation of architecture against which people are now turning, but it must be maintained, preserved and recognised.

In recent years, work carried out at King's Cross has tried to be sympathetic to the character of King's Cross. I know that the hon. Member for Chipping Barnet has a close interest in buildings and architecture and, with his training, he understands it very well. Recent works have tried to be sympathetic to King's Cross and I hope that the works to be carried out under the Bill will do no harm to that very important and historic building. That is a difficult matter for people to deal with, but it is important. I am puzzled by the attitude of British Rail management to it.

The redoubtable Mr. Prideaux is one of the many members of British Rail management who have been involved in arguments with me and with other hon. Members present. He said:

"Euston's environment for overnight services is superior to that at King's Cross."

He is arguing that King's Cross is basically an unsuitable station even for passengers who alight from an overnight train so that they can go down the escalator provided by the Bill to join the link line to go through London to Holborn and possibly to destinations to the south of London.

Mr. Prideaux says that the environment there is not suitable for that purpose. I cannot understand why, because King's Cross has refreshment room facilities, newspaper stalls, a Pullman lounge and all the facilities that one might require either on alighting in the early morning or leaving late at night. However, I wish that the refreshment kiosk stayed open a bit later at night, because at 11.30 pm one is confined to a burger stand. The facilities are adequate for the purpose, and will be particularly so if the link line is there.

I cannot see the sense of diverting all the overnight traffic from Scotland into Euston if the link line was about to be provided. The possibility that people could move directly from an overnight service on to a train which would take them into central London or out to destinations south of London, should have been foreseen by British Rail when it made its extraordinary management decision to transfer all overnight services to Euston. At the back of that desire to transfer, there seems to be a belief that in some way King's Cross is not an adequate station. I reject that view and it is implicitly rejected in the decision in the Bill to make King's Cross part of this service.

Mr. Trotter: For the reasons that the hon. Gentleman has advanced, if King's Cross is inadequate for people who simply want to get on an overnight train, it must be a great deal more inadequate for the many people who use it during the day.

Mr. Beith: The hon. Gentleman is right, and I shall come to the problems related to the points about congestion that were made earlier in the debate.

One matter casts a strange light on the Bill. I went to York to discuss British Rail's plans to withdraw overnight services from the Borders. At that meeting I discovered that British Rail planned to remove them from Tyneside as well. Nothing had been heard about that decision. Indeed, I found afterwards that a press release had been issued at precisely the time that I was t the InterCity manager to discuss the pr that one of the results of the chang services would be that King's Cross closed after 10 o'clock at night. How d the provisions of the Bill?

Clearly, the Bill envisages that provide a regular service for passeng directly to King's Cross station or al Holborn viaduct or stations to the sou understand how an apparent att economies by closing King's Cross at the provisions of the Bill.

Problems will arise because of co Cross while the works take place. The Cross is not with the overnight services of the build-up of daytime services and them. When the overnight services dep is plenty of room on the concourse at K the passengers, even though the tra Minister should realise that British Rail over his eyes when it says that nobody u services. The evening sleeper service t Edinburgh is full night after night. personal experience. The southbou Newcastle is frequently full, even if the is not.

The congestion problem arises duri of the large number of InterCity trai station for a very short time. They ar is a case of capital being intensively the consequences is that often the train platform for the 20-minute or half-hou that passengers can get directly on to be boarding the train in the last five result is that a large number of people King's Cross station concourse.

It is extraordinary; it is like Hampto entire station concourse is marked rather like the lines on the carpet in t great serpentine shape. The queues another like an Indian snake-charmer' wind around to get from one side of platform, or sometimes proceed in the queue B, queue C and queue D. It is system, and it is a tribute to the fortitu the British people — especially Northumbrian and Scottish travellers — that they bear the queueing s tolerance, and show so little irritation, e very uncomfortable and inconvenient

Mr. Trotter: Does the hon. Gentlem of the features of the maze at King's Cr lack of anyone in authority to hel Presumably that will also apply to the get down to the Holborn link.

Mr. Beith: That is true. I have seen I find—particularly if I am wearing anything which faintly resembles auth asked questions by members of the pub can get to, say, the metropolitan line.

Problems of congestion are bound a serious displacement of other activit caused by the works that are taking

escalator and ticket hall must be built. I foresee considerable problems arising from building of the ticket hall, which is one of the explicit provisions in the Bill. Someone will have to explain to the staff at King's Cross how to relate the activities of one ticket hall to those of the other.

My experience at King's Cross—and, I am sure, that of other hon. Members—has been very disconcerting. For two or three months it was impossible to book a sleeper to Alnmouth, in my constituency, because the ticket office had been told that the train did not stop there. Although the barrier, with a notice on it, was nearer to that ticket office than the new ticket hall proposed in the Bill, the staff seemed unable to observe the words written above the platform informing passengers that the train stopped at Alnmouth. Unless there is some co-ordination, there will be experiences similar to the experience—which I described in an earlier intervention—of the unfortunate Nigerians arriving in Milton Keynes.

Let me now deal with the important issue of the interchange between the link service that the Bill provides and other services out of King's Cross. It has been a great disappointment to hon. Members that there seems to be no prospect of through running, despite concern in the north about through running into the Channel tunnel and beyond.

As the hon. Member for Tynemouth (Mr. Trotter) pointed out, any support given from the north-east to the Channel tunnel, although it was pretty muted, was at least based on the assumption that there had to be a rail tunnel, with a direct rail connection. If the Bill's promoters would say that the Bill would assist through running through the tunnel that is being built in London, so that direct services to the continent would be an early possibility, it would be enormously welcome, in relation to freight as well as passenger travel.

It is important that the north-east should gain the benefits of rail haulage, which could provide the area with distinct economic advantages if there was direct linking through the Channel tunnel. However, we were told that the loading gauge made through running unlikely, unless there was some rolling stock specifically designed to enable through running from the east coast main line on to the link line and beyond.

Mr. Chapman *rose in his place and claimed to move,* That the Question be now put.

Question put, That the Question be now put:—

The House divided: Ayes 123, Noes 34.

Division No. 147] **[9.59 pm**

AYES

Arnold, Tom *(Hazel Grove)*
Atkinson, David
Bevan, David Gilroy
Blaker, Rt Hon Sir Peter
Bonsor, Sir Nicholas
Boscawen, Hon Robert
Bottomley, Peter
Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Brandon-Bravo, Martin
Bright, Graham
Burt, Alistair
Butterfill, John
Carlisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Carttiss, Michael
Chapman, Sydney
Chope, Christopher
Clark, Sir W. *(Croydon S)*
Coombs, Anthony *(Wyre F'rest)*
Coombs, Simon *(Swindon)*
Cormack, Patrick
Cousins, Jim
Cran, James
Davies, Q. *(Stamf'd & Spald'g)*
Day, Stephen
Devlin, Tim
Dorrell, Stephen
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James
Eggar, Tim
Evans, David *(Welwyn Hatf'd)*
Favell, Tony
Fenner, Dame Peggy
Field, Barry *(Isle of Wight)*
Finsberg, Sir Geoffrey
Fookes, Miss Janet
Forman, Nigel
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Gale, Roger
Garel-Jones, Tristan
Gill, Christopher
Goodson-Wickes, Dr Charles
Gorman, Mrs Teresa
Gorst, John
Gow, Ian
Gower, Sir Raymond
Grant, Sir Anthony *(CambsSW)*
Greenway, Harry *(Ealing N)*
Greenway, John *(Rydale)*
Griffiths, Peter *(Portsmouth N)*
Ground, Patrick
Hamilton, Neil *(Tatton)*
Hanley, Jeremy
Hargreaves, A. *(B'ham H'll Gr')*
Hargreaves, Ken *(Hyndburn)*
Harris, David
Howarth, Alan *(Strat'd-on-A)*
Howarth, G. *(Cannock & B'wd)*
Howell, Rt Hon David *(G'dford)*
Hunt, David *(Wirral W)*
Hunter, Andrew
Irvine, Michael
Jack, Michael
Jackson, Robert
Janman, Timothy
King, Roger *(B'ham N'thfield)*
Knapman, Roger
Knowles, Michael
Lee, John *(Pendle)*
Lennox-Boyd, Hon Mark
Lightbown, David
Lilley, Peter
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
Lord, Michael
McCrindle, Robert
Macfarlane, Sir Neil
MacKay, Andrew *(E Berkshire)*
Maclean, David
McLoughlin, Patrick
McNair-Wilson, M. *(Newbury)*
Mans, Keith
Martin, David *(Po*
Miller, Hal
Mitchell, Andrew
Mitchell, David *(N*
Monro, Sir Hector
Moore, Rt Hon Jo
Moss, Malcolm
Neubert, Michael
Nicholls, Patrick
Nicholson, David
Onslow, Rt Hon C
Oppenheim, Phill
Paice, James
Patnick, Irvine
Porter, David *(Wa*
Portillo, Michael
Raffan, Keith
Rhys Williams, S
Riddick, Graham
Rost, Peter
Rowe, Andrew
Ryder, Richard
Shaw, David *(Dou*
Shaw, Sir Michae
Shephard, Mrs G
Shepherd, Colin
Sims, Roger
Skeet, Sir Trevor
Speed, Keith
Stern, Michael
Stewart, Andrew
Stradling Thomas
Summerson, Hug
Thompson, D. *(C*
Thompson, Patric
Thurnham, Peter
Townsend, Cyril
Trippier, David
Waddington, Rt H
Walker, Bill *(T'si*
Warren, Kenneth
Watts, John
Wheeler, John
Widdecombe, Mi

Tellers for the Ay
Mr. Michael B
Mr. Timothy W

NOES

Ashdown, Paddy
Beith, A. J.
Buchan, Norman
Campbell, Menzies *(Fife NE)*
Canavan, Dennis
Carlile, Alex *(Mont'g)*
Clelland, David
Cox, Tom
Cunliffe, Lawrence
Dixon, Don
Eadie, Alexander
Flannery, Martin
Foster, Derek
Foulkes, George
Fyfe, Mrs Maria
Golding, Mrs Llin
Haynes, Frank
Home Robertson, John
Lamond, James
Leadbitter, Ted
Livsey, Richard
McKay, Allen *(P*
McWilliam, John
Meale, Alan
Patchett, Terry
Powell, Ray *(Og*
Prescott, John
Snape, Peter
Thompson, Jack
Trotter, Neville
Vaz, Keith
Wallace, James
Williams, Alan W
Wise, Mrs Audre

Tellers for the N
Mr. Archy Ki
Mr. Michael F

Question accordingly agreed to.

Question, That the Bill be now read a Sec*accordingly and agreed to.*

Bill read a Second time and committed.

Hong Kong

Postponed proceeding resumed.

Question put and agreed to.

Resolved,

That this House takes note of the White Paper on the Annual Report on Hong Kong 1987 (Cm. 293) and endorses the policies which the Government is pursuing to maintain Hong Kong's future prosperity and stability.

Food Protectio

10.9 pm

The Parliamentary Under-Secre Scotland (Mr. Michael Forsyth): I be

That the Food Protection (Emergenc 1988 (S.I., 1988, No. 11), dated 7th Jan which was laid before this House o approved.

The order revokes and re-enacts w provisions of the Food Prote Prohibitions) (No. 3) Order 1987 and (Emergency Prohibitions) (No. 4) Ord the emergency prohibitions impose restricting various activities to preve food rendered unsuitable for that pur of the escape in April 1986 of radioact the nuclear reactor at Chernobyl. *[In*

Mr. George Foulkes (Carrick, C Valley): On a point of order, Mr. Spe in what the Minister is saying, but I of it.

Mr. Speaker: I sympathise with th

Mr. Forsyth: The order also desig out the areas in Scotland affected b which the movement of sheep and in of sheep are prohibited. As hon. Mem restrictions on the slaughter of sheep areas and the supply of meat derive extend throughout the United Kingd

Hon. Members will know that in the minimum disruption to normal bus Government announced on 13 introduction of a mark and release sch which failed a monitoring test for moved from an area where the move of sheep had been restricted by or slaughtered. Those sheep were painte a distinctive paint mark of a parti denoted that they came from a restric not be slaughtered until they had su monitoring test and were ear-tagged to until there was a general amnesty on colour, following comprehensive testi consumption of the sheep would no lo to health.

Three colours are used in rotation green, blue and apricot. The order pro Monday 11 January, slaughter contro sheep originating in the post-Cherno are lifted. It follows a substantial fall i in such sheep, all of which were mark September 1987, following their move

In addition, with effect from Mon colour mark used to identify hither which are to leave a restricted area monitoring test for radioactivity is ch apricot. As with previous colour chang is to enable newly marked animals from sheep which have moved earlier area onto clean pasture, thus facili release from controls of blue-mark readings for radioactivity permit it.

Neither sheep marked blue on or 1987, nor sheep marked apricot on

1988 may be slaughtered unless they successfully pass a re-monitoring test for radioactivity and are identified with a special ear-tag.

Those changes in colour continue the central control, designed to protect the food chain, over the movement and slaughter of sheep from the restricted areas and enable sheep once contaminated to unacceptably high levels of radioactivity and in respect of which these levels have now decreased to acceptable levels, to be slaughtered.

Mr. James Wallace (Orkney and Shetland): If there are any difficulties after this year, are there any contingency plans about future colour arrangements?

Mr. Forsyth: If the hon. Gentleman has followed the debate—I am sure he has followed the subject closely—he will know that the three colours operate in rotation and that there is no need for additional colours to be added. The additional scheme of monitoring in the slaughter-houses continues to give added protection to the food chain.

I commend the order to the House.

10.14 pm

Mr. John Home Robertson (East Lothian): I want to know who chose the colour apricot used in the scheme. I am grateful to the Minister for giving us a brief explanation of the way in which the colour coding scheme is going round in circles. It sounds rather like a variation on the alliance merger negotiations. I am sorry that neither the hon. Member for Caithness and Sutherland (Mr. Maclennan) nor the hon. Member for Ross, Cromarty and Skye (Mr. Kennedy) can be with us tonight. I understand that they may be taking part in something of a greetin' meetin', in keeping with the tactics that the leader of the SDP has recently discussed.

I am grateful to the Minister for giving a brief account of the way in which the restriction scheme is operating. I understand that the areas covered are as before, and that therefore the same number of farms and broadly the same number of sheep are subject to the restrictions. I understand from the National Farmers Union of Scotland that it is as happy as can be expected about the way in which the scheme is operated. Indeed, everyone involved with farming in Scotland recognises how important it is that consumers should be reassured that meat reaching the market place is safe for consumption. It is obviously important that the Government should continue to operate such schemes for as long as necessary.

With that in mind, I should be grateful if the Minister could give us some suggestions about how long the Government's experts advise that the restrictions should remain in effect. This morning my hon. Friend the Member for South Shields (Dr. Clark), the shadow Minister of Agriculture, gave me a copy of a cutting from the *Manx Independent* of 8 September 1987. That article quoted an unnamed scientist from the industrial pollution inspectorate in Scotland who confirmed that sheep farms could remain under Government restrictions for years. He told the paper:

> "Caesium levels will decay by half their value in 30 years, and because of the nature of much upland pasture, readings which are considerably above the trigger levels in operation, suggest that caesium pollution could be a problem for many years."

Clearly that is a matter of some concern. It has bearing on the considerations that the House and the nation may give to future aspects of nuclear power, s disposal and so on. Over the years, we ha reassurances that we have no need to worry will be all right. We have been told that not could go wrong and that if it does we will be and that there are ways of dealing with su However, here we are facing a problem t hundreds of miles away nearly two years ag

Mr. Foulkes: Thousands of miles away.

Mr. Home Robertson: Yes, indeed. I am p hon. Friend. That problem occurred nearly t but farms, businesses and people's jobs and v being disrupted in Scotland.

I make no complaint about the fi Government are introducing the order. Ind heartedly support it. However, I should be Minister took this opportunity to say how such restrictions are likely to be in effect.

10.17 pm

Sir Hector Monro (Dumfries): Although h may greet the debate with some hilarity, I bel is a serious side to the problem, on two cou Government were quick to react to the introduce the scheme, soon after the Chern in the interests of consumers. However, at t it was equally important that a scheme shoul to help farmers sell their fat lambs at the ap and to ensure that they were clear contamination.

I believe that the Government and Department, of Agriculture and Fisherie administered the scheme, often with partic have done so with great good will and Farmers are satisfied that they were helpe difficult period by that Department, and p regional offices such as that in Dumfries.

In the first six months when the scheme difficulties arose. I appreciate that it took that scheme to be understood in the mark farms. However, the compensation that wa arrangements that were made have, in the lo satisfactory. However, I appreciate that have been greatly inconvenienced by the or in south-west Scotland.

I am grateful for the opportunity to than and his Department for being so helpful an ing and for administering the scheme in possible.

10.19 pm

Mr. Richard Livsey (Brecon and Radno for being a fellow Celt and not a true Sc Scottish, and in the past I farmed 1,500 acr so I know a little about the farming sce sensible to continue with the order. We hav problem in north Wales. The hon. Member f The Border (Mr. Maclean) has also expe problems in his constituency.

The main point is that the health of the protected. All farmers accept that. That is requirement of the order. It is also necess farmers' products and markets long term.

The CEGB proposal to conduct an Trawsfynydd power station in Wales is ir

[Mr. Richard Livsey]

could cause problems if it is not monitored carefully. I do not think that it is wise to proceed with it. It should be remembered that the original experiment at Chernobyl caused all the trouble that we are discussing. It must also be remembered that farmers are now into the third year of disruption and are not able to market sheep from the upland areas. The Scottish Office should ensure that those farmers are adequately compensated. Considerable compensation has been given but, as I have just said, this is the third year in which the upland sheep farming system will be affected.

Upland areas throughout the United Kingdom have been affected. The Scottish colleges should monitor farm accounts closely to find out the long-term effect on the profitability of the Scottish upland farms. The Government should try to ensure that there is not a continuing decline in farm incomes. Therefore, the Minister should take careful note of the monitoring from the point of view of the contamination of the sheep and the effect on the profitability of sheep farming systems.

10.21 pm

Mr. Bill Walker (Tayside, North): I welcome the introduction of the order and the fact that the Government are continuing to act sensibly and sensitively, as they have done from the outset, on the problems faced by sheep farmers. After all, it was not the action of sheep farmers that brought about the difficulties. It is wise to remember, as the hon. Member for East Lothian (Mr. Home Robertson) has said, that such things are with us and that they could happen again.

What comes through clearly is that, whatever we decide to do in the United Kingdom, it will not in the end have any impact upon totalitarian regimes wherever they are, and particularly on the one that initiated the problem. We can only hope that our example will encourage or embarrass that country so that never again will we face a similar situation.

The Government have adopted a realistic approach. We have dealt with the effects of the fallout and we have put into operation a system of monitoring that continues to protect the consumer while at the same time ensuring that farmers do not go out of business during the term of the order. On that the Government are to be congratulated.

10.23 pm

Mr. George Foulkes (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley): I declare an interest from the point of view of my constituency, which is affected by the order and by the contamination, as the Minister knows. As the hon. Member for Dumfries (Sir H. Monro) knows only too well, my constituency is large, being 800 square miles in area. It is interesting to note, in view of the debate in which I participated earlier, that my constituency is twice the size of Hong Kong, which has a population of 5·5 million. My constituency is sparsely populated; it is rural, with many high parts, and has a heavy rainfall. It was one of the areas most seriously affected by contamination because, unfortunately, we had very heavy rainfall just after the Chernobyl incident.

I agree with the hon. Member for Dumfries that this is not a humorous or facetious issue. It is important in terms of compensation and effect. We must remember that this incident, involving serious contamination and restriction on the slaughter of sheep, took place almost two years ago, yet it is still having a serious effect. We must also remember that it was not a nuclear explosion. It was a conventional explosion in a nuclear power station resulting in the emission of radioactive material which went into the atmosphere, was transported through the atmosphere and deposited, in particular, in Scotland, Wales and Cumbria. It was a case of caesium contamination, which decays very slowly.

It is a very serious matter, but there is no harm in bringing humour into a serious matter—as I have been known to do from time to time — because it can sometimes illustrate a point extremely well, as the Minister managed to do in his reference to the colouring of sheep.

This matter has caused a great deal of concern in my constituency. I have raised the post-Chernobyl effect with the Minister on several occasions, but, like his predecessor, he tends to shrug it off in a Pavlovian way. In my younger days, I studied psychology a little, including the matters studied by Pavlov. Scottish Office Ministers tend to react in that sort of way when hon. Members, particularly Opposition Members, raise such issues.

I have mentioned on previous occasions the effect of the build-up of radioactivity after the Chernobyl incident in the bodies of people in south-west Scotland. Although there is a restriction on the slaughter of sheep which register above the 1,000 becquerel level, contaminated sheep below that level are still being slaughtered and sent to market. Sheep are also being slaughtered and being sent to market at a later stage when the becquerel level falls.

There has not been sufficient study of the other ways in which accumulated radioactivity gets into the body through food chains and accumulates. If that effect is evident in sheep and lambs, it must surely be present in the bodies of other animals that we eat. It must be present in grain and root crops and is therefore coming through all the food chains into the body. That is why I have been urging the Minister to institute a systematic study of whole-body monitoring.

Mr. Livsey: The becquerel level of a married couple farming in north Wales has been monitored. The becquerel level recorded in the wife was 4,500 and the level in the husband was 4,800.

Mr. Foulkes: I can give other similar examples. The Minister, the hon. Member for Galloway and Upper Nithsdale (Mr. Lang), brought the matter to the attention of the media. He supplied other figures for me and then shrugged them off. I regret that he does so. There were high radioactivity levels for trout in Loch Doon, for rabbits — the level for rabbits in my constituency was very high—and for deer. Of course, radioactive material is concentrated in animals' bodies.

I have been arguing for systematic whole-body monitoring. The Minister said that it is already happening because volunteers are going to east Kilbride. Professor Baxter and his staff at the Scottish university research and reactor centre are doing whole-body monitoring. But that is not a systematic study to try to compare one part of the country with another. Of course, volunteers are not always those who need to have their radioactivity levels checked. I hope that the Minister will reconsider the matter. Opposition Members were worried recently by a report in *The Observer* that the radiation monitoring unit at the Ministry of Defence had warned against——

Sir Hector Monro: That is quite incorrect information. A fortnight ago, I received a letter from the Ministry of Defence—it was well publicised in the press—stating that that was a lot of nonsense.

Mr. Foulkes: If that is the case, I look forward to receiving a copy of the letter from the hon. Gentleman. The information was certainly not refuted at the time. Many weeks ago, a full account appeared in *The Observer*, including a quotation from a Ministry of Defence spokesman, stating that the Department had warned against military personnel going to the south-west of Scotland because of the danger of radioactivity in the Purple Warrior exercise. I observed that exercise and had certain comments to make.

There is general concern not just because of the post-Chernobyl effect but because there are other potentially radioactive nuclear establishments in the area. There is Hunterston in the north. Right in the centre there is the radioactive establishment of great interest at Chapelcross, which many people forget. Not only is it a generating station but it has other significant functions as a producer of tritium and plutonium. Therefore it is important in terms of the weapons programme. It is right in the centre of south-west Scotland. Sellafield is south of south-west Scotland.

We know about the concern that has been expressed about Sellafield. The latest Sellafield proposal is that the enriched plutonium that is brought here from Japan for reprocessing should be flown back from Prestwick airport. A previous Energy Select Committee pointed out that the most dangerous radioactivity scenario that one can envisage is an aeroplane crash. The hon. Member for Tayside, North (Mr. Walker) is an expert on the matter. There is concern about road and rail transportation and possible accidents. The worse possible scenario is an air crash, a subsequent fire, and the effect of radioactive discharges and the contamination that should take place.

We in south-west Scotland consider that the area is targeted. [*Interruption.*] The hon. Member for Dumfries mutters away. His majority is reducing progressively as mine rises progressively. Bit by bit, the people of south-west Scotland are giving their verdict. There will soon be few Tories in that area. I receive letters from the hon. Gentleman's constituency and from the neighbouring constituency, stating that the Conservative Members are not adequately reflecting local people's concerns.

There is genuine concern that the south-west of Scotland is targeted. Of course, we cannot blame Chernobyl; it was entirely an accident. There was certainly no intention to target any part of the country. It was an unfortunate thing, and it added to people's worries. They are already concerned about the incidence of radioactivity and the potential for further radioactive contamination in the area.

I hope that the Minister will give a more positive reaction about the monitoring for which not only I but other people have been calling. If he does not, we shall continue to press him in order to obtain a response. I hope that he will, for once, show some concern. He is following the path of his predecessor in accepting the bland assurances that he is given by his Department and regurgitating them. He should remember what happened to his predecessor the Earl of Ancram, who is no longer a Member of the House.

10.35 pm

Mr. Michael Forsyth: By leave of the House, I shall try to answer some of the main points that have been made.

The hon. Member for Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley (Mr. Foulkes) said that I follow a long line of Ministers who repeat what the Department says. I took the trouble to read some of the speeches that the hon. Gentleman has made on this issue. He seems to make the same point over and over again and, although it is answered, he does not accept the answers that are given. He has a characteristic of trying to stir up anxiety about these issues because of his particular antipathy to nuclear power. It is slightly mischievous of him to create needless concern among his constituents.

With regard to the hon. Gentleman's point about whole-body monitoring, he knows very well that there is a project being carried out at East Kilbride, which he mentioned. He says that it is not a proper project because it is based on particular selected volunteers. My understanding is that to make the data from the project valid, it is essential to have volunteers whose dietary behaviour has been considered to obtain worthwhile results. I would rather take the word of the scientist responsible for the project on the best ways of achieving that than take that of the hon. Gentleman.

Mr. Foulkes: Will the Minister confirm that scientists have put to him a proposal that has not been approved by the Department?

Mr. Forsyth: We are supporting the project that is currently being undertaken.

Mr. Foulkes: The Minister is dodging.

Mr. Forsyth: I am not dodging at all. It has shown quite clearly that the assumptions on which our action was based were valid.

I am grateful to my hon. Friends the Members for Dumfries (Sir H. Monro) and for Tayside, North (Mr. Walker) for the tributes that they paid to the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, which handled an extremely difficult matter extremely well. It has served the people of Scotland very well indeed.

The hon. Member for Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley must not try to imply that the levels of radioactivity concerned are anything but nominal. Even at the 1,000 bq/kg level in lamb, if someone consumed 5 kg per year it would be equivalent to the levels in half an X-ray. We should bear that point in mind.

The hon. Gentleman asked about deer, rabbits, trout, grouse and other animals that have been affected. One would have to eat about 20 grouse per year to reach the levels with which we are concerned. The higher levels that are sometimes referred to occurred on the leg meat of the grouse, and there is not much leg meat on a grouse.

Mr. Foulkes: I did not mention grouse. I mentioned rabbits, trout and deer. I specifically did not mention grouse because very few of my constituents are able to afford it. Some of them manage to catch trout, and the Minister will recall that the level in trout in Loch Doon was about 4,500 bq/kg. The Minister is shrugging off concern about such information.

Mr. Forsyth: The reason why I mentioned grouse—the hon. Gentleman is right, he did not mention grouse specifically—is because the highest levels of radioactivity have been encountered on the leg meat of grouse; I was

[Mr. Forsyth]

giving the worst case to reassure the hon. Gentleman's constituents. The levels of bq/kg discovered in deer, rabbit and trout are very much less. The point that I am trying to get across to the hon. Gentleman is that the quantity of meat consumed determines the dosage. The dosages concerned are very low and are comparable to half an X-ray. It is irresponsible of the hon. Gentleman to imply that his constituents are somehow threatened. If they were, the Department would have taken action, as it has done over the sheep problems.

The hon. Member for East Lothian (Mr. Home Robertson) asked why we chose particular colours. It arose because of the dyes. I am sure that he will be relieved to know that red is used only in England and not in Scotland. The hon. Gentleman assumed that the number of farms affected would be broadly the same, and went on to say that this problem would be with us for a considerable time. This year 69 farms are covered, compared with more than 2,500 the previous year. The worries expressed by the hon. Gentleman and some of his colleagues do not appear to be reflected in the number of farms affected.

The hon. Gentleman talked about sheep farms being affected for years to come and quoted the 30-year half-life of caesium. What matters is not the half-life of caesium but the time that it takes for the caesium to be dispersed. That is affected by rainfall, soil and vegetation structure, and so on.

Mr. Home Robertson: The Minister referred to the 69 farms covered. I understand that that is precisely the same number of farms that were covered by the order that we debated on 16 November, which, incidentally, included a number of farms that had not been covered by previous orders. There seems to be an indication that there was a build-up in some areas. I press the hon. Gentleman again to take the opportunity to give some sign of the Government's view, on the strength of the scientific advice available to them, of how much longer this type of restriction is likely to have to remain in force.

Mr. Forsyth: There are 69 farms involved, and about 124,000 of the sheep population in Scotland of 8·8 million are affected. The hon. Gentleman is right to point out that some additional farms came within the system. As he has studied these matters, he will know that, for example, the structure of the vegetation in some areas results in a concentration of caesium. That is why some farms came back into the system, as I explained when we debated the matter previously, along with the orders that applied to other parts of the United Kingdom.

The Government will continue to operate the system s long as our monitoring indicates that it is necessary to d so to protect the food chain. I hope that the hon Gentleman supports us.

Mr. Home Robertson: I am sure that the whole Hous would support any responsible Government in applyin restrictions where they are necessary. I am trying to pres the Minister to throw some light on one point. I am certai that his officials have given him some information on th likely prognosis. How long is it likely that such restriction will have to remain in force, either on these farms or o others? Are we talking about weeks, months or, indeed years?

Mr. Forsyth: The hon. Gentleman may believe that th Scottish Office is omniscient, but it does not have th qualities of precognition. There is no way of predictin exactly how quickly dispersal of the caesium will take. Th position that the hon. Gentleman appeared to think existed is not nearly as bad as he suggested.

The hon. Member for Brecon and Radnor (Mr. Livsey referred to compensation. To date, the compensation paid in Scotland amounts to £1·4 million. The hon. Gentleman talked about the tests to be carried out in a nuclear power station, which is something of a red herring. I refer him to the excellent reply by my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister in the House yesterday, which he obviously has not had an opportunity to read.

We shall keep the situation in Scotland under review to ascertain how far restrictions will need to be maintained in 1988. For the immediate future, however, we believe that the present movement and slaughter controls represent the most practicable way of ensuring the continued safety of the food chain and of maintaining public confidence with the minimum disruption to farmers' normal husbandry practices. I commend the order to the House.

Question put and agreed to.

Resolved,

That the Food Protection (Emergency Prohibitions) Order 1988 (S.I., 1988, No. 11), dated 7th January 1988, a copy of which was laid before this House on 11th January, be approved.

STATUTORY INSTRUMENTS, &c.

Fees and Charges

Motion made, and Question put forthwith pursuant to Standing Order No. 101 (Standing Committees on Statutory Instruments, &c.),

That the draft Department of Trade and Industry (Fees) Order 1987, which was laid before this House on 4th December, be approved.—*[Mr. Peter Lloyd.]*

Question agreed to.

Exhaust Emission Control

Motion made and Question proposed, That this House do now adjourn.—*[Mr. Peter Lloyd.]*

10.45 pm

Mr. Graham Bright (Luton, South): The impact of the motor car on our lives is obvious to us all. It is an essential means of transport for business and leisure activities for the majority of the population. Indeed, no modern economy could survive or prosper without it. The growing number of vehicles on our roads has created a series of problems — congestion, inadequate traffic-carrying capacity and a shortage of parking spaces in our towns and cities. We are all familiar with those problems.

The Government and local authorities rightly give high priority to the task of tackling those problems. However, there is a second concern — less obvious but equally serious. We have become much more conscious of the effects of vehicle exhaust on the atmosphere. That was one of the reasons for our welcome decision to move from the use of leaded to the use of unleaded petrol. But car engines are also the source of a substantial proportion of the carbon monoxide, nitrogen oxides and unburnt hydrocarbons being pumped into the air every single day.

I do not pretend to be a medical expert, but I know that the harmful effects of the emissions are widely accepted. More than 90 per cent. of the carbon monoxide detected in cities in the United States, which has far more stringent standards than we have, comes from car exhausts. Carbon monoxide is a poison that reduces the flow of oxygen into the blood. People with weak hearts and the very young suffer extra strain even at low levels of exposure.

The second major source of pollution is to be found in the oxides of nitrogen. Admittedly, cars are not normally responsible for as high a proportion of these as of carbon monoxide in the atmosphere. They are responsible perhaps for only 30 to 40 per cent. in most urban areas. Even a small concentration has been shown to cause respiratory problems for children and asthmatics—something that concerns me as an asthmatic.

Finally, there are the unburnt hydrocarbons, which, in combination with nitrogen oxides, have been identified as a major cause of acid rain and photochemical smog. Two years ago, I had the dubious privilege of seeing the disastrous results of acid rain pollution on the Black forest in West Germany. It would be most unwise to think that those effects occur only there and in Norway. Every time that we get a really fine summer day without strong winds, we also get ozone pollution outdoors at levels of concentration well above those permitted in factories by the factory inspectors. There is no escaping those effects; they are all around us.

Other countries have acted to control such emissions. The Clean Air Act passed in the United States in 1970 required motor manufacturers to cut atmospheric pollution from vehicle exhausts. The technology needed to do that was available in the form of autocatalysts. Since those became compulsory in 1975, carbon monoxide and hydrocarbon emissions have fallen by 90 per cent.—as a result of oxidation catalysts being fitted to the exhausts of new cars. Since 1981, when the three-way catalysts capable of removing nitrogen oxides also became compulsory, the emission of that gas has dropped by 75 per cent. Therefore, it is not surprising that other countries such as Australia, Canada and Japan have followed the American lead.

Here in Europe, members of the Stockholm group have adopted the United States emission standards. Austria, Sweden, Switzerland and Norway have all decided to take that course. In the European Community, West Germany, Holland and Luxembourg have used fiscal incentives to promote the use of autocatalysts.

As a result of the Luxembourg compromise in 1985 — I emphasise the word "compromise" — the Commission produced a draft directive requiring cars with a capacity of more than 2 litres to have three-way catalytic converters fitted by 1989; those with engines between 1·4 and 2 litres would either have to have three-way catalysts or lean-burn engines fitted with oxidation catalysts, while those under 1·4 litres would require lean-burn engines alone.

I now understand—this is one reason why I have sought this debate—that the Community's Environment Ministers agreed at their meeting on 3 December that the directive should now be issued. I understand also that they have not yet decided what should happen about small cars. I understand further that Denmark is to go it alone and have more stringent controls. I say, "Good for Denmark." That is undoubtedly progress. My hon. Friend will be entitled to claim credit for that on both economic and technical grounds when he replies. However, the key question is whether it is an entirely appropriate solution in the long term.

This issue is of great importance to my constituency, where General Motors' main United Kingdom plant, Vauxhall, is situated, and to the British-based motor manufacturing industry in general.

There is no doubt that we have the technology to solve the problem. Indeed, a British company, Johnson Matthey, pioneered the development of autocatalysts and is still the world leader in this field. That company, together with General Motors, is a major exporter of autocatalysts to the American and European markets. The difficulty that motor manufacturers based in Britain and suppliers like Johnson Matthey will face lies in the mixture of lean-burn and autocatalysts technology that is proposed in the directive.

It is not true to claim that lean-burn technology in itself offers a solution. Lean-burn engines cut emissions of nitrogen oxides at low speeds, but increase them at higher speeds. There has been some misleading, not to say irresponsible, advertising by one of our major motor manufacturers on that point. Furthermore, the leaner the engine, the higher the hydrocarbon emissions. That explains the need for oxidation catalysts to reduce carbon monoxide and hydrocarbon emissions on lean-burn engines.

The study conducted by the Warren Spring laboratory for the Department of the Environment suggests that, on official traffic forecasts, the adoption of the directive will reduce nitrogen oxide emissions from vehicles by between 12 and 32 per cent. by 2010. If three-way catalysts were fitted to all cars, the estimated reduction would be between 60 and 69 per cent.

The directive offers a second-best solution, even if it is adopted now. A delay in its adoption until the 1990s will simply put back the date at which atmospheric pollution begins to be reduced.

I appreciate that one or two manufacturers face difficulties in completing their engine technology to accommodate autocatalysts on all their models. But all our manufacturers are already faced with the task of meeting

[Mr. Graham Bright]

American emission standards, if they are exporting. They will have to confront the problems of meeting those standards and complying with the much less rigorous European Community requirements in the 1990s. I do not believe that that is a satisfactory long-term prospect. Two of our major producers of motor vehicles are American, so they have the technology because that is what they provide in the United States. There is no reason why that technology should not be transferred.

The alternative is obviously to adopt three-way catalysts for models of all sizes, which is what I would prefer. Such catalysts are capable of dealing with unburnt hydrocarbons, carbon monoxide and nitrogen oxides, and of converting them into harmless carbon dioxide, water and nitrogen. On environmental grounds, that is a clearly preferable course. I recognise that extra costs would be incurred by motor manufacturers and, in due course, by car purchasers. The basic cost of a catalyst is now about £50, although further modifications to an engine have to be made if one is fitted. In West Germany, where identical models with and without autocatalysts capable of meeting the proposed European standards on emission are available, the average price is about £214, and the figures of £500 to £1,000 that have been bandied around by some critics are highly exaggerated.

It is equally untrue to suggest that the fitting of autocatalysts has a dramatically adverse effect on engine performance and fuel economy. The figures that I have seen of tests on continental manufacturers' models suggest reductions in maximum speed for medium-sized cars—between 1·4 and 2 litres—of just over three miles per hour, and for larger cars of more than 2 litres of fractionally more than two miles per hour. On fuel economy, there was a marginal loss for small cars of 1·3 miles per gallon, and for large cars of 0·2 miles per gallon; medium-sized cars actually gained. I have taken part in a scientifically monitored test that confirmed those findings. The results are, I believe, acceptable in the light of the environmental gain offered—even when the cars are pushed, no difference in performance can be found.

The technical case for supporting three-way catalysts rather than the directive's compromise is compelling. This is an area in which Britain has a technological lead. We have taken the necessary steps to reduce the emission of lead, even though I am afraid that customers at the petrol stations have been very slow in demanding the product. That situation cannot last. Perhaps my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer will feel able to provide an incentive to encourage the use of unleaded petrol when he makes his Budget statement later in the year. Unleaded petrol is essential if we use autocatalysts.

I do not believe, however, that we should settle for a second-best solution to the problem of exhaust emissions from motor vehicles. It may not, in any case, be possible to sustain the compromise envisaged in the Community directive indefinitely. There is pressure for environmentally clean vehicles to be produced here in the United Kingdom and in continental countries where the Green movement is strong.

It is interesting that a survey by a Scandinavian poll in this country shows that 45 per cent. of the public identified that cars were associated with contributing to acid rain. The adoption of American requirements within the European Community to conform with other continental countries is bound to reappear on the agenda. It may enjoy some support from the Japanese and United St based manufacturers operating in a global market. threat of further penetration of our markets by manufacturers cannot be discounted.

Let me put the issues as clearly as I can to my Friend the Minister. Action has had to be taken to co vehicle exhaust emissions. The EEC's directive offers a partial solution, even though the technical mean resolve the major problems is available. Three- catalysts are already available for all classes of veh They are relatively cheap and have little adverse effec engine performance or fuel economy. A British comp is the leading manufacturer, and most car producers as Vauxhall are perfectly capable of adapting their veh to use them. It is in our commercial and environme interests to adopt this solution.

My hon. Friend understands, I know, how technic subject this is. It is vital that the Government's positi fully explained to satisfy the legitimate environme concerns which underlie this debate. It will also hel clarify the thinking of the motor manufacturers and suppliers. I accept that we have moved forward. I hoped that we could move further and faster. I trust the Minister will recognise the force of these argume

1 pm

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Environment (Mr. David Trippier): I am most gratefu my hon. Friend the Member for Luton, South (Mr. Bri for raising the question of motor vehicle emissions their control. As the House will know, he has an excel record as an assiduous and able advocate for constituents and the companies operating within constituency. I am certain that that point will particularly appreciated by the Vauxhall Motor Comp

My hon. Friend has raised some important points his proposal justifies careful consideration. I welcome opportunity to clarify the issue and to place on record considerable progress that we have made and to say w action is planned for the future.

My hon. Friend correctly identified the importanc the contribution made by road traffic to air pollution. mentioned specifically carbon monoxide, nitrogen oxi hydrocarbons and lead. I add to that list smoke emissi In addition to these primary pollutants, vehicle emissi contribute to the formation of secondary pollutants, s as ozone, which he mentioned. The fact that legislatio in place or under discussion within the Europ Community to deal with all these pollutants demonstr that the problems are taken seriously. I believe that t measures will lead to a significant improvement in quality.

First, I should like to deal with the so-ca Luxembourg package or compromise as it used to called. The European Community directive specifies standards that member states may apply to car emissi It is to this directive in particular that my hon. Friend drawn our attention. The Luxembourg package is agreement made for European cars in the context of European environment.

In approaching negotiations, the Government ai for a step-by-step approach designed to tighten standa as improving technology allowed us to do so in a c effective manner. An important part of this approach

to take account of the fuel-efficient lean-burn technology being developed by various manufacturers, including those in the United Kingdom.

The directive in its final form reflects our approach. The standards agreed are a substantial improvement on previous regulations, but car manufacturers are able to take full advantage of new technologies and, in particular, the lean-burn engine. Standards are given for three categories of car — those above 2 litres in engine capacity, those with engines between 1·4 litres and 2 litres and those with engines of less than 1·4 litres.

My hon. Friend has summarised admirably the technical options that car makers will probably adopt to meet the new regulations. This is important. We do indeed expect that some manufacturers of medium cars will decide to fit three-way catalysts to particular models. My hon. Friend will no doubt be pleased to see a growing number of catalyst-equipped cars on the road. The new directive will allow enterprising manufacturers to continue to follow the lean-burn route, but it will not prevent the use of catalysts.

As my hon. Friend said, the Luxembourg directive was finally approved by the Environment Council last December. We have recently committed ourselves to implementing all its provisions. As regards the mandatory application of the exhaust emission standards for small and medium cars, we want to harmonise the dates as far as possible with other manufacturing countries. We are in active discussion with other member states to that end. We also intend to apply the large car standards as soon as practicable.

Predictions of future emissions and the formation of secondary pollutants are made within the Department's air quality research programme. My hon. Friend has raised two further issues essential to predictions of this kind — the growing number of vehicles on our roads, and the fact that pollutant emissions vary with speed. I should like to assure him that both factors have been taken into account in our calculations. It is currently estimated that the implementation of the Luxembourg package will more than offset the effects of traffic growth. Levels of both primary and secondary pollutants will be significantly below today's levels by the year 2000. Clearly, tighter standards of the kind suggested by my hon. Friend, for example, would further reduce pollutant levels. However, the improvements would be subject to a law of diminishing returns both in terms of the air quality improvements achieved and the cost of achieving them.

The costs associated with the new standards can, of course, only be estimated, and as technology develops so the estimates are revised. In the House last year my hon. Friend asked about those costs, and I am pleased to be able to give him more recent information. Our latest estimates are that controlled three-way catalysts would add £370 to the purchase cost of a car before tax. By comparison, the lean-burn plus oxidation catalyst route would add £150. Overall, we estimate that the Luxembourg agreement, as it stands, will add £550 million annually to United Kingdom motoring costs.

By contrast, the costs of applying three-way catalysts to all new cars are estimated to be well in excess of £1 billion a year. Those estimates do not take fully into account the potential for fuel economy improvements with lean-burn vehicles. Looking to the future, this potential, which is lost with three-way catalyst cars, is of major significance. Taking those costs together with the diminishing benefits obtained, we believe that United States levels of emission control would not be cost-effective for Europe.

Unleaded petrol has a link with the Luxembourg agreement, as the directive gives dates from which member states may insist that all cars must be able to run on unleaded petrol. The United Kingdom insisted on early dates, consistent with our policy of reducing environmental lead. A separate directive covering the distribution of unleaded petrol was approved in 1985. My Department has energetically pursued the directive requirement for balanced distribution of unleaded petrol throughout the United Kingdom by October 1989. This has to be a joint enterprise with the oil and motor industries, and we have set up the machinery for effective co-ordination. Now that the Luxembourg package has been approved, we will be implementing the earliest possible dates for cars to be required to be able to run on unleaded petrol and my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Transport will be issuing draft regulations for consultation in the near future.

My remarks so far on the Luxembourg directive, in terms of the emission reductions expected and the costs, refer only to the first stage. The directive requires that proposals for a second stage of emission limits for the small car category be discussed this year. We are currently waiting for the Commission to present proposals to the Council.

The 3 December Environment Council agreed a common position on a directive, providing a first stage of limits for particulate emissions from diesel cars. Like the Luxembourg directive, this proposal also includes the provision of a second stage, to be considered in 1989.

The December Environment Council also gave its final approval to a directive limiting for the first time gaseous emissions from heavy diesels. Again, this is a first stage of regulation. Proposals for a second stage will be ready for consideration by the Environment Council by the end of this year. This second stage will further reduce the limits on emissions and introduce a limit on emission of particulates. As my hon. Friend the Under-Secretary of State for Transport told the First Standing Committee on European Community Documents on 25 March 1987, large diesel engines are now the dominant source of black smoke in urban areas. We shall be pressing the Commission to bring forward tough proposals for the most stringent limits technically and economically feasible.

In summary, we have at our disposal powerful new measures against air pollution from motor vehicles, and more are to come. The Luxembourg agreement enables us to impose emission limits on cars which give a substantial reduction in primary and secondary pollutants, but which also encourage new and cost-effective technology. We remain convinced as a result of our most recent estimates that the adoption of emission limits for cars equivalent to those of the United States would entail additional costs that would not be justified by the air quality improvement likely to be achieved.

Finally, I thank my hon. Friend for raising this matter. I know that he has taken a close interest in vehicle emissions and that the Vauxhall Motor Company in his constituency is concerned with the issue. It has been most useful to have the opportunity to discuss these very important matters.

Question put and agreed to.

Adjourned accordingly at nine minutes past Eleven o'clock.

House of Commons

Thursday 21 January 1988

The House met at half-past Two o'clock

PRAYERS

[MR. SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

Mr. Cohen: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: I cannot take a point of order before we have opened the sitting. I say to the hon. Member that by raising a point of order at this time he puts in jeopardy those who wish to put questions to the Home Secretary. I will take points of order at the appropriate time, which is immediately after Business Questions.

Mr. Cohen: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. It will not wait until then. It is very brief.

Mr. Speaker: I am sorry, I cannot take it now.

Mr. Cohen: On a point of order. I am——

Mr. Speaker: Order. I have to say to the hon. Gentleman that he will have to raise this at the appropriate time.

Mr. Cohen: Mr. Speaker, a number of people have been denied their democratic rights. This affects the Sessional Orders, and I should like to be given the opportunity to raise the matter of people being denied their right to lobby——

Mr. Speaker: Order. Will the hon. Member please come and discuss this with the Table while I am getting on with the business?

PRIVATE BUSINESS

LONDON REGIONAL TRANSPORT BILL *(By Order)*

Order read for resuming adjourned debate on consideration [10 December], That the Bill be now considered.

Debate further adjourned till Thursday 28 January.

GREATER MANCHESTER (LIGHT RAPID TRANSIT SYSTEM) BILL *[Lords] (By Order)*

As amended, considered.
Amendments agreed to.
To be read the Third time.

GREATER MANCHESTER (LIGHT RAPID TRANSIT SYSTEM) (NO. 2) BILL [Lords] (By Order)

As amended, considered.
Amendments agreed to.
To be read the Third time.

TEIGNMOUTH QUAY COMPANY BILL *(By Order)*

YORK CITY COUNCIL BILL *[LORDS] (BY ORDER)*

HAMPSHIRE (LYNDHURST BYPASS) BILL

[Lords] (By Order)

Orders for Seconding Reading read.
To be read a Second time upon Thursday 28 January.

Oral Answers to Questions

HOME DEPARTMENT

Official Secrets Act

1. **Mr. Simon Hughes:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what consultations he has undertaken in order to ascertain views as to the reform of section 2 of the Official Secrets Act.

The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Douglas Hurd): There have been at least 15 years of public debate on the matter, and there will be full opportunities to comment on the Government's proposals before legislation is introduced.

Mr. Hughes: Will the Home Secretary make sure, in the months between the debate last Friday on the Bill introduced by the hon. Member for Aldridge-Brownhills (Mr. Shepherd) and the White Paper that the Government plan for the summer, that he listens to the views of the country as a whole and not to the increasingly dominant view in his party that secrecy is justifiable? Is the Home Secretary aware that only two out of the 53 new Conservative Members elected in June voted for freedom of information? Is that not an indictment of a view that is generally rubbished, namely, that the Government put their own self-defence at a far more important level than the general interests of the nation and its ability to judge issues?

Mr. Speaker: Order. I ask for brief questions, because long questions lead to too long answers.

Mr. Hurd: I do not agree with the hon. Gentleman. People who wish to express views to us obviously have a choice to do so between now and June, the time of the White Paper, or after the White Paper and before the legislation.

Mr. Stokes: Is my right hon. Friend aware that all these matters of secrecy are of interest mainly to the media, and that the mass of ordinary patriotic people want state secrets to be kept as state secrets?

Mr. Hurd: I must say that when I arrived in my constituency at the weekend I found a rather different flavour to the discussion there from the one here. We have a serious job to do, to honour the commitments that the Prime Minister and I have given to the House. During the debate on Friday many hon. Members explained how difficult that job will be. I agree with that, but we intend to do it.

Mr. Hattersley: Does the Home Secretary recall that during the debate on Friday quotations were read to the House from the book by Mr. Anthony Cavendish, in which Mr. Cavendish said that the security service had recently been involved in operations to discredit Members on both sides of the House. Why does the right hon. Gentleman think that such allegations should be suppressed under section 2 of the Official Secrets Act rather than be investigated, as they would be in any other democracy?

Mr. Hurd: I do not wish to comment on the Cavendish case or the injunctions that have borne on that particular

publication. I would much rather have a decent, restricted system for the protection of official information than the present system, which is open to misinterpretation and misuse, and that is what we intend to get.

Firearms

2. **Mr. Patrick Thompson:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what recent meetings he has had with representatives of gun clubs; and if he will make a statement.

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Douglas Hogg): My right hon. Friend has met representatives of the British Shooting Sports Council, which represents a wide range of sporting and trade interests. I have met representatives of the Shooters' Rights Association, and the United Kingdom Practical Rifle Commission, and Home Office officals have met a number of other organisations.

Mr. Thompson: I thank my hon. Friend for that reply. Bearing in mind the excellent work carried out by many gun clubs up and down the country, including in Norwich and the surrounding area, and the genuine concern about some of the measures to be put forward in the legislation to be debated this afternoon, will my hon. Friend say more about the discussions that he may have had with the gun clubs about licensing arrangements and compensation?

Mr. Hogg: I recognise that the issue of compensation causes considerable concern to right hon. and hon. Members. There are serious objections to compensation, but we are prepared to give further thought to the fresh arguments that have been put forward. However, I should emphasise that I believe that there are still great difficulties, both of principle and of practice.

Sir Jim Spicer: Does my hon. Friend agree that although there may be objections to the principle of compensation, there are greater objections to not paying compensation because of what may happen as a result of the disposal of such firearms? Will he undertake to keep an open mind on that matter as the Bill progresses?

Mr. Hogg: I shall always consider extremely carefully the points that my right hon. and hon. Friends make. None the less, there are difficulties of principle that we cannot ignore. However, I repeat that we are prepared to give further thought to the arguments that have been put forward.

Immigration

3. **Mr. Bernie Grant:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he will consider collecting statistics for entrants to the United Kingdom on the basis of ethnicity.

The Minister of State, Home Office (Mr. Tim Renton): No, Sir. The statistics collected on passenger admissions by nationality are sufficient to meet all the Department's major needs for information on entrants to the United Kingdom.

As far as immigration control is concerned, we do not consider it necessary to extend the interviewing process by seeking and recording a person's ethnic origin; it would add to the cost of the control and inconvenience to the public and the passenger.

Mr. Grant: The Minister will be aware of number of complaints of racism at the ports of e country. Does he agree that one way of ensur check is kept on that problem would be by ethnicity? For example, if 20 Nigerians were de one could reasonably assume that they were However, if 20 Americans or South Africans entry, one does not know their colour.

Mr. Renton: I reject the charge of racism a immigration authorities and officers. Both the N Council for Community Relations and the C for Racial Equality have in recent reports said t that immigration officers discharge their without regard to race, colour or religion, a required to do by the rules.

If we were to ask a question about enthnicity have to apply to all passengers subject to im control. If we were to ask whether passen African, Asian or Arab in origin, the hon. Gen some of his colleagues, would be the first to co

Mr. Sayeed: Does my hon. Friend agree tha the statistics, suggested by the hon. Me Tottenham (Mr. Grant), would be likely to le misuse, as they would reflect only one criterio

Mr. Renton: Yes, that is right. Let us co example, South Africans — be they black o coming into this country. If they have British by descent, they will travel here on British pas their entry to the country will not be reflecte statistics.

Mr. Janner: Does the Minister accept that m wishing to enter this country — members minorities and others — complain of the l delays at Heathrow caused by the heavy burde on immigration officers? Far more of the compl constituency and elsewhere come from people f minorities and their families and friends seek entry as visitors than from anyone else.

Mr. Renton: I suggest to the hon. an Gentleman that, since we introduced the visa five countries — including those of the In continent — over a year ago, the number of of difficulties at our major ports of entry has substantially. However, I agree that there are un delays, and that is one reason why we have p in the immigration rules before the House for d week. I hope that the hon. and learned Gent support them.

Mr. Stanbrook: Is my hon. Friend aware thu is no more relevant to immigration control than of an immigrant's hair? We ask only that im control should be exercised in the interests of people as a whole, whatever the colour of thei

Mr. Renton: I take my hon. Friend's point. I remind him that one of the first immigration r immigration officers should exercise their powe regard to race, colour or religion. I believe th that, and it is very important that they should

Mr. Randall: Why does the Minister not concerted action to overcome deficiencies in Office statistics, which refer to appalling disc between black and Asian people in this country he not done more?

Mr. Renton: I am totally unclear about the deficiency in the Home Office statistics to which the hon. Gentleman refers. As discussed in the Immigration Bill Committee —to which I must not refer in the Chamber—we intend to put forward changes in the rules for debate in the House next week. They will greatly help immigration officers and Lunar House to attend more to the serious and deserate cases that hon. Members bring to my attention.

Custodial Remand

4. **Mr. Favell:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on the progress of his experiment on restricting the period spent on remand in custody.

Mr. Hurd: So far the custody time limits in force in Avon, Somerset, Kent and the west midlands are working well. From 1 April I propose to extend the tighter limits in the first three areas to Greater Manchester, the whole of Wales and to Cheshire, Cornwall, Devon, Dorset, Gloucestershire, Hampshire, the Isle of Wight and Wiltshire. In the west midlands the time limit to committal will be reduced from 98 to 84 days, and time limits will be extended to the Crown courts at Coventry and Dudley.

Mr. Favell: As a lawyer, I hesitate to suggest that lawyers never do today what they can put off until tomorrow. The news from my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary is not only desirable but necessary. When can we expect the experiment to be extended to the whole country? Does my right hon. Friend agree that when that is done there will be less pressure on prisons and their staff, a saving of money and a reduction of the time during which innocent people can be kept in gaol?

Mr. Hurd: We are proceeding gradually so that we can benefit by experience. So far our experience has been good, and that is why I have today referred to a further substantial step to reduce delays in justice. As we get on, I hope to extend the provisions over the whole country and to re-examine the time limits to see whether they can be tightened further.

Ms. Short: As a member of the Select Committee on Home Affairs, which made that recommendation, may I remind the Home Secretary that one of our major concerns was that enormous numbers of those in our prison population were on remand? Can the right hon. Gentleman tell us what is happening to the proportion of prisoners on remand in areas where the experiment is in operation?

Mr. Hurd: Not without notice. However, I hope and estimate that, as a result of the extension of the time limits that I have announced, there will be a reduction of between 300 and 600 in the prison remand population.

Mr. Lawrence: Is my right hon. Friend aware that if the 110-day rule that operates in Scotland and the United States—with which he is tinkering in the experiment—were introduced, there would be a substantial reduction in the time spent in custody awaiting trial and in the prison population? Will he consider bringing forward an amendment to the Criminal Justice Bill to introduce such a provision as speedily as possible?

Mr. Hurd: We have the powers. We took them under the Prosecution of Offences Act 1985, and we are using them. My hon. and learned Friend is aware that the Scottish procedures are different, and the procedure is not absolutely applicable across th With the exception of the west midlands, we are towards 56 days to summary proceedings, 70 committal and 112 days to arraignment in th court.

Mrs. Ann Taylor: Will the Home Secretary ex logic behind his decision today? Why, if he is so-fa impressed with the experiment, is he just extend he agrees with the recommendations of th Committee on Home Affairs, why does he not the procedure for the country as a whole?

Mr. Hurd: Because I want to make sure arrangements are in place and that the li practicable. Nothing is worse than to intr substantial change of this kind at a pace and in a brings it into discredit because people cannot c We are gradually extending and tightening Opposition might be a little more gracious a progress that we are making.

Courthouses

5. **Mr. Amess:** To ask the Secretary of Stat Home Department if he has any plans to amend t for approval of the construction of courthouses reduce delays.

The Minister of State, Home Office (Mr. John No, Sir. The procedures are already designed that scarce capital resources are used to prov operational buildings economically and as q possible. I understand that Essex county counc to go to tender this week for the new m courthouse in Basildon, with a view to comple in 1990.

Mr. Amess: Will my hon. Friend accept my and that of my constituents for the support of t Office and Essex county council for the building c courthouse in Basildon? Will he also accept tha the intolerable pressures on the old court Billericay, it would be irresponsible for anyone to building of the new courthouse further?

Mr. Patten: I entirely agree with my hon. Fr I hope that there will be no further delays with courthouse now that it has gone to tender. Friend's warm thanks are greatly appreciated. sometimes sparing in the direction of the Dispat quite often happily visit Basildon with my hon. will be there shortly in his company lookin important crime prevention project funded by th sector, and I hope to have a chance to look at courthouse site.

Mr. John M. Taylor: Will my hon. Friend opportunity to consider the merits of c magistrates and county court buildings, such excellent building at Staines in Middlesex, and that with the position in Solihull, where we have magistrates court, but no county court?

Mr. Patten: I sometimes go to Solihull as consider the issues on their merits. We like combine the provision of justice with the pro other social facilities wherever that makes sens local community and can be afforded.

Broadcasting

6. **Mr. Greg Knight:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many representations he has received during the past year on the future of broadcasting.

7. **Mr. Menzies Campbell:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he now expects to publish his proposals for the future of broadcasting.

Mr. Hurd: In recent months I have received many representations in various forms about the future of broadcasting. I announced our radio proposals on Tuesday and will within the next few months be publishing further proposals for broadcasting legislation.

Mr. Knight: Does my right hon. Friend agree that, with regard to television, the British public get a pretty raw deal from the current BBC-ITV duopoly? Is he aware that on many occasions second-rate sports programmes are broadcast simultaneously on three of the four channels, often with two channels covering the same event? Is there not an overwhelming argument for the setting up of a fifth television channel and for giving the go-ahead for short-range local television stations?

Mr. Hurd: We are looking at a whole range of matters relating to television. Unfortunately, they must be considered together because they relate to each other, and that is why this matter is taking some time. They include the point referred to by my hon. Friend and the possibility of a Channel 5, the future organisation of Channel 4, how ITV contracts should be let in future, the possibility of the multipoint video distribution system and the use of night hours. There is a big agenda.

Mr. Campbell: In his written answer on 19 January the Home Secretary said that community radio should be subject to light restriction. Is it still the Government's intention to prevent those providing community radio services from expressing views on matters of political or industrial controversy? If, for example, there was a proposal in a particular community for the dumping of nuclear waste, would that not be precisely the kind of issue on which a community radio station should be entitled to pronounce?

Mr. Hurd: The hon. and learned Gentleman should consider paragraph 7.7 of the Green Paper. Nothing in the statement that I made on Tuesday alters that. We believe that stations, including local stations, should ensure that any news, given in whatever form, is presented with accuracy and impartiality. There are a number of provisions to avoid allowing the views and opinions of particular persons to predominate. If the hon. and learned Gentleman considers paragraph 7.7 of the Green Paper, he will find the answer that he is seeking.

Mr. Wells: Under the legislation proposed by my right hon. Friend, will it be possible to have a dedicated London Jazz radio station?

Mr. Hurd: Yes, indeed, if the proposals for such a station meet the criteria—and I see no reason why they should not. Some of the people who first interested me in the idea of community radio wanted to do exactly that.

Mr. Rees: Would it not be wise, before the Government legislate, following their statement of a couple of days ago in a written answer, to give the House a chance to comment on the proposals?

Mr. Hurd: The right hon. Gen
Opposition have ways of doing that if
take the suggestion seriously into accou
to rush into these matters. It will be so
there is any legislation.

Mr. Nicholas Bennett: What repres
right hon. Friend received about the
television? Many of us are concerned a
that appear on television well before 9 o'
of which is unsuitable for children.

Mr. Hurd: Occasionally, so am I, a
most recently just before Christmas
chairmen of the BBC and the IBA
continuing anxiety about violence on t
much rather that they dealt with the ma
with the guidelines. However, as my ho
we shall soon be setting up the new broad
council. That is the sort of issue with wh
concern itself.

Mr. Tony Banks: Was it not a grave
House to announce these major change
by way of a parliamentary question and
that it amounted to a statement? Wh
Secretary not come here and allow the
the matter in further detail? When w
opportunity? Will the auctioning of
national independent channels allow pe
to bid for them?

Mr. Hurd: There was a discourtesy to
when the answer was available it was a
and I apologise for that. There was a m
to the copy sent to the right hon. Membe
Sparkbrook (Mr. Hattersley), and he a
correspondence about that. I do not thi
of place to carry the discussion forw
statement, as what I said followed closel
that was published some time ago and
have substantial opportunities to go o
detail when legislation is introduced.

Mr. Fisher: How many of the 500 re
the Home Secretary received about
recommended that he should auction off
highest bidder? Does he understand
something as powerful and culturally im
licence is completely irresponsible and
it did not command even the support
companies and individuals who were
applications for licences?

Mr. Hurd: I do not think that the ho
thought the matter through. We are talki
allocates three national commercial ch
either have a body that sits down
maybe in an unsatisfactory or conceal
what we propose, which is a standard
applicant will have to pass a test of varie
is accepted. Once that hurdle is surmo
to provide variety on each national ch
done by tender so that the Exchequer an
benefit to a certain extent from the u
national resource.

Mr. Sayeed: How does my right hon
control the content of internationally
broadcasting by satellite?

Mr. Hurd: Negotiation is going on in the Council of Europe at Strasbourg with the aim of producing, if possible, a convention treaty that will bind the 21 members and provide for some enforcement machinery. Apart from that, we are considering whether other additional methods might be necessary. It is one of the most difficult aspects of this problem. I hope that if the Council of Europe can reach agreement the necessary legislation will be put before the House before too long.

Mr. Corbett: First, may I give the Home Secretary another opportunity to apologise to the House for his discourtesy in making a statement about a major change in broadcasting policy by way of a written answer on Tuesday, instead of coming here so that my hon. Friends and other hon. Members could ask him questions?

Secondly, how does he intend to ensure quality and balance in the stations whose licences are to be flogged off to the highest bidder, and when does he expect to make an announcement about the frequencies that the BBC will lose under his proposals, because the BBC needs time to adjust?

Mr. Hurd: I think that I have already covered the first point and do not want to repeat myself. If the hon. Gentleman looks at the reference in the Green Paper to content and to what I would call the "consumer protection" part of the proposals and the standards to be required by the new radio authority, he will see that they are set out at some length. The House will want to debate that in detail when the legislation is considered in Committee.

We are discussing with the BBC which two frequencies we propose to take from it to facilitate the three new national commercial channels. On the whole, the BBC is content with the position because it knows where it is within the limits of the money and frequencies that it has and which are assured to it, so it can get on and organise itself as it thinks fit, not as I think fit.

Farmwatch Schemes

8. **Mr. Key:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what information he has as to how many farmwatch schemes are operated in England and Wales by county constabularies; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. John Patten: Information about the number of farmwatch schemes is not held centrally. Farmwatch is one of a number of variations of the neigbourhood watch concept; others include hospital watch and business watch. The number of such schemes continues to grow and we are much encouraged by this evidence of the willingness of so many individuals to work together, and with the police, to help prevent crime in their areas.

Mr. Key: Will my hon. Friend join in congratulating the Wiltshire constabulary on its initiation of the scheme, which has led not only to a decrease in rural crime, including farm theft, illegal hare coursing and other crimes, but to an improvement in the use of police resources and help with the scheme from the whole community, including environmental groups and shooting clubs?

Mr. Patten: The answer to that is yes. The type of work that is being carried out in the Amesbury sub-division of the Wiltshire police area is exemplary. I hope that other such areas up and down the country w problems of rural crime will think about g same path. *[Interruption.]*

Mr. Speaker: Order. Hon. Members wh private conversations should do so outside.

Mr. Skinner: What assistance will the those on the farmwatch scheme to stop developers and the city slickers preying on th it and then turning it into suburbialand, thu natural beauty of Britain?

Mr. Patten: That is an interesting devel farmwatch concept, but I am happy to say for my right hon. Friend the Secretary of Environment.

Drinking and Driving

9. **Mr. Teddy Taylor:** To ask the Secreta the Home Department how many persons with offences relating to drink and driv Christmas period; how these numbers c previous equivalent periods; and if he statement.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: I regret that inform be available in the form requested until the this year. However, the Association of Officers has collated provisional figures for Wales which show that there were 5,259 po breath tests in the period 19 December 198 1988. I am encouraged by the widespread s way in which the police and the Governme drinking and driving problem over the Chri I hope that that will be reflected in the off when they are available later this year.

Mr. Taylor: Although figures show a welcome improvement, does my hon. Friend much excess drinking at Christmas time is a Bearing in mind the enormous social pressur people to consume alcohol at Christmas tim to take steps to require publicans to stock wines and beers, especially at that time?

Mr. Hogg: My hon. Friend is right importance of making available non-alcoh pubs.

Mr. Ashton: Is it not time that the Mi patting some drivers on the back? Does he the past 20 years, while the number of cars enormously, the number of accidents has g the Scottish Temperance Society continually to slag off drivers who have an excellent re a fact that a lorry speeding through fog on a cause far more damage, and that more peop at Christmas by dangerous foam-filled furnit killed on the roads by drunken drivers?

Mr. Hogg: The truth is that drinking and do not go together, and it is the bus Government to communicate that fact as possible.

Mr. William Powell: Is my hon. Friend aw is considerable relief about the success of the Christmas to discourage people from driving? Does he recognise that the proble

and driving is not confined to Christmas, but takes place throughout the year, during much of which there is no talk at all about the dangers of such behaviour? Will he use all the resources of his Department to ensure that there is a year-on-year campaign, not one that takes place merely during public holidays?

Mr. Hogg: My hon. Friend's point is very much in the mind of my hon. Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Transport. In substance, I agree with what he has said.

Broadcasting

10. **Mr. Wallace:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what representations he has received regarding the future of community radio in Britain.

Mr. Renton: Many of the responses to our Green Paper "Radio: Choices and Opportunities", published last year, welcomed the prospect of community radio. As my right hon. Friend announced on 19 January, we intend to bring before Parliament legislative proposals based on the Green Paper.

Mr. Wallace: I am sure that those with an interest in community radio will be very glad that the Green Paper has given the green light to it. Is the Minister able to announce a time scale in which he hopes the proposals will be implemented? As he is no doubt aware, the Shetland Islands Broadcasting Company has been on the air in my constituency and — judging by representations that I have received — is popular. Can the Minister say how the proposals will affect that company?

Mr. Renton: I thank the hon. Gentleman for his support for the proposals that we are announcing. Assuming that it is possible for a Bill to be brought before Parliament in the next Session, I hope that the proposals will be law by the end of the summer of 1989, and that the radio authority will then be able to consider community radio applications and start issuing licences.

As regards the station in the Shetlands, I am sure that the hon. Gentleman would not expect me to give my blessing to a pirate radio station. The gentleman concerned will have to make his application to the radio authority. I must say, however, that that seems just the sort of project that could succeed under the new regime that we have announced.

Custodial Remand

11. **Mr. Matthew Taylor:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many *(a)* male and *(b)* female prisoners aged less than 17 years old are currently held on remand in England and Wales; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: On 30 September 1987, the latest date for which figures are available centrally, about 165 untried and 15 convicted unsentenced males aged under 17 were held in prison department establishments in England and Wales. Girls aged under 17 may not be remanded into prison custody.

Mr. Taylor: I am sure the Minister agrees with the importance of the rapid development of bail hostels. Does he agree that the present development of such hostels is too slow, and is there any way of speeding it up?

Mr. Hogg: I am glad that we hav support for our policy of introduc

Prisoners (Stati

12. **Mr. Hardy:** To ask the Sec Home Department how many serving sentences in Her Majesty's Wales.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: On 30 Nove 37,450 sentenced prisoners in priso ments in England and Wales.

Mr. Hardy: In view of the serious crime during the Governm and noting that under the Wh expenditure the provision for law a to improve much after 1989, m Minister can be sure that all the Department is to provide will be f

Mr. Hogg: I am sorry that the h such a question. For one thing, I sh his party's position was a trifle emb Labour was in government in the anything about a prison building surprised that he has not welcom present building programme, wh 21,000 more places by 1995 than th came to office.

Mr. Madel: Some people sent t result of having caused death by dri much. Can my hon. Friend comm The public are not clear whether ra allowed because of different policie chief constables. Can my hon. Frie breath-testing is, or is not, lawful?

Mr. Hogg: Random stopping is 159 of the Highways Act 1980. lawful.

Adults (National Numbe

13. **Mr. Wilson:** To ask the Sec Home Department if he has any pl a national numbering system for e years.

Mr. John Patten: No, Sir.

Mr. Wilson: If the Home Secret introduce a system of natio presumably, like all his predecesso system as undesirable, what repres to his colleagues in the Cabinet abo tax will require just such a system, commissioned by the Scottish Offi Institute of Public Finance and Ac that the report makes it clear that t without a system of national nu system—to be known as a comm he agree that, as a by-product of t down the road of a state identific individual?

Mr. Patten: That is a matter fo the Secretary of State for the authorities will have the responsi

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Environment. Local
ty of compiling the

lists of those liable to the community charge. They will be able to draw on a range of lists to compile the community charge list.

Mr. Jessel: As most other countries have identity cards, and as they would greatly help to combat terrorism and other crimes, including social security fraud, what possible argument is there against them?

Mr. Patten: I know how strongly my hon. Friend and some of my other hon. Friends feel about the issue. However, there is no evidence that in 1952, when identity cards were withdrawn, the police were put into difficulty. We have had no representation from the police that they find difficulty in identifying most people when they need to in pursuit of crime.

Charities

14. **Mr. Ashdown:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he has any proposals to seek to change charities law; and if he will make a statement.

16. **Mr. Nicholas Baker:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will bring forward proposals to amend current arrangements for the monitoring and control of charities.

Mr. Hurd: The Government have warmly welcomed the report by Sir Philip Woodfield of his efficiency scrutiny of the supervision of charities. We accept the report's conclusion that, while the essentials of the present supervisory framework are still necessary, the system needs extensive reform. The report's proposals to strengthen the Charity Commission's powers, and in particular its capacity to deal with abuse, provide a sound basis for the future.

Most of the report's recommendations concerning the procedures and internal management of the Charity Commission are already being put into effect. Those recommendations affecting the extent and nature of the commission's powers will need primary legislation. We would hope to put forward proposals for such legislation later in this Parliament.

Mr. Ashdown: The Home Secretary's statement will be welcome in view of the fact that charities are being abused, as he knows. There are cases where so-called charities are returning as little as 10 per cent. to charitable purposes. Business men are earning fat profits and running expense accounts and vehicles to dodge tax. When does the Home Secretary expect the legislation to be complete and in place?

Mr. Hurd: We need to think it through carefully, but Sir Philip Woodfield clearly showed that the Charity Commission ought to spend more time monitoring and spotting the kind of problem to which the hon. Member referred, and less time carrying through pernickety procedures laid down by law, which should not have the same priority.

Mr. Nicholas Baker: My right hon. Friend's announcement is very welcome on the Government side of the House. Does he accept that too many bodies which do not deserve it are taking considerable tax advantage of charitable status? Will he also accept that too many charities are suffering from maladministration and that too many charities are engaged in political advertising and political activity?

Mr. Hurd: There has been a huge charitable activity in recent years. We nee that the framework of law is right to gu problems. I am holding a seminar at the Monday, to which many leading charities people, to clarify in our own minds more t the content of legislation might be.

Mr. Winnick: In view of their present p Home Secretary tell us whether the Libera would now qualify for charity assistance?

Mr. Hurd: I think they would have so submitting to the commission the necessary rules and membership.

Crime Statistics

18. **Mr. Andrew MacKay:** To ask the S for the Home Department if he will make the latest crime figures.

Mr. John Patten: In the 12 months September 1987 recorded crime was 2·6 than in the previous 12 months. This is le long-term rate of increase in recorded crim 1950s.

Mr. MacKay: Does my hon. Frie altho[illegible]one of the greatest deterrents ag be the [illegible]ity to be caught, the Thames Val which he and I share, has the lowest ra public anywhere in the country? Ca constituents and his any hope on this poi

Mr. Patten: Thames Valley police force increase, and another increase in manpo from 1 April. My right hon. Friend the takes into account the changes in popula resources available to the police locally, crime pattern, in deciding on future inc manpower. Thames Valley police force number of additional policemen authoris

PRIME MINISTER

Engagements

Q1. **Mr. Thurnham:** To ask the Prime will list her official engagements for Thurs

The Prime Minister (Mrs. Margaret morning I presided at a meeting of the C meetings with ministerial colleagues addition to my duties in the House, I further meetings later today.

Mr. Thurnham: Does my right hon. F parents have a great responsibility for the is she aware that parents who find them transmitting severe genetic disorders, molysis bullosa, which cannot be detecte week, wish to choose, on medical advice, they should continue with such a pregna

The Prime Minister: My hon. Friend very effectively. It is a matter that will be debate tomorrow, when doubtless hon. make up their own minds about how to v It is for each of us to do that. Speaking f Bill is drafted at present, I could not sup

Mr. Kinnock: I am glad that, in at least one area, the Prime Minister and I are in complete agreement. When it is clear that the Prime Minister has enough money to meet the demands of the presidents of the royal colleges and of the nurses, without further dispute and without further crisis, why does she not use that money now?

The Prime Minister: The right hon. Gentleman will have seen from the public expenditure White Paper published yesterday that there is a very substantial increase in National Health Service expenditure for next year, 1988-89, of £1,100 million.

Mr. Kinnock: The Prime Minister knows that those figures are calculated on exactly the same basis as the figures for this year, which required her to find some supplementary sums and which still leave the hospitals in deficit. Does she not realise that she is guaranteeing a further underfunding crisis for next year unless there is an additional amount? Why does she not make Budget day a National Health day?

The Prime Minister: The right hon. Gentleman is aware that the public expenditure estimates have just been published. Before those were published, in December an additional £100 million was made available to the National Health Service to get over this difficult time of year for some. The amount of public expenditure has been decided. The Budget is about how to raise the taxation and borrowing, not how to add extra expenditure.

Mr. Forman: Does my right hon. Friend agree that it is a great pity that the Opposition and some parts of the media do not pay more attention to all the good news in the National Health Service? Was she as heartened as I was to learn of the formal opening earlier this week of the new maternity unit at St. Helier's hospital in my constituency, where the dedicated staff are able to deliver 10 babies a day? Does she agree that this is a sign of the excellent performance in the National Health Service and also of the vitality of the nation?

The Prime Minister: Yes, I noted the opening of that hospital, and I congratulate it on the way in which it has got up to its fullest possible capacity and on the excellent work it is doing. It would be pertinent to remind the House that, although we hear of difficult cases from time to time, since we discussed the National Health Service last week there have been about 45,000 operations in the NHS. That is not a Health Service in crisis. We are doing very well.

Dr. Owen: Surely the wise decision of the Royal College of Nursing not to sanction any strike action now deserves more than mere verbal support. Will the Prime Minister give it the assurance that it wants to hear, which is that the pay rise due to nurses will be funded in full by the Government, and that the price for that will not be exacted in any way from the National Health Service?

The Prime Minister: The Royal College of Nursing, for which we have the highest regard, is very much aware that the nurses were given an independent pay review body because the royal college had never gone on strike, as it cared too much for its duty to patients. I note what the right hon. Gentleman said. May I remind him that the Government of which he was a member cut the pay of nurses by 20 per cent. in real terms?

Mr. Grylls: Does my right hon. Friend recall the words of the late Aneurin Bevan, who said that he would stuff the mouths of the doctors with gold? As doctors have been well rewarded over the years, is it not right to expect them to make their contribution to improving efficiency and value for money in the National Health Service?

The Prime Minister: Everyone has a duty to obtain the maximum from the enormous amount of resources that the taxpayer pays to the Health Service, to operate with maximum efficiency and treat the maximum number of patients. Certainly, performance varies greatly between districts and hospitals, and it is with a view to examining that that we are obtaining some interesting figures and hoping to raise the standards of those who are not so good at using their resources to the standards of the best. Doctors will play a welcome part in that process.

Mr. Barry Jones: May I draw the Prime Minister's attention to the continuing difficulties of Chester district health authority, which treats thousands of my constituents? Does she know that on Christmas Eve two elderly patients were transferred between hospitals in a 4-tonne Bedford van because of a result of cuts? Does she know that that van was cold, dirty and smelly? Would the right hon. Lady like any member of her family to be transferred in such a shameful way, and does she realise that we do not think the Health Service is safe in her hands?

The Prime Minister: As the hon. Gentleman is aware, those matters must be addressed to the local management, because it is responsible for the conditions. From 1979 up to March 1988—*[Interruption.]* The Opposition do not want to know the extra amount of money that the taxpayer has found for the Welsh Health Service—*[Interruption.]* Yes, it is the taxpayer who finds the money. Almost £500 million at current prices has been invested in the capital of the hospital and community health service in Wales, and expenditure on the National Health Service in Wales has risen by a third, after allowing for general inflation between 1979 and 1987. It is for the management to make the best of the opportunities that that money affords them.

Mr. Wheeler: Does my right hon. Friend nevertheless agree that it is not a simple matter of more money—billions more have been spent on the NHS, and billions more are planned to be spent—but that it is also a case of efficiency, good management and evaluation between hospitals and practices?

The Prime Minister: We notice great differences between departments, hospitals and districts in how the money is spent and we are trying, as I said, to bring more of the best practices to those areas that have hitherto not been able to manage as well, although they may have had as many consultants and nurses. In general, the Health Service is expanding, it is treating many more patients, it is doing many more operations and it is treating more day and out-patients. The polls show that 80 per cent. of the enormous number of people who use the Health Service every year are highly satisfied with the treatment that they receive.

Q2. **Mr. Cohen:** To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 21 January.

The Prime Minister: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the reply that I gave some moments ago.

Mr. Cohen: Why is the Prime Minister demanding extra-special NATO meetings? Is it to bounce the

Germans to accept battlefield nuclear weapons, which they do not want, or is it to tie President Reagan's hands in the coming peace talks? Is the Prime Minister using NATO to nuke the negotiations? Would not the money which she is determined to spend on new bombs be better spent on the Health Service?

The Prime Minister: No. If we did not have an effective defence there would be nothing like such a good Health Service, education service or standard of living. That has been mostly accepted by past Labour Governments. I understand that it does not seem to be accepted by the present Labour party.

Q3. **Mr. Wood:** To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 21 January.

The Prime Minister: I refer my hon. Friend to the reply that I gave some moments ago.

Mr. Wood: Is my right hon. Friend aware of the deplorable action of the Birmingham council in trying to prevent the free extra tuition for gifted children in the area, which teachers are prepared to provide? Is it not a duty of a local education authority to ensure that there is good education to maximise the abilities of the children in the area?

The Prime Minister: I saw those reports this morning. I have not been able to find out whether they are accurate, but if they are I hope that everyone will condemn the action. The teachers are willing to give those especially gifted pupils extra tuition on Saturday morning. I think it is our duty to give every child a chance to develop its best talents and abilities and not to let the Socialist dogma of levelling down interfere with that process.

Q4. **Mr. Pendry:** To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 21 January.

The Prime Minister: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the reply that I gave some moments ago.

Mr. Pendry: Will the Prime Minister take time out today to talk to the chairperson of the Tameside and Glossop health authority to discuss the proposed cuts in health care: 24 per cent. in orthopaedic beds, when there has been a 51 per cent. increase in the waiting list this year; 18 per cent. in surgical beds; 19 per cent. in medical beds; and the closure of a hospital? All this in an area that the Black report described as one of the worst in the country for health provision. Will she come with me to Tameside to meet the doctors, nurses and patients to gauge their opinion of these Government-imposed cuts?

The Prime Minister: I am grateful to the hon. Gentleman. I have made inquiries from the Tameside and Glossop health authority. The number of patients that it has been treating since the reorganisation of 1982 is substantially up. In-patients are up by 34 per cent., and out-patients by 10 per cent. On capital building, there has been completed in the Tameside and Glossop health area a £2·6 million geriatric unit and there is under construction a £16·6 million phase 2 redevelopment of Tameside general. It has received £110,800 extra from the waiting list fund for additional orthopaedic, gynaecological and ear, nose and throat patients, et cetera, et cetera.

Mr. Ralph Howell: May I congratulate my right hon. Friend and the Government on the firm and proper stand that they are making on the question of extra finance for the National Health Service? Does she agree that there is no shortage of funds, but that those funds are being improperly used and that what we need is greater efficiency? Does she further agree that in the whole 40 years of the lifetime of the National Health Service it has never been properly managed? *[Interruption.]* Why is it that we have 12 chairmen employing a total of 870,000 people in the other nationalised industries — *[Interruption.]*—but have never had a chairman with full and effective power to look after the National Health Service.

The Prime Minister: My hon. Friend is absolutely right. Well over a million—nearly 1¼ million—people work in the National Health Service. It can be properly run only by effective management. It was in the lifetime of this Government that managers were appointed. It is not the Government who provide finance; it is the taxpayer. This year the average family of four provided to the Health Service £1,500 in taxes and charges. Next year the average family will provide in taxes and charges £1,600 to sustain the National Health Service. It has a right to expect that money to be effectively used.

Q5. **Mr. Terry Fields:** To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 21 January.

The Prime Minister: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the reply that I gave some moments ago.

Mr. Fields: Despite the Prime Minister's pathological hatred of the Health Service, which she sees as a manifestation of Socialism to be destroyed, is she aware that on Wednesday 10 February Health Service workers and trade unionists in Liverpool will be engaging in a day of action to defend the Health Service? Will she now, at the eleventh hour, instruct the Chancellor, instead of giving tax handouts to the rich, to divert that money to the Health Service, or is she prepared to accept full responsibility in the event of a nationwide National Health Service dispute?

The Prime Minister: I had hoped that the hon. Gentleman would condemn those who take strike action at the expense of the patients—*[Interruption.]*

Mr. Speaker: Order. The Prime Minister has the right to reply.

The Prime Minister: They are hitting out deliberately at the patients. It sounds as if the Labour party supports that strike and that industrial action.

Business of the House

3.31 pm

Mr. Frank Dobson (Holborn and St. Pancras): May I ask the Leader of the House to state the business for next week?

The Lord President of the Council and Leader of the House of Commons (Mr. John Wakeham): Yes, Sir. The business for next week will be as follows:

MONDAY 25 JANUARY—Second Reading of the Regional Development Grants (Termination) Bill.

Motion on the London Regional Transport (Levy) Order.

TUESDAY 26 JANUARY—There will be a debate on the Army, on a motion for the Adjournment of the House.

Motion on the Church of England (Legal Aid and Miscellaneous Provisions) Measure.

WEDNESDAY 27 JANUARY — Opposition Day (8th Allotted Day). There will be a debate on an Opposition motion entitled "The Government of Scotland".

Motion relating to the statement of changes in immigration rules (HC 208).

Remaining stages of the Income and Corporation Taxes Bill *[Lords]*, which is a consolidation measure.

THURSDAY 28 JANUARY — Second Reading of the Merchant Shipping Bill *[Lords]*, followed by Second Reading of the Welsh Development Agency Bill.

FRIDAY 29 JANUARY—Private Members' Bills

MONDAY 1 FEBRUARY—Remaining stages of the Public Utility Transfers and Water Charges Bill.

Mr. Dobson: I am grateful to the Leader of the House. First, will he give an undertaking that the new guidelines on the immigration rules, which directly affect the rights of hon. Members, will be debated on the Floor of the House in prime time before the consultation period expires?

Will the right hon. Gentleman commit the Merchant Shipping Bill to the scrutiny of a Special Standing Committee?

In view of the reports that the Secretary of State for the Environment is now planning to sell off the Crown Suppliers, with the possible loss of 1,900 jobs, may we have an urgent statement on that latest proposed rip-off?

Will the Leader of the House also tell us when we can expect a debate on the social fund? The proposed changes are devastating for the very poorest people in our society, and the House must be given an opportunity to debate, and I hope reject, them.

Will the Leader of the House confirm that we shall soon have an opportunity to debate Members' accommodation and other facilities, in view of the continuing problems faced by many Members, especially new Members?

Finally, when will the televising of the House be debated? Will the right hon. Gentleman tell us, for the convenience of his right hon. and hon. Friends so that they can make the necessary arrangements, whether the Prime Minister intends to put on a three-line Whip to get them to vote against that?

Mr. Wakeham: The hon. Gentleman has asked six questions, which I shall do my best to answer.

First, I can confirm that there will be a debate on the immigration rules on the Floor of the House, I hope at a convenient time before the consultation period has expired.

I note the hon. Gentleman's request that the Merchant Shipping Bill should be committed to a Special Standing Committee. That matter is best pursued through the usual channels. It might be convenient if the hon. Member for Aberdeen, North (Mr. Hughes), who leads for the Opposition on these matters, and my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Transport were to have a discussion about it; I think that that can be arranged.

My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment has been considering various options for the future of the Crown Suppliers, following advice from consultants. When he is in a position to make an announcement, I shall ensure that there is consultation through the usual channels about the form of that announcement.

I have nothing to say about the social fund today, but I shall refer the hon. Gentleman's request to my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Social Services.

I recognise that Members' accommodation and the new building Sub-Committee report on phase 2 is an important matter and I shall certainly arrange for a debate. When that report is received, a suitable occasion can be arranged.

I told the Leader of the Opposition last week that I hoped to be able to announce the date of the debate on televising the House today and I can inform the House that, subject to there being no unforeseen events, the debate will take place on Tuesday 9 February.

Mr. Nicholas Soames (Crawley): In order to facilitate the passage of the Government's business through the House, will my right hon. Friend have a word with the Serjeant at Arms about the unacceptable heat in the Palace of Westminster? Is he aware that in the Committee rooms upstairs the temperature is sometimes over 80 deg? Does he agree that, not only in the interests of economy but also in the interests of clear thinking, the heating should be turned down in what is a mild winter?

Mr. Wakeham: I shall take on board what my hon. Friend says about the heat in the Committee rooms, although I am not entirely sure that all the heat is generated by the heating system.

Mr. James Wallace (Orkney and Shetland): Have there been any developments in the past seven days which will allow the House to give further directions to the Committee of Selection on the setting up of a Select Committee on Scottish Affairs?

Furthermore, the Leader of the House will be aware of the dismay that a major statement on the future of radio broadcasting should be made by way of a written answer. In view of that, will the House have an opportunity to debate that in the relatively near future?

Mr. Wakeham: Discussions are still going on to see whether we can find a satisfactory solution to the problem of the Select Committee on Scottish Affairs. I have written to the hon. Member for Glasgow, Garscadden (Mr. Dewar) and, when I have heard from him, I hope that that will help the matter.

My right hon. Friend the Home Secretary has answered questions about the announcement on broadcasting today. The form of any announcement by the Government is obviously a matter for the Government's judgment, but we shall find time for a debate. When legislation comes forward, that will be an opportunity.

Mr. Allan Stewart (Eastwood): Will my right hon. Friend draw to his colleagues' attention the need for the

Government to table an amendment which will draw to the attention of the House not only the disastrous consequences for Scotland but the most serious implications for the House of the Opposition's proposals for the future government of Scotland? Does he agree that the Labour party has spent the past ten years failing to answer the West Lothian question? Is it too much to hope that we shall have an answer on Wednesday?

Mr. Wakeham: Obviously, those are exactly the points that I know my right hon. Friend and others will want to make in the debate. The question of an amendment to the motion is best left until we see what the Opposition motion is.

Mr. Ray Powell (Ogmore): Will the Leader of the House reintroduce the 10-minute limit for speeches in major debates? You said yesterday, Mr. Speaker, in reply to a point of order by my hon. Friend the Member for Holborn and St. Pancras (Mr. Dobson), that on Tuesday of this week, on a major debate on the Health Service, affecting all constituents of all hon. Members, 25 Members were called and 30 were not. A number of speeches by Privy Councillors could have been cut much shorter. Many Back Benchers would have been afforded the opportunity of speaking if the 10-minute limit had been introduced. I ask the Leader of the House to arrange an urgent debate on the matter.

Mr. Wakeham: I recognise the strength of feeling. In the past few days I have been in contact with the hon. Member for Holborn and St. Pancras (Mr. Dobson), who leads for the Opposition on House of Commons matters, and through the usual channels, to find out when it would be best to deal with this matter and some other outstanding matters in the report of the Procedure Committee.

Mr. Hugh Dykes (Harrow, East): Does my right hon. Friend share my concern and the concern of other members of the Select Committee on European Legislation that many items are piling up which have not been put down for rapid debate, including all aspects of the present and future EEC budgets? On too many occasions Ministers may, either unwittingly or because they are in a difficult position, allow approval of measures which should gave been scrutinised by the House and the Select Committee in the proper way.

Mr. Wakeham: I recognise that there have been one or two such cases, as my hon. Friend points out. In each case the Minister concerned has properly written to the Scrutiny Committee explaining why he felt it necessary to take the action, but I recognise that there is concern, and I will do my best to meet it.

Mr. Greville Janner (Leicester, West): May we have a debate on solvent abuse, because in my constituency and elsewhere young people are turning from glue sniffing to sniffing butane gas for gas lighters, which is freely available to people irrespective of their age? Should not this matter have the attention of the House before it gets very much worse?

Mr. Wakeham: Yes, that is of course a very important matter. I know that the hon. and learned Gentleman is concerned about it, but I am afraid that I cannot see an early opportunity for a debate, although I will certainly bear it in mind.

Mr. Tony Marlow (Northampton, North): My right hon. Friend will be aware of the synthetic indignation of the Opposition about the actions of the Patronage Secretary with regard to private Members' business last week. As he is also aware that hypocrisy is not an ingredient of the debates in the House, I wonder whether, through the usual channels, he could make inquiries of the Labour party to see what pressure is being put on its members as to how they should vote tomorrow, and whether some of those pressures might infringe the rules of privilege of the House?

Mr. Wakeham: I have said to my hon. Friend before that I recognise his concern about this matter, but I believe that the usual channels are best kept to private discussions. I am not sure that I shall be asking the questions he wants me to ask.

Mr. Jack Ashley (Stoke-on-Trent, South): Is the Leader of the House aware that I received a letter this morning from a woman whose father almost died six years ago after taking the drug Opren? she said that she is ashamed to say that she now wishes he had died, in view of his appalling suffering. He is now bedridden, in pain, needs constant attention day and night, and has no hope and no dignity. I have many hundreds of similar letters about the sufferings of those who have taken Opren. Will the right hon. Gentleman recognise that all my Adjournment debates, early-day motions and parliamentary questions are inadequate and that we must have a full debate in order to knock some sense into the multinational company, Eli Lilly, which is offering an average of £2,000 for such injuries? We must debate how to avoid similar drug disasters in future.

Mr. Wakeham: I think the whole House recognises that, when the right hon. Gentleman takes up a case, he pursues it with great vigour and sincerity. Having said that, I do not believe that I can immediately offer a debate on the subject, but I will have a word with my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Social Services.

Mr. Michael Fallon (Darlington): Will my right hon. Friend arrange for an early debate on the work of the Liaison Committee, which seems to be putting Thomas Cook to shame as it sends Select Committees to the far east, the Mediterranean and the United States? In view of the fact that overseas travel now costs a third of a million pounds a year, would it not be better to have a more rigorous and independent assessment of the applications for such trips rather than the secretive back-scratching that goes on between Select Committee Chairmen?

Mr. Wakeham: I am not sure that I can promise a debate on the Liaison Committee at the moment, but if it should make a report to the House obviously we shall concern ourselves with the matter. As I understand it, the Liaison Committee scrutinises such applications with the greatest possible care.

Mr. Andrew Faulds (Warley, East) *rose*——

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

Mr. Faulds: I thought I was called——

Mr. Tony Banks (Newham, North-West): Called what?

Mr. Faulds: If I might have a word in this conversation——

Mr. Speaker: I would welcome it.

Mr. Faulds: Thank you, Sir. Before the worst elements in the Government, including the Prime Minister and the Home Secretary, have their destructive way with public service broadcasting in this country, would the right hon. Gentleman determine to allow the House to debate and defend this principle, and in particular the BBC?

Mr. Wakeham: I recognise that debates on broadcasting are an important part of the debates in this House and that there must be a debate on this issue before too long. I cannot promise anything more than I have already said, but it is certainly a matter that I will consider.

Mr. Tim Smith (Beaconsfield): On the question of over-lengthy speeches raised by the hon. Member for Ogmore (Mr. Powell), is not the problem the fact that there are now too many Privy Councillors and ex-Ministers in this House? Will my right hon. Friend have a word with the Prime Minister to see whether some of them could be sent to the House of Lords, where there appears to be a need for good people?

Mr. Wakeham: That may be so, but the principal problem of over-long speeches is that hon. Members speak for too long.

Mr. Alex Salmond (Banff and Buchan): Will the Leader of the House allow a debate, in early course, on the Government's policy towards mergers and acquisitions, given the remarkable circumstances whereby the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry refers the Kuwaiti minority investment in BP—a company with no golden share—to the Director General of Fair Trading while, simultaneously, the Chancellor of the Exchequer refuses to take effective action in BP's bid for Britoil — a company with a golden share? Indeed, the Chancellor gave a clear commitment to Britoil's independence before the House of Commons on 31 March 1982. We need a debate so that the Government can explain the apparent hypocrisy in their policy towards Britain's and Scotland's largest company.

Mr. Wakeham: We obviously will have debates on these subjects from time to time. However, I do not believe that the events of recent weeks make the need for such debates more urgent than it was. I believe that, in both the cases referred to by the hon. Gentleman, my right hon. Friends the Chancellor and the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry acted entirely properly. Indeed, the actions of the Chancellor were the subject of a statement to this House.

Mr. Patrick Cormack (Staffordshire, South): Reverting to the point made by my hon. Friend the Member for Beaconsfield (Mr. Smith), would it not be a good idea if all Privy Councillors, with the obvious exception of the Father of the House, were restricted to four priority speeches a year?

Mr. Wakeham: I do not know that I can necessarily go along with that. I am not sure that we need too many rules about speeches. I believe the basis upon which the Speaker selects who should speak in debates—it is one that has served us for many hundreds of years—is probably the best basis.

Mr. Norman Buchan (Paisley, South): Is the Leader of the House aware that a kind of creeping censorship over the spoken and written word is occurring under this Government? We saw it last Friday and we are now seeing it with the announcement of a possible debate, some time in the future, regarding broadcasting when organisation outside the House is already discussing it not time that we had a little glasnost in Britain a discussed what is happening to the spoken and w word?

Mr. Wakeham: I do not accept the hon. Gentle analysis. Subjects for debate in this House are not e a matter for the Government. As I said, I shall see can be done, but there are other ways in which the Gentleman might press for a debate.

Mr. Ivan Lawrence (Burton): There is growing evi that perpetrators of Nazi war crimes are sheltering i country, yet there is no provision in British law for to be brought to justice. As my right hon. Friend the Secretary is examining the matter and considering wh there should be a change in the law, would it n appropriate for us to have a debate to consider wheth House is in favour of the introduction of measu change the existing law?

Mr. Wakeham: My right hon. Friend the Secretary mentioned that matter in the debate earlie week. He said that, when the Government have consi the matter more fully, he will ensure that the Ho informed. The best plan is to wait until that happen then decide how best to proceed.

Mr. William O'Brien (Normanton): Will the Lea the House agree to an urgent debate on the threa closure of the only hospital in south-east Leeds? W accept that the regular statements and rhetoric fro Dispatch Box do not help the people of Rothwell, the closure of St. George's hospital will cause tremen hardship? Will the right hon. Gentleman agree to an debate, before Budget day, so that we can explain in the problems that we face as a result of hospital clo in south-east Leeds and my constituency?

Mr. Wakeham: As the hon. Gentleman knows, w a debate on the Health Service earlier this week, would not be reasonable to expect me to find tim another debate quite so soon. If the hon. Gentl wishes to raise the matter, he could perhaps try his at securing an Adjournment debate.

Mr. Bowen Wells (Hertford and Stortford): M bring to my right hon. Friend's attention once mo question of the debate recommended to him by European Legislation Committee on steel closures i Common Market? The matter has been outstanding o list since the beginning of December, before the Mi went to express his views and vote in the Coun Ministers, yet it has still not been debated. It seri affects steel makers in this country and, indeed denationalisation of the steel industry, which is proposed to the House.

Mr. Wakeham: I recognise the importance of subject, and I know that my hon. Friend has taken a interest in the matter. I shall refer it to my right hon learned Friend the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lanc and Minister of Trade and Industry, but I do not pro a debate in the next week.

Mr. D. N. Campbell-Savours (Workington): May I with the Leader of the House for the fourth time question of Kuwaiti purchases of BP shares and the that the Arabs are buying up the North sea through

As no Minister has yet made a statement on these matters at the Dispatch Box, is it not time that such a statement was forthcoming? Will the right hon. Gentleman impress upon Ministers the fact that we want questions answered in the Chamber?

Mr. Wakeham: The question whether there should be a statement in the House is ultimately for my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer. If the hon. Gentleman is not satisfied with that, his right course is to table a question.

Mr. James Kilfedder (North Down): May we have an urgent debate on the warning issued yesterday by the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, who told the people of Ulster to expect a fresh and terrible campaign of terrorism as a result of support given, and arms provided, by Libya to the Provisional IRA? Those arms were apparently landed in the Irish Republic in three separate shipments. The Ulster people have suffered two decades of terrible terrorism and are now demoralised by the Anglo-Eire Agreement, which they perceive as weakening their position in the United Kingdom. Therefore, is it not vital to have a debate—quite apart from Tuesday's debate on the Army—to enable all Northern Ireland Members to express their fears and investigate what the Government intend to do to protect the people of Northern Ireland and the members of the security forces from further atrocities?

Mr. Wakeham: I recognise the importance of debates on Northern Ireland. I regret that I cannot offer my hon. Friend a debate on the subject next week. However, he can question the Secretary of State on Thursday during Northern Ireland questions.

Mr. Bob Cryer (Bradford, South): Will the Leader of the House accept that I would welcome a debate on the largely pin-striped meetings of the Liaison Committee because the vote on the £300,000 expenditure referred to by the hon. Member for Darlington (Mr. Fallon) would reveal that there was a 9 to 1 vote in favour and that I was the sole Member to vote against it?

I want to make a suggestion about the problem of continuing hospital closures and the debating system. Will the Leader of the House ask the Secretary of State for Social Services next week to come to the Dispatch Box to make a statement about the various closures proposed by the area health authorities, most of which have puppet Tory chairmen in charge? The Secretary of State could then explain why Bradford area health authority is proposing hospital closures and not fulfilling appointments, which amounts to a cut of more than £3 million in two years. We could question the Secretary of State about that. If those matters are going to take a long time, as seems likely, Opposition Members would be quite happy to take the time to examine the massive cuts that are continuing to take place.

Mr. Wakeham: In any debate about the Health Service, we should refer to the expansion as well as the closure of facilities. The picture is not as the hon. Gentleman described.

I do not believe that I should say anything more than I have already said about the Liaison Committee. If the Liaison Committee reports to the House, we will find an opportunity to debate its report if that seems appropriate.

Mr. Neil Hamilton (Tatton): May I invite my right hon. Friend to be less resistant to the advances from the Member for Warley, East (Mr. Faulds) and the hon. Member for Paisley, South (Mr. Buchan), and to have a debate on public service broadcasting because many of us believe that that would be a useful innovation for the BBC? Has my right hon. Friend seen the report in today's newspapers that the "Panorama" team intends to make a programme on the National Health Service? However, to prove that the hospital service is overstretched, the team has had to import bogus patients into a waiting room to make it look as if it was full. When one of the constituents of my hon. Friend the Member for Gloucester (Mr. French), who had undergone two hip replacement operations by the National Health Service, offered to be interviewed, the "Panorama" team lost interest because he was not going to be critical of the National Health Service and the Government's role.

Mr. Wakeham: My hon. Friend puts his points very persuasively. I said that I would look at it again, and I will. I will bear in mind my hon. Friend's point.

Mr. Tony Banks (Newham, North-West): May I draw the attention of the Leader of the House to early-day motion 533 about the Nicaragua and Guatemala accord?

[That this house warmly congratulates the President and Government of Nicaragua on complying with the terms of the Guatemala Accord; asks the United States Congress to vote down any proposal from President Reagan to provide additional funds for the Contra terrorists; and calls upon the United States Government to respect the sovereignty of Nicaragua and allow the countries of central America the freedom to determine their own political futures.]

May I ask the Leader of the House, in view of the fact that on 3 February the United States Congress will discuss a proposal from President Reagan to extend further assistance to the Contra terrorists, to arrange a prior debate in this House because of the interest in this country about what is happening in central America and because of the presence of British forces in Belize? At least the United States Congress would know the views of the British Parliament about the further arming and funding of terrorists by President Reagan.

Mr. Wakeham: I cannot promise an early debate on that subject. However, the central American Presidents, at their meeting on 15-16 January, stated that they were not entirely satisfied with the implementation of the agreement so far, and they agreed to fulfil their undertakings immediately. We appeal to all central Americans, especially those from Nicaragua, to meet that new undertaking.

Mr. Jacques Arnold (Gravesham): Has my right hon. Friend noted early-day motion 275 calling for the abolition of the national dock labour scheme, which now has the support of the very large number of 209 hon. Members?

[This House believes that the National Dock Labour Scheme is an anachronism which both endangers the viability of jobs in the scheme areas and acts as a deterrent to job creation by new ventures; and calls on Her Majesty's Government to abolish the scheme, and open negotiations immediately with employers and unions to bring that about.]

That support is representative of the frustration felt in the House at the continuing existence of this anachronism,

[Mr. Jacques Arnold]

which is having a bad effect on the growth of employment in the inner cities where most of the scheme ports are located. Will my right hon. Friend talk to our right hon. Friends the Secretaries of State for Transport and for Employment with a view to getting on with the negotiations, which will allow legislation to be tabled in the House?

Mr. Wakeham: The Government are aware of the views of many of my right hon. and hon. Friends about the drawbacks of the national dock labour scheme. However, as we have made clear to the House, there are no plans at present to change its operation.

Mrs. Alice Mahon (Halifax): May I draw the attention of the Leader of the House to early-day motion 512, which draws attention to the Sex Discrimination Act 1975?

[That this House calls on the Government to strengthen the Sex Discrimination Act 1975 in ways to ensure that: (a) those bringing claims of sexual harassment under section 1(1) of the Act cannot be subjected to questioning on their sexual attitudes, nor should such information be relevant to the case (b) compensation cannot be reduced as a result of reference to views of the victim's character and (c) compensation reflects the seriousness of the offence.]

Recently, a tribunal allowed an employer to question a woman who had won her case about her sexual attitudes and, consequently, it reduced the compensation. Will the Leader of the House make time to debate this serious issue?

Mr. Wakeham: I agree that it is a very serious issue. The Equal Opportunities Commission has recently completed a review of the Sex Discrimination Act 1975, and we expect it to be submitted to my right hon. Friend shortly. He will consider its proposals for any changes in the legislation, and that might give us the opportunity of a debate on the subject.

Mr. Bill Walker (Tayside, North): On Wednesday next week we shall again have an opportunity to debate the government of Scotland. When will we have an opportunity to debate the good government of the United Kingdom, particularly the needs of London and the south, as the Opposition parties have difficulty in finding Members who represent that area to staff Committees? My right hon. Friend will be aware of the difficulties that we have been having in Standing Committee, with interruptions caused by difficulties of that nature coming from the north.

Mr. Wakeham: We have plenty of opportunities to debate the good government of England, Wales and Scotland, and that is the best way to proceed. The Opposition have chosen Scotland for their debate next Wednesday, which is their right.

Mr. Dennis Skinner (Bolsover): Will the Leader of the House take the appropriate steps to ensure the publication of the 1988 Register of Members' Interests so that those of us who sympathise with nurses working in hospitals and those who are taking action can send them photocopies of the appropriate pages showing all those Tory Members of Parliament who are attacking nurses for being moonlighters when they themselves have page after page of directorships, like the right hon. Member for Chingford (Mr. Tebbit), who has more than four directorships with salaries adding up to more than £50,000? He is biggest moonlighters in this building, yet he has to attack nurses who are on paltry wages. We register so that we can get that point across to who matter.

Mr. Wakeham: The register will be publishe as possible. I shall look into why the printing ha dealt with, although the register is available in th Damage is done to the Health Service by the ex and excessive remarks of the hon. Gentleman ar his hon. Friends—they are much more dama anything else.

Mr. Tim Boswell (Daventry): Will my right h bear in mind the importance of an early agriculture? The National Farmers Union is abo its annual meeting, and with the vital negotiatio proceeding in Europe, the pressure on farmin clear disparity in the green pound, would this entirely appropriate and seasonal moment for

Mr. Wakeham: I agree with my hon. Frie subject that I have in mind for a debate in th distant future.

Mr. Tom Clarke (Monklands, West): Does t of the House accept that many people in social se social work departments share the concern o Friend the Member for Holborn and St. Pan Dobson) about the consequences of the socia those departments? Does he agree that the pre in the National Health Service means that there greater demand on social workers? The morale workers in this country is at a low ebb. Therefo have an urgent debate on these urgent matters'

Mr. Wakeham: These are important matters, are two sides to most of the points that Gentleman raises. I cannot add anything to wha the hon. Member for Holborn and St. Pan Dobson).

Mr. Michael Jack (Fylde): My right hon. F realise that, in spite of many probing parl questions, 16,500 aerospace workers in Lancash concerned about the future of the Europe aircraft? Will he find time to have a word Secretary of State for Defence, so that he ca statement to reconfirm the British Gov commitment to this vital project and tell us doing to persuade the German Government themselves to the project as fully as our Gover

Mr. Wakeham: I shall certainly refer the ma right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for De

Mr. George Foulkes (Carrick, Cumnock Valley): Will the Leader of the House, in consult the Home Secretary, arrange for any Co Members intending to participate in the debate on the government of Scotland to be encourag the excellent novel, "Scotch on the Rocks"?

Mr. Wakeham: I am sure that many of my ho will take part in the debate next week. I shall list contributions with interest, but they will be in with a number of speeches from the Oppositio suspect will not be quite as good.

Mr. Patrick McLoughlin (Derbyshire, West): Will my right hon. Friend take time to look at early-day motion 342?

[That this House deplores the appointment by Derbyshire County Council of Mr. Reg Race, former honourable Member for Wood Green, former Research Officer for the National Union of Public Employees, former head of the Greater London Council's programme office, former consultant to the Association of Cinematograph, Television and Allied Technicians and former researcher to the Labour-funded London Government Information Unit, to the £46,000 a year post of County Director; and believes that all local authority employees should be politically impartial and that Derbyshire County Council is making appointments on the basis of whether or not candidates are acceptable to the ruling group's left-wing views and not on the basis of merit and experience.]

He will see that it relates to the appointment, as county director of Derbyshire county council, of a former Labour Member of Parliament. Does he agree that this raises some disturbing questions about the conduct of good local government? This is only one of a number of political appointments in paid employment on long-term contracts that have been made by that authority which damage Derbyshire's reputation as an employer. Does he agree that this should be the subject of a debate under the title of "The code of local government"?

Mr. Wakeham: I recognise that this is an important matter. Effective local government rests solidly on politically neutral officers serving, with equal commitment, whichever party may be in political control. There is increasing concern that in some cases appointments are politically motivated. The Widdicombe committee has put forward proposals aimed at preventing such abuses, and the Government are giving them careful consideration.

Points of Order

4.7 pm

Mr. Bob Cryer (Bradford, South): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. Given the reply of the Leader of the House, for which you have no responsibility, may I raise a point with you as Chairman of the House of Commons Commission? Would it be possible, if the Register of Members' Interests is further delayed, for nurses to be allowed to be conducted into the Library so that they can see for themselves the Register of Members' Interests? Would it be possible for the Library to be open for one day so that the Government can show that the register is not being delayed and that the point about hypocrisy and double standards is not being shielded from the public gaze? If, unfortunately, nurses are driven out on strike by the Government's policies, it would be a good opportunity for them to come here and see the background of those hypocritical Tories who are attacking them.

Mr. Speaker: That matter was raised with me yesterday. I said that I would look into the reason for the delay in publishing the register. However, as the hon. Gentleman correctly says, it is available to hon. Members in the Library.

Mr. David Winnick (Walsall, North): I wonder whether I might take up the attitude that you, Mr. Speaker, intend to take towards points of order. Inevitably, if we believe that the House is not being treated properly, hon. Members—this has happened for hundreds of years a will continue long after we are gone—raise the mat with the Speaker.

Yesterday, I understand that you did not want to ta any more points of order, Sir. There was, if I may say with respect, an important principle—the Governm had decided to publish a White Paper without makin statement. The Home Secretary has, from his point view, defended and justified that. Clearly, we are satisfied; we were not satisfied at the time and we tried raise a point of order. I know that a rubbishy arti appeared in one of the newspapers saying that you w not exercising sufficient control. As I understand it, House does not sit for the convenience of the Governm —certainly not for the Government alone—and Ba Benchers—those of us who hold no jobs, official otherwise—take the House of Commons seriously. If did not, we would not spend so much of our time her

It is rather unfortunate—I hope that you, M Speaker, will take this in the way that it is being presen and not as a criticism—that if we try to raise a point order, even before we can get a word out, like yesterd you shout us down, or tell us to sit down—[Hc MEMBERS: "Oh!"] I corrected that. Therefore, I hope th you will recognise that it is a legitimate way for Ba Benchers to raise matters, and if we are refused we sh have to find other ways, such as Standing Order No. applications, which I do not think you would apprecia I hope that this point is understood.

Mr. Speaker: This matter was raised by an ho Member yesterday and he was supported from his Fro Bench. If the hon. Gentleman looks at *Hansard* he will that question was not directed to me but to the Leader the House across the Chamber, and he responded. T point about the written question was a matter Government business, not a matter of order at all.

I think the House will always support the Chair dealing with points of order which are points of order, b points of controversy across the Chamber must be de with in different ways. If it is legitimate to raise such matter through a Standing Order No. 20 application, th is the correct way to deal with it, not as a result of a po of order.

I should add that some hon. Members—not many might be tempted to get in early by raising a point of ord rather than by making a speech in the debate to con Yesterday, and indeed on other occasions this week, large number of right hon. and hon. Members wished take part in our debates. That is equally true today. Poi of order delay them and ensure that they do not get a f chance.

Mr. Allan Stewart (Eastwood): On a point of ord Mr. Speaker. May I seek your guidance on a question privilege and refer you to the precedent——

Mr. Speaker: Order. If the hon. Gentleman has question of privilege, he should write to me in the usu way and I will consider it. That is the rule, and has be so for some years.

Mr. Brian Sedgemore (Hackney, South a Shoreditch): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. I wond whether you could help the House. My hon. Friend t Member for Bradford, South (Mr. Cryer) is, as he has ju told the House, a member of the Liaison Committee.

[Mr. Brian Sedgemore]

understand that that Committee met in closed session recently to discuss the expenditure of large sums of money for trips and that my hon. Friend gave the vote of that Committee. My understanding is that it is a rule of this House that matters that take place during private proceedings should not be brought to the House until the Committee has reported. I wonder, Mr. Speaker, whether you could reprimand my hon. Friend the Member for Bradford, South.

Mr. Speaker: I reprimand him.

Mr. Tony Banks (Newham, North-West): Further to the point of order, Mr. Speaker, raised by my hon. Friend the Member for Walsall, North (Mr. Winnick). You will recall that on Tuesday I raised as a point of order the Home Secretary's release of information by way of a planted parliamentary question on the reorganisation of radio in this country. It may come as a bit of a surprise to you from time to time, Mr. Speaker, but I want to try to support the Chair as often as I possibly can. I should like that to be every single time.

However, I should also like to put it to you, Mr. Speaker, that we have the right here to attempt to raise certain matters—for example, when we see the Home Secretary treating the House with what we believe to be contempt—certainly with discourtesy—in the way in which important Government announcements are sneaked in in that fashion.

Although Government business and the business of the House may not be your responsibility, Mr. Speaker—indeed, they are not—when Back Benchers, and indeed Front Benchers, are treated with contempt by Ministers, you, Sir, can certainly use your influence to intervene on our behalf so that we can call Government to account in the Chamber, which we are elected so to do. I should add that I have received complaints from Conservative Members about the way in which the Home Secretary acted on Tuesday.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. Gentleman should study the Order Paper more carefully—*[Interruption.]* Well, if he had studied the Order Paper yesterday he wou that there would be an opportunity to rais matters on questions 6 and 7 today. The hon will recognise that I allowed a full run on Indeed, every hon. Member who wished to Question Time today on that question including the hon. Gentleman.

In relation to an earlier point of order, I "unreprimand" the hon. Member for Brad (Mr. Cryer) because I now see from the Proceedings which have been shown to Committee of which he is a member has rep House. I apologise to the hon. Gentleman.

Mr. Cryer: Further to that point of order, I I was, in fact, going to draw that to your should like to conclude this amicable discus us, in which the Committee has been hig saying that when my hon. Friend the Hackney, South and Shoreditch (Mr. Sedgem the House he had a reputation for defendi would not trust him to adopt that positio future.

BILL PRESENTED

OVERSEAS AID (ASSISTANCE TO THE PO

Mr. Brian Wilson, supported by Miss Joan Bernie Grant, Mr. Tom Clarke, Miss Marjor Mr. Sam Galbraith, Mr. David Blunkett, Mr Mr. George Galloway, Mr. Donald Anders Diane Abbott, presented a Bill to amend t Development and Co-operation Act 1980 to the bulk of United Kingdom official assistance is concentrated on the poorest coun poorest people living in them; that a proportion of aid spending is devoted to agric development to benefit especially women and to require the Overseas Development Admi establish a timetable during which overall of Nations aid targets may be reached: And th read the First time; and ordered to be read a upon Friday 12 February, and to be printed.

Orders of the Day

Firearms (Amendment) Bill

Order for Second Reading read.

Mr. Speaker: I have to announce that I have selected the amendment in the name of the hon. Member for Clwyd, South-West (Mr. Jones) and his hon. Friends.

I must also draw to the attention of the House yet again the fact that about 26 right hon. and hon. Members wish to take part in the debate. I noticed that the issue of 10-minute speeches was raised during business questions. It would be most helpful to the Chair if brief speeches could be made today, so that not too many hon. Members return to their constituencies in distress this weekend.

4.15 pm

The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Douglas Hurd): I beg to move, That the Bill be now read a Second time.

The House hardly needs me to recall the background to this Bill. The tragedy at Hungerford in August last year did not create the problem which the Bill, like the 1968 Act, seeks to tackle but it underlined the nature of that problem indelibly, in terms which no one will forget. Well before then, we had set work in hand in the context of proposals for a firearms amnesty this year. Well before then, there had been tragic incidents and strong calls from the police for firmer controls. Hungerford ensured that there would be no let-up. Every tragic crime since then —there have been several—involving the use of firearms has intensified the loss of public confidence in the present system of control. It is not in anyone's interest to leave unchanged such a shaky system. The need for a reformed Act in which both public and shooters can have confidence is overwhelmingly felt, and this Bill is the result.

I hope that I have been careful throughout not to overstate the argument. I do not pretend that what is offered in this Bill can provide any absolute guarantee against criminal abuse or negligent misuse of guns. Hungerford cannot be guaranteed against a Ryan. What the Bill can and does do is to reduce the risk, to the individual citizen and the community at large, of such disasters. The safety of the citizen and the community has been our main concern in working out the Bill.

That does not mean that we have ignored the rights of the legitimate shooter. Wherever possible, we have sought to accommodate the needs and interests of the many responsible shooters from all walks of life. I have declined to be hustled by the opposition parties or by the media to go faster or further. We have no desire to hinder the legitimate sportsman, the gamekeeper or the farmer in pursuit of his sport or work. But obviously our overriding obligation is the protection of the citizen in the community.

Before I describe the main provisions of the Bill let me say that, although we believe that the central pillars of our policy are right, we remain ready to listen to legitimate concerns on matters of detail. Indeed, our White Paper was designed to enable people to study and comment on the proposals in a way that would inform debate in proceedings on the Bill.

It is entirely natural that the proposals should cause some anxiety among legitimate shooters. As it happens, I have spent a large part of my life among people guns. That comes of having been brought up o and now representing a country constituency always known shooters to be highly sensible and people, which is, on the whole, borne out by my e over recent weeks.

There have been shrill, and I think largely un tative, voices in the shooting press — *[Int* There have been some. Many of my hon. Friends received strong letters of protest, as we have in t Office. I congratulate them on the way in which resisted particular pressures and returned to th argument. I have been impressed—and surpr the number of individual shooters who have co me and said that they thought we had got it ab At the last meeting I had with my National Farm constituency parliamentary committee, I led o proposals on firearms, expecting a good opposition, because I suppose everyone in t owned a shotgun. Instead of opposing, thos urged me to get on with it, because there were unknown people with guns wandering about land.

Of course, users of guns, whether shotguns pistols, have legitimate concerns and represent make. That is why, contrary to some pressure, w to be stampeded on this, and have proceeded s way of debate, statement, White Paper and no

With the genuine anxieties that exist very muc we have been concerned that representative shooting community should be properly heard. consulted widely, with organisations represen ticular shooting activities and with those with a in shooting generally. There have been meeting officials and over 20 such organisations, as we police and local authority and other representati met the British Shooting Sports Council, led Swansea and my hon. Friend the Member for (Sir H. Monro), which includes a very wide constituent bodies covering sporting and trade My hon. Friend the Parliamentary Under-Se State has met the council on two further occa has also met the Shooters Rights Association, t Association for Shooting and Conservation United Kingdom Practical Rifle Commission. received views from a number of organisations specifically asked to comment, as well as from of clubs and the public generally. I apologise fo that, because of the volume of such correspon have not been able to reply as quickly as we w I assure the House that all views have been t account.

As I proceed, I shall illustrate ways in whic accommodated particular concerns expressed by There are some that we cannot meet without dam pillars of the Bill; but there are others on which will find that our mind is not closed.

The Bill is relatively short, but also, technical and complex. Clause 1 goes to the h because it extends the list of prohibited wea ammunition that can be held only with th authority of the Secretary of State. Such autho normally given to private individuals, and the various types of weapons and ammunition whic unsuitable for private possession. First and among these are full-bore self-loading rifles o

[Mr. Douglas Hurd]

used by Ryan at Hungerford, and full-bore pump-action rifles. Self-loading or pump-action shotguns, which are short-barrelled or less than 40 in. in overall length, and revolving magazine shotguns, will also become prohibited. We have in addition taken the opportunity to prohibit a number of other weapons, including rocket launchers, mortars and stun guns. As for ammunition, explosive bullets will be banned, and, if capable of being used with a firearm, grenades, bombs, rockets, and shells. It is odd that some of those items were not already on the prohibited list. I hope the House will agree that there can be no justification for such weapons or ammunition being possessed by the private individual.

We have not gone in, if I may so put it, with a blunderbuss. It will be seen that .22 rim fire pump-action and self-loading rifles, which are widely used for vermin control, are not caught by the ban. When I first outlined our ideas in September, I indicated that we were minded to ban all short-barrelled smooth-bore guns. The shooting organisations have drawn my attention to the legitimate, traditional uses for such guns. Examples include rook guns, muzzle-loading guns, Very signalling pistols and stag-dispatching guns. We decided that those could properly remain under section 1 control.

I recognise that the ban on self-loading rifles will affect the practical rifle shooter, who will not be able to continue his sport with that gun. The House will have to weigh a number of considerations, as we have had to do, including lethality and the extent of use. In my view, the limited sporting use of such weapons is outweighed by the power to kill, and I do not feel that we should ask the House to accept the risk of further misuse.

We have no wish to hinder practical shooting as a sport. It may be little consolation to the self-loading rifle enthusiast, but he will of course be able to use the traditional bolt action rifle, or to join in other practical shooting events that use pistols or shotguns.

The issue of compensation arose at Question Time. I recognise that compensation for those whose weapons will be prohibited causes considerable concern to many of my right hon. and hon. Friends, and possibly to Opposition Members as well. As my hon. Friend the Minister said in answer to questions, there are serious objections to compensation. I am prepared to give further thought to the fresh arguments that are put forward. However, I must add that I see considerable difficulties of both principle and practice in any form of compensation scheme.

Sir Bernard Braine (Castle Point): My right hon. Friend has been touching on the practical difficulties. Will he consider the man with a legitimate licence, whose legitimate weapon is now to be made illegal? All the advice that he has been given so far is that he can sell his weapon back to the trade. Has my right hon. Friend thought of the greatest difficulty of all—that the only outlet for such weapons will be sale overseas, as a ready gift to terrorists?

Mr. Hurd: I am afraid that huge quantities of such weapons are awash in the world. I do not believe that that argument is decisive. One of my hon. Friends has put it to me that we should not give compensation because on other occasions when certain products have been banned by domestic or European legislation, no compensation has been paid, and it would therefore be inequitable to pay it in this instance. I am using that argument simply to show some of the difficulties of principle, as
But, as I have said, we are prepared to giv
to argument on the matter, and my hon.
listen carefully to points made on the sub
debate or in correspondence we have re

Mr. Graham Riddick (Colne Valley): C
Friend give some instances of certain
being hit in the pocket by Bills passed i

Mr. Hurd: The example given to me in
described as a scented eraser, which was
a certain constituency and cannot be m
longer. The machinery and process
manufacture therefore have lost their va
that as a small example of the principle

Mr. Peter Hardy (Wentworth): The
may wish to consider two points. First,
banned weapon may well be prepared, pa
are adverse financial circumstances, to
that weapon unlawfully to someon
particularly concerned about complying

My second point concerns a constitue
responsible young man, whom I have k
time—he is a student, with very little
weapon, and is going to find that his hol
very dear. Such cases surely merit consid

Mr. Hurd: The hon. Gentleman put
clearly, but I do not think that the first is
weapon is already listed on a section 1 fi
and its destination would be a matter fo

Mr. Tony Marlow (Northampton, No
right hon. Friend, in these exceptiona
justify paying compensation, on the basi
these weapons out of circulation? Other
a risk that we shall find some of our sold
Ireland being killed by weapons that have
the system, because they have not be
circulation as a result of the measure?

Mr. Hurd: I do not think that the
illegally, for the reason that I have alr
point will clearly come up in the debate.
we are prepared to give it further thou
suggestions can be made to resolve some
that I have mentioned, it will be helpful.

Mr. David Tredinnick (Bosworth): I a
right hon. Friend for giving way. I am
he is prepared to reconsider compensat
approached by an engineer, a respectabl
community, who has three self-loadin
assumption that he will be forced to s
approached six dealers, all of whom said
rifles were virtually unsaleable. Four w
unable to accept any price, and the other
about £30 and about £10 respectively—
the rifles, would represent a loss of £735

Mr. Hurd: I note that illustration of

Mr. William Ross (Londonderry, Eas

Mr. Hurd: No; I have given way four
this point.

Clause 1 also provides a reserve power
of State to make an order to add to the
weapons and ammunition. Such an additi

in respect of any firearm or ammunition, but not an air weapon which is not prohibited but which appears to be especially dangerous. This is not a power to be used lightly — it should be exercisable by statutory instrument subject to the approval of both Houses of Parliament, the affirmative procedure, but I feel it is essential because of the rapid development of weapons technology.

Mr. Ieuan Wyn Jones (Ynys Mon) *rose*——

Mr. Hurd: No; I must get on.

Some may feel that the provision is drawn rather too widely, but do we really need primary legislation every time a new weapon which ought to be prohibited comes on to the market? It is because of such developments that we have in the Bill provision to deal with burst fire weapons and stun guns; stun guns have caused a good deal of concern. If we seek to qualify the reserve power too much we may limit the scope for dealing with the unforeseen.

The effect of clause 2 is to lift pump-action and self-loading shotguns of normal length to section 1 control under the 1968 Act— the same level of control, that is, as exists for pistols and bolt-action rifles. This is justified by the significantly greater rate of fire which such guns have over conventional single and double-barrelled shotguns. There are relatively few sporting purposes for which a conventional shotgun will not serve just as well as a pump-action or self-loading one, and in future there is no question of prohibition but those who want to hold such weapons will have to satisfy the police that they have a good reason for wishing to do so. This clause also lifts the more lethal types of shotgun ammunition — cartridges which contain the larger pellets of shot, for which, again, there is little sporting justification—under full section 1 control.

Clause 3 details the new criteria for the issue and renewal of shotgun certificates. There have been a number of recent incidents involving the misuse of legally held shotguns. We want to reduce the danger of shotguns falling into the wrong hands and to ensure that where they are held lawfully they are kept safely and cannot easily be acquired or used by those with criminal intent.

Under present legislation, a chief officer of police must grant a shotgun certificate unless he has reason to believe that the applicant is prohibited by the Act from possessing a shotgun, or that such possession by the applicant would endanger the public safety or the peace. Clause 3 requires the chief officer to be satisfied that the public safety or the peace will not be endangered. This will give the chief officer discretion to satisfy himself, by means of a home inspection if necessary, that shotguns are being stored securely.

Sir Dudley Smith (Warwick and Leamington): My right hon. Friend will know that various chief constables are zealous in certain departments, such as booking people for speeding, drink driving, and so on. Can he assure the House that chief constables will be more or less even-handed under the good reason provision of the Bill? On refusal, will there be a right of appeal for the individual?

Mr. Hurd: The answer to the second point is yes. That is very important. On the first point, I am coming to parts of the Bill which limit the discretion of chief officers of police for the kind of reason that my hon. Friend has in mind when we come to good reason. We shall also be issuing guidance. I think it is reasonable in p chief officers of police should apply their po light of local circumstances, knowing that the of appeal. In some cases, particularly the shotguns from one place to another during o of a shoot, there have been problems. We c some of those by guidance. I am keen that w so to remove friction, which does not serve purpose.

I was coming to the secure keeping clause. to amend the Firearms Rules 1969 so that the to keep a firearm in a secure place when not i also extends to shotguns. In 1986 there we incidents in which shotguns were reported to stolen, including over 500 thefts from properties. I am aware of concern that such a should not operate unreasonably on people w carry guns from one place to another. It is imp there should be sensible guidance to the police related points.

Clause 3 also provides for a shotgun application to be refused where the police are s the applicant has no good reason for wishing shotgun. This will not affect the majority of sh where the reason for holding a shotgun wil apparent. The existence of a good reason is n for arbitrary decision. I know that there is a rea a future Labour Government might seek to use expression to their views on what they call blo declare, for example, that sporting purposes constitute a good reason for having a shotgu

That is why we have put on the face of the in primary legislation which could be chang further primary legislation, that a good reas sporting or competition purposes and vermin will not be grounds for refusal merely that wants to hold, but not use, shotguns that sentimental value, for example. In my view th in practice need to make further inquiries only are genuine doubts about an applicant's inte a shotgun. They cannot do so at present. I do that is right if judgments are to be made pro

Mr. Robin Maxwell-Hyslop (Tiverton): The of substance on which my right hon. Frien advise the House. He has referred to giving guidance. So far as I know, this is not a statu What is the status of the guidance which he police, and in what way does it bind the police it?

Mr. Hurd: Guidance is not a direction. My knows the system of policing well enough to kn relationship with the Home Secretary is not th receive directions from me on matters outsi Guidance is guidance. Chief officers on the wh with guidance. The guidance will be worked between the Home Office and the police representatives of the shooting community be conscious that we will not get it right unle involved in advising on sensible guidance, w phrase I use.

Mr. Henry Bellingham (Norfolk, North-W my right hon. Friend agree, in regard to guid

[Mr. Henry Bellingham]

would make great sense if the Bill contained provisions for a statutory expert, consultative committee that could advise Home Secretaries?

Mr. Hurd: I understand that point. The question would then arise as to who should sit on it, what should be the police representation and what should be the representation of people who may not be so keen on the legitimate shooter's rights as I and my hon. Friends are. As I think we have shown in recent months, I am keen to keep in close touch with representatives of shooters, and I have given examples of that. When we come to the drafting of guidance, I believe that keeping in close touch will continue to be important. I would rather do that than set up a consultative body, given the arguments that would arise about its composition.

Mr. Roy Hattersley (Birmingham, Sparkbrook): Will the Home Secretary tell us what he regards as the boundaries of acceptable guidance? From time to time we on the Opposition Benches talk about guiding chief constables and it is called political interference. When does one start and the other end?

Mr. Hurd: Interference would occur if the proposals of the Labour manifesto were ever to be implemented, which would by law put the operations and priorities of chief constables under the control of local authorities. The right hon. Gentleman's red herring is not even particularly ingenious.

Clause 4 provides for the listing on a shotgun certificate of details of all the shotguns possessed by the holder and for notification of transfers. I found it odd that the police should have so little knowledge about the type or numbers of shotguns which are legally held. I believe it represents an important improvement in the nature of controls that the police should have more detailed information about the possession and movement of shotguns. Clause 5 deals with the sale of shotgun ammuntion. At present, the only control on shotgun ammunition is that it may not be sold to persons under the age of 17. There is nothing to prevent someone who does not possess a shotgun certificate, and who might qualify for one, from purchasing large quantities. This clause provides that, in future people seeking to purchase shotgun ammunition will, unless they are exempt from control, have to produce their shotgun certificate, or one belonging to a third party, together with an appropriate authorisation, when buying ammunition. This is a sensible and straightforward provision.

Let us consider the effects of the provisions of clauses 3 to 5 on the holder of a traditional single or double-barrelled shotgun. The police will be able to come and check that he is keeping his shotguns safely. When his current certificate expires, he will need next time to list the guns that he holds on his new certificate, with numbers or a description. If he sells one of his shotguns, or buys another from someone who is not a registered dealer, he will need to tell the police. If necessary, the police will be able to ask him, when renewing his certificate, about his reasons for wanting one, but his sport, leisure activity or profession will count as a good reason by law, as will the fact that he has inherited shotguns, or wishes to collect them, without any intention of using them, provided other conditions, including security, are satisfied. That hardly amounts to an onerous burden on the legitimate, reponsible shotgun holder, but it keep an account of the weapons keep track of them when they ch give them the power to make clo doubt.

Mr. Tim Boswell (Daventry): W clarify the position on temporary and on weapons which are norma in shared possession, where fathe use them on alternate days, or shooting, his gun is unserviceable one to continue the shoot?

Mr. Hurd: The Bill effectively interference in those kinds of Perhaps my hon. Friend the Unde comment in detail on those three li he winds up.

I think that I can deal with the Bill rather more briefly. Clause 7 problem of conversion from a hi lower classification or, indeed, d that such weapons will retain classification. There is a good de trade in military and other firearr to a lower classification. In many c be restored to their original condi knowledge or tools. The standar widely, and the legal status of suc The clause aims, therefore, to intr this area and serves to guard ag converted weapons.

The purpose of clause 8 is to two——

Mr. Ieuan Wyn Jones: Will the one point in respect of clause 7? D the prohibition on weapons wh deactivitated, perhaps by being tu and cannot, in any circumstances, kind of weapon?

Mr. Hurd: As the hon. Gentlem is that it is all too often possible Gentleman's suggestion, which has by some of my hon. Friends, would could find a simple way of testing bureaucracy or paperwork. We such points in greater depth in C given a Second Reading. I acknowl problem here.

The purpose of clause 8 is simpl to two the number of photographs under the Firearms Rules, to acco for a firearm or shotgun certificate. to prescribe the form of a firearm c extended to include a power to requ a photograph of the holder.

Clause 9 deals with firearms de in future, the status of registered f confined to those who can sta firearms is a substantial commerc here is to ensure that only bona fid by the police. It has been pointed o into account the position of thos

ll enable the police to
ld by individuals, and
nge hands, and it will
r inquires in cases of

my right hon. Friend
pan or changes of use
held within a family,
nd son might want to
ere somebody is out
d he needs to borrow

rovides against undue
ansactions or loans.
Secretary of State will
ly contingencies when

ther provisions of the
eals with the difficult
er classification to a
ctivation. It provides
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which are converted
es, such weapons can
n without specialised
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weapons is not clear.
uce greater clarity in
st possible abuse of

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ome Secretary clarify
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shotgun certificate is
e a certificate to bear

rs. It provides that,
arms dealers will be
sh that dealing in
activity. The point
dealers are registered
that we should take
who genuinely need

dealer status because of their research activities, for example. I accept that we should consider what more can be done in this respect.

We propose to extend the period of validity of a dealer's registration from one year to three years. This should reduce the administrative burden on the police and the dealers without sacrificing control.

Mr. Bob Cryer (Bradford, South): Does the Home Secretary agree that the definition "substantial extent" is very unsatisfactory? What about taking into account those people who run gun clubs in addition to small dealerships in firearms? There are a number of private, legitimate gun clubs, so will the turnover of a gun club, which is a commercial enterprise, be taken into account when assessing dealership in guns, or will only the trading in guns be taken into account?

Mr. Hurd: As the hon. Gentleman knows, one of the problems is the connection between dealers and gun clubs, which some people believe is too close. We have drafted clause 9 to try to solve that problem.

Clause 11 sets out revised arrangements for approved rifle and pistol clubs. This is important because the membership of an approved club can be a significant point in the grant of a firearms certificate in the first place. Clubs will have to fulfil a number of criteria in order to qualify for approval. We shall be looking to see that they are properly constituted and have suitable arrangements for full and probationary members; that they are run by fit and proper persons; that adequate arrangements are made for the security of club firearms and ammunition; and that they have access to a firing range target practice with only those types of rifles or pistol as are specified in the approval. The approval will be renewable on a six-yearly basis, and will be subject to the payment of a fee.

Clauses 12 and 13 deal in a sensible way with the position of visitors to this country. Section 14 of the 1968 Act represents a potentially serious gap in existing controls because it allows any visitor to this country to hold or acquire a shotgun without a certificate. We are replacing that with a straightforward visitors' permit scheme, based on sponsorship, for those who wish to come here to shoot for sporting or competition purposes. We have changed this, in the light of comments received, and we are taking care to preserve the position whereby visitors can acquire shotguns for export purposes only so that damage to such business does not result.

Dr. Alan Glyn (Windsor and Maidenhead): Thousands of visitors come to this country to shoot. Will the acquisition of a licence not be extremely difficult? Will it not spoil the shooting rights of people who have many visitors over to this country for the shooting?

Mr. Hurd: Indeed not. We have tried to design the legislation in a straightforward and simple way, comparable with the arrangments of other countries. My hon. Friend the Under-Secretary of State can spell this out in greater detail. The scheme, based on sponsorship and the issue in advance of the requisite certificate, will work satisfactorily.

Special arrangements for museums are set out in the schedule to the Bill and are introduced by clause 14.

Mr. Maxwell-Hyslop: Will my right hon. Friend deal with a point in respect of museums?

Mr. Hurd: I have hardly started on t
museums. It is not a very long passage.

Mr. Maxwell-Hyslop: I suspect the Hon
his speech will not cover the schedule so
clause 14. Is he aware that clause 14 gives a
list of museums? Is it not bizarre that such
put forward by the Home Office does not co
and local museums, which have been give
another Government Department, for exa
Office? A local holder of the Victoria cross
won it by capturing a German machine gun
given by the War Office to a local museum.
Secretary ensure that every museum wh
considered fit by another Government Dep
given, for instance, a captured weapon is
by the Home Office to be unfit to hold it?

Mr. Hurd: I congratulate my hon. Frien
and I shall certainly look into it carefully.
comments before I had outlined the policy,
we accept that, for the many people who
museums or with large collections of firearm
with section 1 requirements in respect of
would be unreasonably burdensome. That i
introduced this proposal for a museum
simplify things.

This not a new system. We accept the pri
categories of the Firearms Act 1968. I ha
accept proposals that sound good but would
for public safety and would inconvenie
shooters. I agree with shooters that demand
holding weapons at home, for example,
loading of ammunition, should be resisted. I
provided that security is adequate — tha
precondition—individuals should keep res
their guns rather than having them held b
merely because of the numbers that woul
them, would be bound to become the targ
and terrorists.

I agree with shooters that we do not nee
limit on the number of firearms held
certificate. A good reason for each one shou
I agree with them that it is not justified
section 1 controls on shotguns, with all the
that that would involve, but the provisions
worked out and that I have sketched today
and anything less would represent a weak re
has happened. I say to my hon. Friend th
Dumfries that a response that is too weak
would be swept away by fresh events. I hop
strengthen the system so that it can last a
20 years.

I have gone through the Bill in some det
this matter, it is the details that count.
intention to harass the legitimate shooter o
sport. Rather, we aim to ensure that all shoo
working or sporting, can be pursued in the
a straightforward and effective control, wh
ordinary citizen the safeguards from the m
that he has the right to expect. The cha
propose to existing controls aim to do tha
build upon the Bill sound administrative p
guidance, which are essential to its effecti
that the shooting interests will play their
that process. Together, all this will provide

[Mr. Hurd]

flexible system which will operate to the ultimate advantage of shooters and the general public for many years to come. I commend the Bill to the House.

4.52 pm

Mr. Roy Hattersley (Birmingham, Sparkbrook): I have already offered the Home Secretary my apologies, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and I want to offer them to you and the House, for the fact that I must leave the House early this evening and shall not therefore be here at the conclusion of the debate. However, I want to put on record my general, if qualified, approval of the Firearms (Amendment) Bill that the Home Secretary outlined this afternoon.

There are certainly reservations about the Bill among Opposition Members—some stronger than others. Some of those reservations are stronger than my own, and a number of them have been included in a reasoned amendment tabled by some of my hon. Friends. Many of the changes that they propose, some of which I support, and many of the changes that I anticipate will be offered from both sides of the House as the afternoon wears on, can be accommodated in Committee. I understand that the Government accept the need for some specific changes and intend to meet some of the technical objections in amendments of their own. Indeed, the Home Secretary spoke of his willingness to meet legitimate criticisms. He may have as much difficulty in defining them as he had in defining legitimate guidance, but no doubt he is open to the view that if the Bill is given a Second Reading, as I hope and believe it will be, there will still be improvements to be made.

In my view, this Bill, like any other, must be judged on the balance of its merits, and I judge it in the same way as I judged the parts of the Criminal Justice Bill that dealt with the control of knives. Those clauses contained provisions to which I was deeply opposed. I am opposed to some items in this Bill—less so, but opposed. My reservations notwithstanding, however, there can be little doubt about the need for the tighter controls on firearms that the Bill provides, so I believe that it is worthy of the House's approval and deserves and will get a Second Reading.

Mr. David Nicholson (Taunton): The right hon. Gentleman mentioned the Criminal Justice Bill and knives. When he spoke on 26 October, he made great play of his views on the proposals for knives. Would he take this opportunity to assure the House that he was not then telling my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary to crack down on guns, which are predominantly—though not entirely—the preserve of Conservative supporters, and he would then give my right hon. Friend an easier passage on knives? That would be both sinister and reprehensible.

Mr. Hattersley: That is both ludicrous and wrong. The hon. Gentleman will discover as the debate continues that what I call—with no intention of being offensive—the gun interest is not confined to any one party; nor are shooters confined to any one voting pattern. I support the Bill on its merits, as I supported the proposals on knives on their general merits. I think the Home Secretary will confirm, if any confirmation were necessary, that when he was kind enough to tell me about his proposals on knives I gave him my unqualified support before we even knew that a Firearms (Amendment) Bill was in prospect.

I repeat my view that the need for tighter controls on guns is obvious, and not only in the context of the tragedies of Hungerford and Bristol. We would do this measure a great disservice were we to represent it as a response to Hungerford and Bristol. I neither intend nor want to minimise the suffering that those two tragic events caused, but I do not see them in themselves as reasons for the Bill. Those tragedies focused the nation's attention on the need for tighter firearms control, but that need existed long before the murders at Hungerford. As the Home Secretary well knows, in March 1987 my hon. Friend the Member for Holborn and St. Pancras (Mr. Dobson) wrote to him on behalf of London Labour Members of Parliament saying that there was a need for tighter gun control. Throughout that year, my hon. Friend the Member for Hammersmith (Mr. Soley) raised on the Floor of the House the need for tighter provisions. I say again that the major provisions of the Bill would have been necessary with or without Hungerford. It is enormously important to make that clear, particularly to the legitimate shooters who will undoubtedly be inconvenienced by the Bill. It should be made clear to them that they should offer their wholehearted support to this necessary measure because it is not an overreaction to an isolated tragedy but a necessary improvement in the law governing firearms which I and some of my hon. Friends advocated long before the horrors of Hungerford were known to us.

We all accept that legislation, no matter how comprehensive or draconian, cannot protect society from a sudden act of lunacy. Perhaps it cannot even protect society from the calculated criminal decision to obtain or use a gun. But proper legislation can prevent casual ownership and the lethal use of weapons that is sometimes the consequence of casual ownership. Those two objectives seem to me so desirable that the price that must be paid for comprehensive and adequate control is a legitimate price to ask.

I repeat that of course we all accept that the Bill will increase the inconvenience experienced by genuine gun users and owners. I include farmers, collectors and gun club members. Nobody — least of all the Home Secretary, judging by his speech this afternoon — will deny that they will find some of the new regulations irksome, but I think it enormously important not to overestimate that inconvenience. I do not believe that the irksome nature or the inconvenience of the new provisions amounts to anything like the major infraction of liberty suggested in some of the circulated pamphlets. The freedom to own a certain type of weapon, even for a legitimate purpose, has to be balanced against the freedom to feel secure, for instance, from armed robbery. In my view, the freedom to feel secure from armed robbery is a great deal more important than the freedom to own and use, even legitimately, a certain sort of weapon.

I believe that most legitimate owners and users accept that point. I share the judgment of the Home Secretary that, on the evidence of the last two months while his proposals have been under discussion, most shooters are prepared to accept the new responsibilities with good grace. The National Farmers Union, whose members will obviously be affected, wrote a letter to me, which I suspect is identical to letters sent to other right hon. and hon. Members, saying that it welcomed the Bill, and specifically

commended the new criteria against which applications for shotgun licences will be measured. The British Shooting Sports Council used the same expression, and said that it explicitly welcomed the Bill, promising full co-operation in its implementation.

If we look at the provisions of the Bill in detail, we see how reasonable their acceptance is, particularly if we look at the area around which most of the controversy hovers —the more stringent control of shotguns.

During the debate on 26 October the Opposition called for two major changes in shotgun control. I am delighted that in fact, if not in words, both those changes have now come about. The Opposition do not claim authorship of those proposals. Their origin, as far as I was concerned, was in the Police Federation. I do not want to be part of some childish competition about who had the idea first; I merely say that we advocated those changes to the Home Secretary in October. I am delighted that the two major proposals on our part are now Government policy.

The first proposal concerned individual certification of shotguns to replace the present practice of a single certificate covering any number of unspecified guns. Clause 3 provides that power in fact, if not exactly in words. Every shotgun is now to be identified in the certificate — a proposal which, in October, some hon. Members said was impossible. It matters not to us whether each gun is identified on a separate piece of paper or all the guns are identified on the same piece of paper. The listing of each weapon is clearly a proper precaution.

First, it will deter a number of undesirable purchasers. The fact that an undesirable purchaser must have the identification number or other identification elements written on his certificate will be a greater deterrent than the present situation, when he or she simply has to go into a gun shop, wave the certificate and buy an additional shotgun.

Secondly, and perhaps more important, the registration of each weapon by number, or by identifying characteristics, is essential if we are to have a national register, and a national register seems to me to be absolutely necessary if we are to have the sort of control that the Home Secretary, the Government and, I believe, the country in general want. We support that proposal.

Clause 3 also deals with what is called the "good reason" requirement. On 26 October I argued that shotgun certificates should be issued only to applicants who had a good reason to possess such a weapon. In his winding-up speech the Under-Secretary of State specifically ruled out that provision. I think that he is looking it up, but I assure him that I am about to read what he said:

"My fear is that if we impose a good reason requirement on the possession of shotguns, we shall face massive non-compliance."—[*Official Report*, 26 October 1987; Vol. 121, c. 67.]

I am delighted that wiser counsels have prevailed. The Under-Secretary's comment was, in any case, a sad and, I believe, wholly inaccurate reflection on the public spirit and responsibility of most shotgun owners and users. We believe, and I think that the country believes, that there should be a good reason for possession of a potentially lethal weapon. I know that, to avoid the embarrassment of agreeing with what they appeared not to agree with three months ago, the Government have stood the idea on its head, and a chief constable must now be satisfied that there is not a good reason for withholding, but it is the same principle. There has to be some reason, some purpose, some justification, and that seems to me to be wholly right, just as it is to strengthen the power appropriately, when it is married to the other half of the clause, by requiring the chief officer of police to be satisfied that the applicant is suitable in other respects.

I know that some hon. Members are worried about the amount of discretion that the clause allows to chief officers of police. For instance, the hon. Member for Warwick and Leamington (Sir D. Smith) raised exactly that point and asked for political guidance from the Home Secretary about how chief constables should behave. It is quite extraordinary how chief constables are held in doubt by hon. Gentlemen when it is thought that they are likely to interfere with subjects which touch those hon. Gentlemen.

In this particular let me make it absolutely clear that I am wholly prepared for responsible chief officers to make their judgments. I believe that they will make those judgments without interference from the House and the Home Secretary. My opinion is that if they err at all it will not be on the side of caution; they will feel it inappropriate to make the individual decisions which those of us who want tighter controls might expect them to make. This is my judgment, particularly since their attitudes are in part circumscribed by clause 3(1) (1B) of the Bill, which, wholly legitimately in my view, stipulates some of the activities which make the legitimate use of a shotgun obvious and the issuing of a certificate almost mandatory on chief officers.

Sport, competition and vermin control are all specified as legitimate purposes and clearly they are legitimate purposes. Nobody disagrees with that, but I hope that the Home Secretary will tell us more about one strange phrase and what its real purpose is. It relates to the criteria by which legitimacy shall be measured and good reason and proper cause judged. It states:

"an application shall not be refused by virtue of that paragraph merely because the applicant intends neither to use the gun himself nor to lend it for anyone else to use."

If it is sentimental, if it is nostalgic, if it is concerned with family possessions or heirlooms, I understand it exactly and think that that might be appropriately specified in these terms in the Bill. That was the example that the Home Secretary gave. But the clause goes a great deal wider than that.

I understand exactly what ought to happen. If a chief police officer, who is approached for a certificate, asks what the gun is wanted for and the individual says that he or she wants it for sport, competition or vermin control, the chief officer will say that is a legitimate use. But I should be rather perturbed if a chief officer, or his representative, were approached and told by the individual concerned that he or she did not want it for anything, but just wanted it. That seems to me to cast very considerable doubt on the legitimacy of gun ownership and on the psychology of the man or woman who might give that answer.

Therefore, I hope that the Home Secretary, reinforced by the fact that some of his hon. Friends are nodding agreement to the proposition—and they do not nod at much of what I say on the subject—will consider the possibility of tightening up that clause.

On clause 2, I know that there is some controversy concerning self-loading and pump-action shotguns, not all of which have equal fire power and some of which are used for legitimate sports by women and the disabled because such guns have minimum recoil. No doubt that point will

[Mr. Hattersley]

be contested in Committee, and no doubt the Home Secretary will hear more about it this afternoon as it has been the subject of a great deal of legitimate argument and correspondence. I urge him to continue to err on the side of caution. The hon. Member for Norfolk, North-West (Mr. Bellingham), who moans, should not be surprised that I, together with the Home Secretary and other hon. Members, take the view that our first obligation is to protect the general public from the risk that ownership might involve.

I hope that my suggestions about other matters will be less controversial and less obnoxious to Conservative Members.

Mr. William Ross: The right hon. Gentleman has just referred to self-loading automatic shotguns. Is he aware that in Northern Ireland, where restrictions on firearms are comparatively tighter than they are here, it is still possible to own a self-loading shotgun?

Mr. Hattersley: I am aware of that, but it does not give me any comfort. Again, we should err on the side of caution, rather than follow the restrictions that operate in Northern Ireland, which are not in themselves always the right procedure. I do not mean to joke about this sensitive subject, but I am sure that the hon. Gentleman shares my view that it is self-evidently right and necessary that the sale or ownership of burst-fire weapons, rocket launchers, mortars, explosive bombs, grenades and electric shock devices should be included in the class of prohibited weapons. It is equally self-evident that the obligation to store guns and ammunition securely is absolute.

The Bill rightly limits the purchase of ammunition to certificate holders and their authorised representatives. There is much to be said for the proposals of the Police Federation that the authorised acceptable conditions in which ammunition is to be stored should always be described on the certificate, and that the man or woman who sells the ammunition should use his or her best endeavours to ensure that the ammunition is to be stored in the way described on the certificate.

I wish to represent to the Home Secretary a second point from the Police Federation, pausing only to make two asides about the views of the federation. Hon. Members have received correspondence from shooting organisations which describes stringent or more stringent controls as a waste of police manpower and time. It is notable that none of the police organisations, which talk about the waste of police time most eloquently in other contexts, suggest that more stringent controls would have that effect. There is something to be said for supporting the views of the men and women who are likely to face someone with a sawn-off shotgun when they are on patrol at night.

The second point about the police and guns concerns a dispute that we had in the House on Monday that the debate on this Bill allows me to put right. There was much shouting from the Treasury Bench about the Police Federation supporting life sentences being imposed on criminals who carry guns in pursuit of crime. The president and the secretary of the Police Federation told the Leader of the Opposition and me on Tuesday evening that they are desperately anxious that the penalty for carrying a gun should not be the same as that for using a gun. I hope that the Home Secretary and the Under-Secretary of State will take note of the position of the police. I Government's control of guns, they should take par account of the views of the men and women whos may be put in jeopardy, rather than the men and who legitimately use guns for sport.

That argument also applies to compensation. respect, I must say to the Home Secretary that he enormously heavy weather of dealing with interj about compensation. He was asked whether he cou any other instances in which such onerous obli were applied. Every time that there have bee regulations about what is a safe motor car, people w cheap motor cars have suddenly discovered that th no longer use them and must sell them for scrap. almost exactly the same situation.

Secondly, the hon. Member for Northampton, (Mr. Marlow) said that if the Minister prohibited t of those weapons but refused to compensate for ther would be passed into the hands of terrorists and illegal organisations. That does not say very much shooters, whom the Home Secretary went out of h to describe as honest and public-spirited character prepared to give them the benefit of the doubt, and that, if the law requires certain behaviour, they will with it.

The hon. Member for Daventry (Mr. Boswell) sa gun owners must be compensated. The hon. Gen said that one of his constituents, who has three gu told by a gun dealer that they are no longer s because they have no value. The Home Secretary have no obligation to compensate gun owners fo which no longer have a market value. That is the p of the market. Conservative Members, who have so eloquently about allowing market forces to o should not whine to the Home Secretary compensation when market values have been remo legislation. I am sure that the Home Secretary will that point in Committee.

I should like to hear the Under-Secretary of response about an omission that I hope will be dea in Committee. It is an omission that the Police Fed believe should be in the Bill. I do not understand w Home Secretary has so firmly set his face agai prohibition of mail-order sales. It seems obviou evident and undeniable that it is easier improp purchase a weapon through mail order than thr shop in the high street. It would be absurd if the more stringent, and generally desirable control undermined by the continuation of mail order. I ho the Home Secretary will think about that before comes back to the House on Report.

Finally, in its evidence to the Home Secreta Police Federation said that since the introduction Firearms Act 1968, the sales of guns have beco business. That is true. More than that, during the years, gun culture in Britain has been encoura television, some newspapers and some films. culture, I mean not the sporting, competit agricultural use of guns, but their illegal use. The i been encouraged that there is something special and about the possession and occasional use of a gun. needs to be encouraged in the belief that the legitim of guns is the only use to be tolerated or acceptabl legitimate use should carefully be prescribed by st regulations about ownership. The proper place proper way in which guns should be used must be c

defined and strictly limited. The Bill, despite its faults, provides a definition and specifies a limitation, and for that reason it is worthy of having a Second Reading.

5.18 pm

Mr. Edward Heath (Old Bexley and Sidcup): I wish to make only one point that greatly concerns my constituents in a residential area. It has been emphasised by delegations and deputations who have come to see me. Before I make my point, I assure the Home Secretary that I give the fullest support to the measure that he is introducing. To use his own words, I believe that he has got it absolutely right. However, I am sure that his broad-minded and flexible approach will accommodate the many detailed points that were made by my hon. Friends on the Back Benches during their interventions in his speech.

Those who came to see me were mainly members of gun clubs. I was a member of a gun club in my last years at school. They have emphasised that many of those clubs originated in the 19th century as part of the national defence. That argument is no longer valid. Those who are of age can join the territorial forces if they so wish and they can then help to deal with a national emergency. It is also true that this measure cannot be guranteed never to allow another ghastly incident. We can only hope and pray that it will lead towards that.

I want to give the strongest possible support to those of my hon. Friends who, in their interventions, have asked about compensation. This is a unique situation. The action that is being taken is right, dramatic and drastic, and comes into effect as soon as the Bill becomes law. It is not a normal question of the market. By making these weapons illegal, the market is being closed completely. That is the situation with which we must deal.

The people who have these weapons are, I am convinced, for the great part, people of integrity. Moreover, they could not possibly have foreseen the events of Hungerford or, following them, the Government's actions. Therefore, they are a small group in the community who are exposed to considerable financial loss. Nor is the comparison, made by the right hon. Member for Birmingham, Sparkbrook (Mr. Hattersley) with others who suffer when the Government take action, a just comparison.

A considerable time is allowed for the changeover to lead-free petrol. That is designed to cover most of the life of cars that use normal petrol. When the Government ban the use of particular furnishings, the present ownership is not affected, only future purchases. For that reason, my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary has a strong case to argue. Moreover, I am told that there is already a precedent, which I think concerns Northern Ireland, in which compensation was paid in a similar case. Therefore, I hope that my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary will press strongly for compensation to be paid to those who will be affected by the Bill.

My right hon. Friend emphasised the practical difficulties. I can see only one practical difficulty, and that is in persuading my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer to provide the money with which to compensate. No one, least of all myself, would underestimate the difficulty of that, but I hope that when my right hon. Friend approaches the Chancellor he will point out that he has the solid support of the Conservative party and also, I believe, despite what the right hon. Member for Sparkbrook said, of many Opposition Members as well. Therefore, I hope that my right hon. Friend will be successful in obtaining compensation for those of my constituents who will be affected, as well as those affected in the rest of the country.

5.22 pm

Mr. Gordon Oakes (Halton): The right hon. Member for Old Bexley and Sidcup (Mr. Heath) has said that in his opinion the Home Secretary has got the legislation right. I welcome the Bill, but I do not think that the Home Secretary has got it absolutely right. He has got it mainly right, but many amendments can, and I hope will, be made in Committee. I hope that the Home Secretary will carry out his undertaking to the House to listen to matters of legitimate complaint.

I should declare that many of the points that I am about to make come from the Association of County Councils, of which I have the honour to be an honorary vice-president.

The Home Secretary listed the large number of shooting organisations with which he had had correspondence and from which he had had representations on the Bill. The county councils, via their chief police officers, the chief constables, will be responsible for the administration of the Bill, and they consider that on a number of matters the Bill does not go far enough. I do not expect the Home Secretary to agree, as I do, with the association's principal policy point that the same licensing conditions should apply to shotguns as apply to part 1 firearms. That is the considered view of the county councils—which, I repeat, will have to administer the Bill through the police.

A great deal of confusion has been caused by clause 3. When I read it I was somewhat confused by the difference between it and what was said in the White Paper. The White Paper said specifically that it is not intended to impose an obligation on all applicants to establish positively the existence of a good reason. Clause 3 seems to say the opposite of that. The Government seem to have stood their original proposition on its head. I listened to the Home Secretary explaining clause 3, but the Act seems to say one thing and the guidance quite the opposite.

I agree with my right hon. Friend the Member for Birmingham, Sparkbrook (Mr. Hattersley) that the Government should not give guidance in that way. The Government should state specifically in legislation what they want chief police officers to do. The public then know that that is their duty by statute, not as a result of some hidden form of guidance. The Act could say one thing while the guidance gave chief police officers a nudge and a wink to do what was said in the White Paper, which would be wrong, in principle and as a matter of policy.

My right hon. Friend the Member for Sparkbrook also drew attention to clause 3(1B), showing what a nonsense it is. If a chief constable has no reason, because of the person concerned, to refuse an application for a gun licence, it is an open gate policy to allow that person to go to the chief constable and say that he wants a gun, not to use or to lend, but just to have. The chief constable may be slightly suspicious and wonder why he wants it, but, as far as I can see, he would be debarred from refusing such an application because he is specifically debarred if a man says that he does not want to use or lend the weapon. That will lead to endless trouble and difficulty and could be a dangerous loophole.

The Association of County Councils firmly believes that there is a need in the statute for a standard condition

[Mr. Gordon Oakes]

to provide for the safe keeping of the guns and ammunition authorised by the certificate. That should appear on the face of the Bill. The association also points out that, as far as it is aware, there is no specific provision in the Bill for certificate holders to notify the police of a change of address. Clearly, that is a vital provision and should be in the Bill.

The association also points out that there is no minimum age in the Bill for a person who can hold a gun certificate. However, I have heard rumours that the Government are to do something about that. I am sure that the right hon. Member for Old Bexley and Sidcup was a most responsible person in his last years at school to be a member of a gun club and to hold a certificate, but that does not necessarily apply to all youngsters. If the Government say that they will stipulate a minimum age in subsequent legislation, why not put it in this Bill?

Another point arises on the number of shotguns and the amount of ammunition which may be held by certificate holders. At the time of the Hungerford case and other recent cases, the country was appalled at not only the variety and type, but the sheer quantity, of weapons and ammunition held by individuals. Under the present law, if a certificate is issued there is no limit whatever. A man can have an arsenal of guns and ammunition. The Bill deals with that problem, but——

Mr. Ron Davies (Caerphilly): Does my hon. Friend know that the weapon that Ryan used at Hungerford last August to inflict most of the injuries was a Beretta pistol, and that that firearm will not be affected by the legislation?

Mr. Oakes: I am not certain whether that is the position, but if my hon. Friend says it is, I accept what he says. The legislation should be comprehensive. That omission would cause a glaring anomaly, if what my hon. Friend says is correct.

Will the Government agree that on the certificate there should be a limitation on the number of firearms or amount of ammunition that a person can hold? I can see no reason why the Government should step back from this single procedure to prevent arsenals from being built up by a person.

My right hon. Friend the Member for Sparkbrook referred to mail order. I cannot understand why the Government have set their face against prohibiting the sale of guns by mail order. Under clause 8, the number of photographs to be attached to the certificate has been increased from one to two. What is the use of photographs if a person can write to a mail order firm and get a gun? How can a mail order firm, dealing by post, know whom they are dealing with? How do they know that the photograph is of the person whose name is on the certificate?

Mr. David Gilroy Bevan (Birmingham, Yardley): Does the right hon. Member agree that there would not even be the need to write because many mail order firms that advertise such weapons would take a credit number over the telephone in payment for the weapon?

Mr. Oakes: I do not think that it is quite as bad as that, because a person will have to send with his application to the mail order firm his firearms certificate. How could the mail order firm check this? People who deal in firearms are overwhelmingly very responsible traders. If t suspicious of a person who applied for a gun believed that there was something wrong certificate, they would have a sixth sense to k something was wrong because they deal with the the time. Just like any other trader, they would something was wrong, but the mail order firm do anything about it because it would have no i it was dealing with. If the Government were to an age limit in subsequent legislation, how woul order firm know the age of the person with wh dealing through the post? That loophole should up in Committee.

I welcome the Bill. Amendments could be improve and strengthen it from the point of v public. The Home Secretary was quite right wh that the Bill cannot guarantee that there w another Hungerford. No Government cou prescient as to bring in legislation to prevent th thing. What they can do is lessen the risk of it, a extent I warmly welcome the Bill.

5.33 pm

Mr. Michael McNair-Wilson (Newbury): In Paper that preceded the Bill my right hon. H Home Secretary asserted that the proposal he w before the House marked a considered and signi in the balance of controls between safeguarding at large and protecting the interests of the shooting community. The White Paper state Government

"cannot eradicate entirely the possibility of th legitimately held firearms by an unstable o individual. For that reason the Government must those firearms which are held legitimately are s degree of control which reduces this risk."

I do not quarrel with that statement, any m quarrel with the contents of the Bill. It would the two statements I have read out that the B White Paper, is more a response to the sh Hungerford, Bristol and Wolverhampton last the end product of a review of the Firearms although I do not doubt that such a review w before August 1987. I do not complain about t three crimes at Hungerford, Bristol and Wolv drew our attention to the increasing number incidents in our ever more violent society, incid we can expect to recur, although I hope appalling scale of Hungerford.

Because you have called the amendment to be the subject of the debate, Mr. Deputy Spea to say that I cannot see what value would be further public inquiry into the massacre at Hu say "a further public inquiry" because the chie of Thames Valley has already produced a full r has been made publicly available. There has be long television programme and, although crit been made before about the police operati August in Hungerford — criticisms, needle which have the benefit of hindsight—I canno a further inquiry would hope to tell us that we d already.

I am speaking on the Bill because Hungerfo constituency. I do not claim to be a shooting any more than I am opposed to the sport. I Army, have fired on various ranges and posses

but beyond that it holds no special interest or attraction for me. I am aware from the many letters I have received that the sport has a wide following and a large variety of weapons are used. The shooting fraternity feel that because of the terrible actions of that one man, Michael Ryan, they and their sport are being penalised by the legislation. Perhaps if I were one of them I would share their feelings but, as I have said to many people who have come to see me about the subject, I do not believe that my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary could have let Hungerford come and go without reacting as he has; without introducing a firearms review and ultimately some sort of legislation.

Sixteen people were killed and 14 were wounded at Hungerford. Families still mourn and will mourn for many years to come. Almost every week somewhere in the world someone seems to emulate Ryan. I well remember that at the memorial service in Hungerford I found myself standing next to an Australian clergyman who had had a similar sort of massacre in his parish. I believe therefore that the Government had to make a strong response to Hungerford and the circumstances surrounding it.

I welcome the Bill and find much in it to commend. I applaud the decision to outlaw certain weapons such as semi-automatic rifles and to bring other weapons within section 5 of the Firearms Act 1968. It is right to make owners register guns individually on firearms and shotgun certificates and it is right that the police should tighten up their procedures for the issue of the certificates. I cannot help wondering whether the time is fast approaching when we should discontinue having two separate documents, one for weapons described as firearms and another for shotguns, as both are equally lethal, the main difference being in the range over which they are effective. Two certificates must mean that the police spend more time to ensure that the applicant meets the demands of the legislation. Can we not have one certificate? Those who want to own only a shotgun can have the same certificate as those who have firearms, and there could be the same requirement on each certificate to state which weapons are held. Administratively it would seem much cheaper and practically more logical to follow that practice.

To have two classes of firearm, one of which is more difficult to acquire than the other, lends credence to the argument of those shooters who consider that the White Paper and the Bill are aimed more at those who are presently gun owners or shooters rather than those who possess weapons criminally or illegally; in other words, that we are making already strict laws stricter for those who enjoy shooting without affecting the pool of illegally held weapons from which an ever-increasing amount of crime is resulting. The weapon most commonly used in crime appears to be the sawn-off shotgun. I believe that my criticism of the changes has some validity since it is not inconceivable that the Bill as drawn will increase the number of illegally held weapons.

I am not clear whether pump-action shotguns, now to be brought within section 5 (1) of the 1968 Act and to be held on a firearms certificate, will be restricted to use on a shooting range in common with other semi-automatic weapons or will be able to be used for shooting game and vermin if their magazine is converted to take only two shots as opposed to the present five or eight shots. I would be grateful if my hon. Friend could say something about that when he replies.

It has been put to me that if pump-action shotguns are restricted to shooting ranges present owners who possess them legally on a shotgun certificate will simply continue to keep and use them without telling the police or, more seriously, will dispose of them to whomsoever will buy them, particularly if the owner believes that he is likely to be refused a firearms certificate. At this moment I doubt whether anybody knows how many of those weapons are in private hands. One shotgun certificate covers any number of shotguns that may be owned. Therefore, who will know whether the law is effective? Indeed, what extra steps are being taken to encourage pump-action shotgun owners to register their weapons? It has been suggested to me that if such people were offered a half-price firearms certificate for the first year that might provide an inducement. Otherwise, as I have suggested, there seems to be a fair chance that such weapons will not be registered and may even find their way into the wrong hands.

I am sure that my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary and my hon. Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary saw the article that appeared in the *Yorkshire Post* in October 1986 and the subsequent article that appeared in *The Sun* in August 1987. Those articles described how a reporter from those papers managed to buy weapons illegally. The *Yorkshire Post* reporter commented:

"In a few short weeks the following list of weapons were made available:
A single-barrelled sawn-off shotgun for £55.
A double-barrelled sawn-off shotgun for £85.
A Magnum hand gun for £200.
A hand grenade for £30.
A 9mm rifle and ammunition for £100.
An unmodified double-barrelled shotgun for £150.
Other items were offered for hire: A Luger pistol with ammunition for £80; a 9mm automatic pistol, again with ammunition for £50 and two replica revolvers".

That list must cause the House grave concern. I find it desperately worrying. Indeed, after believing that the Hungerford massacre was the work of one demented man, Michael Ryan, who held all his weapons—five firearms and several shotguns — legally, it now transpires that Ryan also illegally owned a Thompson sub-machine gun and another pistol. Although it is true that Ryan was gun-crazy, he was a countryman who could hardly be expected to know where to purchase such sophisticated weapons illegally. However, he held such weapons and I believe that we should count ourselves lucky that he did not use the sub-machine gun instead of the semi-automatic in his killings.

I am bound to ask whether illegally held weapons are as easily available as apparently suggested by those newspaper reports? If they are, what will this legislation do to help the police seize those weapons?

Let us consider the storage of ammunition that has already been raised by a number of hon. Members. That matter is the cause of considerable concern to the Association of Chief Constables. They believe that adequate provision for the safe storage of ammunition should be a feature of the Bill. I hope that the Government will consider introducing an amendment in Committee, bearing in mind that the legal limit per weapon is 500 rounds of ammunition. That is a large amount of ammunition to possess for one weapon and, as we are not intending to restrict the number of weapons held at home, it is clear that we could be talking about thousands of rounds of ammunition held by an individual. I agree with the chief constables that that ammunition should be kept

[Mr. Michael McNair-Wilson]

as securely as the weapons. I believe that it would be an oversight if the Bill did not include something about that matter.

My right hon. Friend will also be aware that some members of the police force believe that armour-piercing ammunition of the kind that Ryan used should be banned. The chief constable of Thames Valley has told me that such ammunition can easily pierce the bullet-proof waistcoats worn by police marksmen and could just as easily penetrate the side of a police Land Rover. Again, I can see no possible reason why armour-piercing ammunition should be required by any sporting shooter.

When we are considering the proposed amnesty, it is right that we should encourage a person with weapons to hand them in if they are held without any form of certificate, or, as a result of the Bill, held illegally. However, numerous people have asked me why the amnesty should be for a limited time only. Anyone wishing to hand in a weapon at another time can be prosecuted. The idea of an amnesty covering a specific time may encourage weapons to be handed in, but should it be illegal to do so at another time? Let us consider the case of an elderly widow who goes through her husband's possessions and finds among them a first world war pistol —a souvenir, perhaps treasured all his life. Her natural reaction may well be to hand over the gun to the local police station, but unless she does so while the amnesty is operating she will be guilty of an offence. That does not appear fair or sensible.

There is also the matter of compensation, particularly for those who are legally in possession of a particular weapon now, but will not be when the Bill becomes law. The Bill offers them nothing, just as it offers nothing to those who hand in their weapons during the amnesty. Indeed, in an earlier debate I told the House that, after the previous amnesty, the Home Office sold the weapons handed in to the gun trade. That is indefensible. I do not believe that we can defend it and I think it is a totally unsatisfactory state of affairs.

Some of the weapons that may be handed in may be antiques that could make a lot of money at auction. They may be legally held in so far as they are so old as never to have required a firearms certificate when first obtained. I do not believe that we can expect people to part with those weapons for nothing or that we can possibly allow the Home Office, having received those weapons,22tt to make a profit from them. I suggest that antique weapons should be exempted from the bounds of the amnesty. In that category I include all muzzle-loading weapons. Other weapons, those breech-loading weapons that fire metal-cased or metal-jacketed ammunition, are in a different category. In terms of the amnesty such weapons should have a cut-off point of 1945. Weapons made between 1867 and 1945 should be treated as souvenirs rather than effective weapons. They are valuable collectors' pieces. Can we really argue that they should be handed in without compensation? What happens when they are handed in? Are we to have an assurance that the Home Office intends to have them melted down or will they, too, find their way to the gun trade?

Let me tell my hon. Friend the Member for Dumfries (Sir H. Monro) why I have chosen those two dates. In 1867 we went over from muzzle-loading to
weapons and between 1900 and 1945 we
wars which produced a mass of souvenir

On the question of compensation, in
Firearms (Amendment) (Northern Irelan
debated the then Under-Secretary told the

"A direction has already been issued whic
holding of bullet-firing weapons by dealers, a
handed over their stocks of these weapons
Arrangements are being made for the dealers
the weapons handed over. The dealers have
every way with the police and the Ministry o
and I want to emphasise that there is no
firearms dealers are not entirely trustworthy
was issued because, about a month ago, for
dealer's premises were raided."—[*Official Re*
1973; Vol. 853, c. 1672.]

If we can introduce such an order in North
provide for compensation, I see no reason
Office should resist compensation arising f
wonder whether it would not be wiser for th
to use registered firearms dealers as its agent
the amnesty so that they can offer the tru
weapons handed in to them—albeit a min
particularly in respect of weapons handed i
can no longer be legally held under the Bil

Mr. William Ross: Many hon. Membe
aware that many of the weapons ha
compensated for in Northern Ireland
classified as personal protection weapo
members and ex-members of the security
weapons could readily be resold to new me
forces if they could be held by the firearms
purchase represents a net loss to the Gover
country as a whole, as they could be sold els
person buying a personal protection weapo
a new one into Northern Ireland. I cannot u
we should be placed in that position. I fu
compensation should be paid for weap
Britain, too.

Mr. McNair-Wilson: I am grateful
Gentleman for that intervention. I think th
wrong for the Government simply to confi
without any form of compensation. I ren
Friend the Minister of the many examples
tion being paid to people who have lost prop
of legislation, compulsory purchase orders,
of planning permission already given, the
gold coinage under the Exchange Control
arrangement with the employees at GCH
made in respect of environmentally sensit
sites of special scientific interest and com
livestock affected by radioactivity after Ch
list is almost endless. Therefore, I see no re
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As I have said, I welcome the principle b
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untrammelled by its effects. Therefore, I
Government will consider whether somethin
added in Committee to make the Bill more

5.54 pm

Mr. Menzies Campbell (Fife, North-East): I suppose that it is only proper to declare an interest on occasions such as this. As the holder of both a shotgun certificate and a firearms certificate, I shall plainly be affected by some of the proposals. I doubt whether such an interest is unique in the House, but it may be rare among my hon. Friends.

It was almost inevitable after Hungerford that there would be a review of the law. Whether that review was provoked by the tragic events of Hungerford or accelerated by them is now neither here nor there. The understandable concern caused by those events made it clear that it was the Government's duty to re-examine the Firearms Act 1968 and consider whether its terms were appropriate to the circumstances of 1987. That review had to be carried out calmly and rationally because, as the Home Secretary has acknowledged, we are dealing with a variety of competing interests — not least, the public interest. I believe that we are justified in saying that responsible shooting interests always recognise the public interest. I suspect that if one possesses or uses a lethal weapon, in the shape of a shotgun or firearm, one is more conscious than anyone of the need for safety and security.

I am pleased that it now appears to be accepted that those who have an interest in shooting are drawn from all walks of life. At one stage, it was being suggested in the House that the interests of those concerned with shooting were somehow related to class. I am happy that that idea is no longer current.

When the White Paper was published, my hon. and learned Friend the Member for Montgomery (Mr. Carlile) broadly welcomed it, and I wish to repeat that welcome. But, however well-intentioned the Government may have been, they have got matters wrong in the Bill in a number of ways. When the Home Secretary introduced the White Paper to the House, he undertook to listen carefully to detailed comment on legislation. It will be known that some of the shooting organisations believe that there has been a lack of proper consultation. The Home Secretary told the House of a number of organisations that he and other Home Office Ministers had consulted. However, it is still believed among shooting organisations that the period of consultation was not long enough. If that is so, it serves only to underline the importance of the Home Secretary's undertaking to listen carefully to detailed comment on legislation. I hope that the Government will be open-minded in this matter and that they will consider amendments in Committee, not as defeats but as improvements.

I should like to associate myself with the observations made about compensation, particularly by the right hon. Member for Old Bexley and Sidcup (Mr. Heath). I was grateful to hear that that was one element that the Home Secretary was prepared to reconsider. I hope that he will take seriously, too, the points put to him about deactivation. It seems rather curious that a weapon should retain its original classification however much it has been altered, sometimes so that it can no longer be used. The Government might demonstrate the flexibility that they say they are prepared to bring to bear in this matter in dealing with that.

A number of other matters are of particular concern to me. Like other hon. Members, I have received many representations from my constituents and organised bodies. I am particularly concerned about clause 2 and the conversion of pump-action and self-loading shotguns i weapons that require a section 1 permission for convers into firearms. I listened carefully to the Home Secretary hear his justifications for that proposal. I was rat disappointed, because I did not understand him to o the House any rational or considered reason why tha necessary.

It is said that there are about 200,000 of those weap in the United Kingdom. They were legitimately purcha in good faith. They are used in sport, on farms and, as already been said, because of their lack of recoil, ar particular advantage to the disabled and to women. rather curious that, when the opportunity to posses shotgun is being made more stringent and strict, it sho have been thought necessary to reclassify shotguns of type. The Government should reconsider that elemen their proposals. If they were to do that, they would h substantial support from hon. Members on both side the House.

Clause 3 requires good reason to be established bef someone may have a shotgun certificate. There is conc about the uniformity of application of those provision the various chief constables. Substantial discretion afforded to chief constables even with the partic elements on which that discretion is to be exercised enumerated in the Bill. We must bear in mind tha challenge to discretion is much more difficult to sus legally than an appeal. Inviting a court to hold that a c constable has unreasonably exercised his discretion ma very difficult to prove.

I hope that the Government will accept the critici that have already been made in interventions about extent of the discretion afforded to chief constables clause 3 and consider a way to ensure uniformity application. It would be ridiculous if someone was abl obtain a shotgun certificate in Inverness, but denied in Dorset. A lack of uniformity of application would ridiculous.

I hope that the Government will take account of fact that many people collect weapons. I hope that will regard good reason as necessarily embra collection. I hope that they will be prepared to cons that point in Committee and accept it as a point that c legitimately be included in the Bill.

Any responsible shotgun owner would be happy accept the idea of specifying the description of a shot on a certificate. Most people who own those weapons h them insured and, for the purpose of insurance, necessary to specify the weapon's make, year and s number. The provision of that information canno regarded as an undue imposition or an intolerable bur It would not be unreasonable to oblige a person ow a shotgun to keep that weapon securely. Indeed, that be stipulated as a condition of insurance, to which I h already referred.

Clause 4 suggests that there should be notificatio transfers within a 48-hour period. The Government m consider the suggestion that that is a remarkably s time and that a period of seven days or 14 days may b appropriate and effective. Similarly, the Government wish to consider whether it is necessary for there to be notifications rather than one.

According to clause 8, it appears that photographs be fixed to shotgun certificates. I do not regard tha unreasonable. Hon. Members can only gain entry to House on presentation of a pass containing a photogr

[Mr. Menzies Campbell]

A photograph is a regular method of identification these days, and I do not believe that it could in any sense be regarded as an intolerable or unreasonable burden.

I hope that the Government will accept my criticisms as constructive. My experience is that the majority of shotgun and firearm certificate holders are conscientious and responsible. Like everyone else, they were deeply troubled by the events at Hungerford. I accept that, with or without those unhappy and tragic events, the Firearms Act 1968 cannot be treated as being set in tablets of stone. We will support sensible changes in the law relating to firearms, but we hope in return that the Government will be receptive to the responsible and sensible criticisms that have been made of the Bill and will accept that it will be susceptible to considerable improvement in Committee.

6.5 pm

Mr. Alick Buchanan-Smith (Kincardine and Deeside): Like the hon. and learned Member for Fife, North-East (Mr. Campbell), I declare an interest in this matter as I am a very occasional user of a shotgun. That use gives me some knowledge, experience and understanding of these matters. It is significant that many hon. Members who speak in the debate tonight may refer to their experience and knowledge, and that always brings more character to debates of this kind.

My interest in this matter is more than personal, as I also have a constituency interest. Obviously, in a constituency such as mine, many people's livelihoods rely on the use of a shotgun or firearm. For gamekeepers, stalkers, trappers, farmers and landowners, the use of a gun or firearm is totally legitimate and normal. In addition, in a constituency such as mine, many hundreds if not thousands of people enjoy game and rough shooting. Clay pigeon shooting, which is a long-standing and very popular sport, is especially popular in my area. People who belong to gun clubs and indulge in target shooting also have a thoroughly legitimate interest in the use of guns and firearms.

I want to emphasise those legitimate interests. I recognise the necessity for the Bill, after the events described by my hon. Friend the Member for Newbury (Mr. McNair-Wilson). I support the Bill in principle for those reasons. However, I do not support it wholeheartedly. Many of the representations that I have received regarding particular aspects of the Bill are legitimate and I agree with many of the reservations that have been expressed about it so far.

I know that my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary has a delicate and difficult balance to strike. However, in a number of respects he has struck that balance against the interests of a large section of totally law-abiding, responsible members of the community. I do not intend to go into details, as many of my hon. Friends wish to take part in the debate, but I want to refer to my major concerns.

My first concern is that I genuinely believe that the police receive too much discretion. That discretion extends too widely. As the hon. and learned Member for Fife, North-East said, we must ensure that there is even treatment in different parts of the United Kingdom with respect to discretion. Treatment must be even-handed among the many different forces.

In my area, excellent relations are e
police and legitimate users of guns and
good trust, and it often gives the police
local knowledge and information that g
purposes.

If the discretion given to chief con
too widely and not exercised responsibl
important and useful relationship bet
section of the community and the poli
something that I should not like to ha

Mr. Ron Davies: Will the hon. Gentl
that the problem of achieving uniform
one of achieving uniformity not only
place but between time and time? The H
that he would give guidance—presum
—to chief constables from time to ti
Gentleman accept that that guidanc
Home Office may change its views o
good reason. An applicant my be acc
good reason this year but be refused
because the Home Secretary has chang

Mr. Buchanan-Smith: The hon.
anticipated what I was about to say.
because I am not satisfied that the issu
the way to deal with this matter.

The Home Secretary has a duty to s
in statute precisely what he expects. O
is security. There are many different int
security of a gun or firearm. I am in
weapons should be held securely. Agai
which there could be different and
Those practices may change in time
guidance. Therefore, I am not satisfied
hon. Friend the Home Secretary said.

The second matter about which
whether it is right to classify, under sec
pump-action shotguns. That weapo
important to clay pigeon shooters an
people and women have been mentio
and I was glad that the right h
Birmingham, Sparkbrook (Mr. Hatters
that point. There is no evidence—if t
seen, understood or accepted it —
weapon with the commission of crime.
on my right hon. Friend to show th
connection, but without it I am unhappy
The classification of that weapon will a
administration. There are 200,000
weapons, so there will be enormous add
tion without achieving anything.

Thirdly, I am concerned about the
self-loading rifles. These weapons are u
deer stalking, which is a proper pursu
constituency, also by civilians for
sometimes along with the military. I ho
will be looked at.

Finally, with regard to compensation
an acknowledged threat to life are ment
Paper. However, they are not an ackn
life in the hands of current licence ho
these weapons have legally obtained
They are holding them because of
certificate under the law. In those circ
been obtained legally and held under a

the statutory authorities, those weapons are not held casually. There is an onus on my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary to consider the question of compensation. A constituent of mine wrote to me yesterday. A matter of months before these circumstances arose, he legitimately spent over £500 on a weapon. Will he lose that weapon automatically with no compensation as a result of the Bill? That matter must be considered.

As one who supports the principle of the Bill, I am still unhappy. I shall remain so unless the Minister gives assurances not only that he has listened but that he is prepared to reconsider the matter and perhaps introduce changes at a later stage. I shall listen carefully to what he says in winding up, because these concerns are shared by a vast number of law-abiding citizens.

6.15 pm

Mr. Martyn Jones (Clywd, South-West): I beg to move, to leave out from "That" to the end of the Question, and to add instead thereof:

"this House declines to give a Second Reading to a Bill which will not achieve the aims stated in the Government's proposals for reform, in that it ignores the statistics of armed crime and the circumstances of the enforcement of existing legislation, which will only become apparent by the holding of a public inquiry into the tragic events in Hungerford in August 1987."

I should like to expand on the reasons for tabling our amendment. I agree with certain provisions of the Bill. I obviously agree with the need to control firearms.

I shall first examine the supposed aims of the Bill and consider the Government's White Paper, which states that one aim is to

"ensure . . . the safety of the general public from the irresponsible or criminal use of firearms".

Another aim is to protect the rights of legitimate interests.

I do not think that the Bill will do either of those things, and it is interesting to note some of the statistics. For example, in the London area, between 1954 and 1986, armed robberies increased from four to 1,579. In the same period, firearms certificates were reduced by one third.

The statistics up to 1986 have shown a consistent picture and are similar to the 1986 figures, which, for all offences in England and Wales, excluding criminal damage were: pistols, 1,308 offences; shotguns, 1,068; and rifles, 27. Yet the Government propose to ban one type of rifle. The Home Office could not find one other case of misuse of a self-loading rifle, apart from Hungerford.

Looking at the figures, why have the Government not placed more restrictions on the availability of shotguns? Do the Government expect shotguns to be willingly registered? Judging from previous experience, it is unlikely that more than 20 per cent. will be, which will leave a massive pool of criminalised firearms. Would not a measure to impose safe-keeping restrictions on shotguns be more effective than anything else in preventing firearms falling into criminal hands?

This review was supposed to have begun early this year. It bears an extraordinary resemblance to a discredited Green Paper of 1973, which was rejected by the House at that time. Why introduce discredited legislation with indecent haste? It contains unworkable provisions of definition and it contains inconsistencies, for example, the anomalies of museum provision, the implication that arms cannot be deactivated, the inclusion of pump-action but not lever-action firearms and the lending anomaly regarding shotguns. The list is endless.

Why are the Government introducing this legi
I suspect that it is because they want to be seen
reacting to the tragedy at Hungerford in Augus
Why do they not first inquire into the backgrou
circumstances of the tragedy? I suspect that it is
it would disclose some unsavoury facts th
Government would rather were not made public. It
show that the existing legislation would have pr
Hungerford if it had been applied properly.
uncovered a catalogue of incompetence, inefficie
perhaps partiality on behalf of the police adminis
which is horrendous in its implications.

As a small-bore shooter unaffected by the Bill, I
aware of and grateful for the existing necessarily st
provisions of the Firearms Act 1968. It struck me as
incredible that an official report, which was ha
"inquiry" as the hon. Member for Newbury (Mr. M
Wilson) described it, glibly stated:

"on 10 December 1986 an application was mad
Firearms Certificate and enquiries revealed that he w
member of the Dunmore Shooting Centre"

That is a Home Office-approved club at Abingdo
report added that:

"Nothing was known to Ryan's detriment and
already obtained a gun cabinet. The application was
on 11 December 1986, with the condition that the
could only be used on approved ranges."

That is frankly impossible if the proper checks are
Even if, as the police suggest, he had applied befo
and he was merely directed to headquarters at Kid
on that date, the procedures that are necess
headquarters are, according to an official docume

"That the certificate would have to be prepared".

That is 20 minutes of police time.

"That it would have to be approved and signed
assistant chief constable".

He would not be waiting at the end of a typewriter
one firearms certificate.

"That indexes are created for reference purposes
certificates dispatched".

I suggest that that is impossible in 24 hours.

My inquiries, unlike those of the police, have r
that Ryan was not a full member of the club w
applied for the certificate. He joined the club
September 1986 and was a provisional member. T
has a three-month provisional membership. No
check was made to establish whether he subse
became a full member. I am sorry to go on in de
this is crucial to my point.

It is clearly laid down in existing law that an ap
for a certificate should be a full member of
Furthermore, and more pertinent to the case, whe
varied his certificate to obtain the so-called "Kalas
style" weapon — a self-loading rifle — he was
member of any club at which he could legitimate
used such a firearm.

Mr. Ron Davies: Will my hon. Friend confirm
is saying that Michael Ryan was not legitimately ar
of a Kalashnikov weapon, which the Bill will no

Mr. Jones: That is not quite the case. After the
the certificate, Ryan was a legitimate owner. Howe
issue of such a certificate by the police was an ex
dubious event. Indeed, I suggest that its iss
illegitimate.

Mr. Davies: So that we can be clear on this m
my hon. Friend telling the House that Michael Ry

[Mr. Davies]

legitimately issued a firearms certificate by the police in circumstances when he was not a member of a shooting club, which membership would, under normal circumstances, have allowed him the issue of a certificate to purchase a Kalashnikov?

Mr. Jones: I am, indeed, confirming that.

As proof of the fact that he was not a full member of any club that had full-bore shooting provision and that he was a member of only one club, the Wiltshire Rifle and Pistol Club, I have a photograph of his membership card, showing clearly his provisional status at the club. He was not even a full member at the time of the incident.

One could say that it was only a matter of time before he would have obtained full membership. Well, that brings me to the issue of an inquiry which, I believe, would prove beyond a shadow of a doubt that he should not have been granted a certificate on at least three grounds. First, he was known to carry his guns in public when not on the way to or from a range. That is illegal under the present Act and enforcement would have prevented the massacre. Secondly, he was reported to have used his firearms in public before the incident. That is illegal under the present Act and enforcement would have prevented the massacre. Thirdly, he was known — it is reported that certain police officers knew this — to have already possessed illegal weapons. I have spoken to an eye witness of one of the weapons and there is evidence under oath to that effect. That is illegal under the present Act and enforcement would have prevented the massacre.

Other facts may or may not be confirmed by an inquiry. Ryan is reputed to have had a social worker. Why? He was not disabled or under a probation order. Did he suffer from mental instability? Ryan is reputed to have been a heavy drinker. Was that true? Ryan is reputed to have physically abused his mother. Was that true? Any of those things would have prevented his ownership of a firearm under the existing Act. Was that "inefficiency" due to the 25 per cent. undermanning of Thames Valley police or is there a more insidious reason? At least one member of the Thames Valley police authority has written to me and he would like to know.

Any investigation might suggest sensible amendments to the Firearms Act 1968, such as statutory control of the "shooting gallery" style of gun clubs, which cannot and, I believe, often do not wish properly to control their membership. There could be statutory examination of an applicant's health and social security records and there could be a reduction of the grounds for appeal and the ease of appeal. Other obvious measures to increase the implementation and, consequently, the effectiveness of police enforcement of the existing legislation may become apparent. Sadly, they may have been all that was necessary to prevent the needless slaughter of 16 people.

Finally, it is essential that an inquiry be held, as the Bill, if it becomes law, could be found to be more unworkable and less effective than the existing Act, at least as far as certain categories of firearms are concerned.

6.26 pm

Mr. Cranley Onslow (Woking): I am grateful, Mr. Speaker, for catching your eye and hope to speak only briefly. I have not spoken in any of the debates on this subject in this Parliament. I hope for Clwyd, South-West (Mr. Jones not follow what he said about his

I must begin by declaring an i member of the National Rifle Ass of the council of the British Field claim to speak for either organisat is based more on the fact that Bi headquarters of rifle shooting in constituency. Many of my consti one kind or another and I have various kinds for twice as long as of the House. Perhaps that enti comment on the legislation.

I cannot begin by saying that I welcome. However, it is necessary. make it necessary are most unwelc reminded of them. However, I adv Under-Secretary of State that substantial improvements in Con hear that my right hon. Friend already persuaded of that in part,

The legislation is necessary to re both about the possession of firear community today and about eff armed crime. It would be most un on this important measure was background of resentment on th community. I advise my hon. Frie of the law-abiding shooting com users of guns — have felt deep classed as potential criminals. The to put that right.

Many more shooters are under some of the proposals in the Bill, ineffective or unfair. An example is the denial of compensation to firearms which are to be made illeg an adequate precedent for that. Friend that scented erasers do not c He might, with a bit more justice, with flick knives or gin traps or othe value, which are rendered totally However, I think that it is conced House that something needs to be in Committee. I was pleased to not hear it from him directly — Friend the Member for Old Be Heath) agrees with this point. It is side as him.

I also feel that my right hon. Frie must do more if he is to justify the repeating shotguns — that is to pump-action guns. He must show have an effect on crime. They w classes — particularly clay pigeon argued with considerable force tha could be amended so that self-lo magazine capacity of no more t brought within them, everything w it extraordinarily difficult to unde present proposals, and the apparen hon. Friend to amend them.

What I also find curious about of my constituents — is that it attempt to limit the burden on pol

at the hon. Member
will forgive me if I do
mendment.
erest. I am a council
iation and a member
orts Society. I do not
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y camp, which is the
is country, is in my
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gard the legislation as
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eluctance of my right

e Bill — as do many
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manpower that the

new regulations would impose. I do not know which firm of management consultants came up with the figure that the new proposals can be adminstered by the addition of a mere 80 police and civilian staff. I should have thought that the burden would be considerably more than that, certainly in the initial stages. I also feel that it would be sensible to consider reducing the present burden on the police by extending the life of some certificates — particularly shotgun certificates — and lengthening the interval at which they must be renewed. That could easily be done through a simple amendment to section 26(3) of the Firearms Act 1968, substituting five years for three. I hope that that will be probed further in Committee.

The hon. Member for Clwyd, South-West mentioned the seemingly perfunctory way in which Ryan's application for a firearms certificate was dealt with by Thames Valley police—and, indeed, the perfunctory way in which the processes of issuing such certificates are dealt with in the chief constable's report. There is no reference whatever to the normal rules and procedures of that force, and we are left to suppose that it is quite standard for a firearms certificate to be issued in 24 hours to someone who holds a shotgun certificate.

Mr. Hurd: This is an important point, and I am grateful for the opportunity to correct the misleading impression that could easily be derived—indeed, has been derived—from the chief constable's report to the police authority on Hungerford.

In fact, Ryan's application was received at divisional level on 26 November 1986. The customary checks were carried out to ensure that he had no criminal record and nothing was known to his detriment; that he was a full member of an approved gun club; and that security was adequate for the weapons that he wished to possess. *[Interruption.]* On 10 December—the date of the chief constable's report — the application was forwarded by the division to headquarters for the issue of the certificate. Having checked the point in view of the report, I understand that a reasonable time was taken, from 26 November to 10 December, and that the usual checks and procedures were carried out.

Mr. Onslow: I understand that the hon. Member for Clwyd, South-West wishes to pursue the point, but he cannot intervene on an intervention in my speech. Before he speaks, may I say to my right hon. Friend that I do not know how on earth the chief constable got away with the report without a correction when he made it to his committee.

An important point has been clarified some time after the event. I am glad that it has been clarified, but the processing of the application in just over a fortnight is still rather better than some parts of the country can achieve. Applicants for a firearms certificate do not resent the fact that it takes some time to check their applications for validity; indeed, I believe that they positively welcome it. Having paid for it, they feel that they might as well get value for money.

Mr. Martyn Jones: I apologise for the interruption on the Home Secretary's intervention. However, I would like to point out again that Ryan was not a full member, as reported in the chief constable's report. That should have been picked up at the time, and obviously was not. Ryan was not a full member of any club at that time. The earliest date on which he could have become a full member was 9 December, and he could have done so on agreement of the club. The police did not che club whether he had become a full mem December.

Mr. Onslow: I do not wish to dwell on the I feel that, both in cases such as this and in House has a right to expect that section 27 of th Act is complied with by the police.

Having said that, I must ask whether we content, as my right hon. Friend proposes, to wide and undefined powers to the police as app proposed in clause 3, under nothing more subst guidance. Some members of the shooting fra that pressure from the police side stems from to enforce the law in the spirit in which it is would be a great pity if the new legislation me relationship between law-abiding shooters and was one of mutual suspicion and distrust; should be to avoid that.

However, I can testify that the feeling exists from an editorial that appeared in *Police*, the the Police Federation, in September last *Shooting Times* is quoted as having respon proposal for increased security by asking sensible question:

"What about the shoot lunch, when the guns local pub?"

The editorial comments:

"an interesting juxtaposition of shooting with b

Any policeman or spokesman for the poli write that has no business to be dealing with su The House should not be content to leave discretion where there is evidence of such at more than we should have confidence in orga in this case, the Shooters Rights Associa claim that the Bill as drafted will increase the crime. I do not believe that either. I think tha have as much effect, in certain respects, as supporters say. It may create more offences, bu quite the same thing.

There is undoubtedly a need for a consulta the kind that has been proposed. There ar people who could staff such a body. For i former chief constable of Surrey, Sir Peter knows a good deal about such matters, and very wise head on that body, and it would no find some other competent people to serve o

In discussing the matter with outside in House must make it clear that we do not arguments based on the case of the right to which is so familiar in the United States. It i body such as our own NRA in particular conti a major role in the promotion of military ma through Services meetings at Bisley, and the a arms meeting is recognised as part of military must, however, make it plain that defence of the task of the armed forces, and not of loca It is important that the public should be legislation that we are dealing with what som as the paramilitary fascination of self-loadin

It must also be recognised that self-lo technology of weapon development is likely It may come to the point where magazin superseded for international competition purp single-shot rifles were superseded by the ma We must be careful not to legislate the Briti

[Mr. Onslow]

sports community out of the right to compete at international level. That, too, should be watched over by an advisory body.

Legislation has to be seen to be sensible and fair. Any Government need the support of the shooting community in its many activities if legislation in this area is to work. This Government are entitled to it more than any alternative Government. It is against that background that I ask Ministers to recognise the need to improve the Bill in Committee to take account of the constructive criticisms of my hon. Friends.

6.39 pm

Mr. Andrew Faulds (Warley, East): I trust that Members will forgive me if I do not range over the wider ramifications of the Bill. I should like to direct the attention of the House to a specific matter — the implications of this legislation for certain museums.

After the passing of the first Firearms Act in 1920, national museums with a statutory duty to collect firearms were exempted, either de jure or de facto, from Acts of Parliament regulating the possession of firearms. This legal basis for exemption was withdrawn from the royal armouries and the service museums by the passing of the National Heritage Act 1983; some of us had the pleasure of serving on the Standing Committee on that legislation. That Act devolved the running of these and other museums to boards of trustees. As a result, employees were no longer

"in the service of the Crown"

and, therefore, the basis of their exemption from the Firearms Acts has been lost.

Since the National Heritage Act 1983 the relevant national museums and their sponsoring Departments and the Home Office have had discussions on ways of overcoming the problem of how to deal with the large firearms collections of the major national museums under the existing firearms legislation. The national museums, as the Home Secretary will know, have continually asked for a return to the status quo ante 1983; in other words, exemption from the Firearms Act.

There is a range of arguments for this: the lack of any recorded abuse of this privilege by national museums or their staff in the past; legal opinion that this course is perfectly feasible and acceptable; the safeguards which exist through Treasury audit, the national museums' security adviser and the individual museums' security infrastructures.

The Home Office has so far, I think misguidedly, rejected this approach and drawn up the present legislation, which includes provisions for giving museums licences of exemption, but on conditions to be laid down by the Home Secretary.

The major national museums with large collections of firearms are very concerned about a number of the details of the present proposals. The principal concern is the irretrieveable damage to objects of heritage which may ensue. The Bill gives the Home Secretary absolute powers to insist that museums hold firearms on conditions laid down by him. The present incumbent may be very concerned about the national heritage, but it may be that other incumbents of his office will not share that concern. It is the unrestricted nature of the powers that concerns the major national museums.

The Home Secretary, or another, may seek to impose conditions that physically affect the firearms in question, and could lead to the physical destruction or alteration of the original whole or part of these firearms. The national museums argue that a statutory distinction could and should be drawn, on the one hand, between the duties of the trustees of the museums in question to keep heritage objects in their original condition for the benefit of present and future generations, and, on the other, the duty of the Home Secretary to ensure that the firearms are held in secure conditions which will not endanger the safety of the public. They are also concerned to ensure that the licences of exemption, so-called, for museums should also cover all types of ammunition. The Bill needs clarification from the national museums' point of view.

The museums affected are fully prepared to secure their firearms in such a way as the Home Secretary accepts will keep the peace and security of the general public. But they urge that the damaging implications of the Bill should be reconsidered on the issues that I have raised. I trust that that will be done, and hopefully done successfully, in the deliberations in Committee. I am grateful to you, Mr. Speaker, for letting me in so briefly.

6.44 pm

Mr. Alan Haselhurst (Saffron Walden): I fear that I may sound like a pale echo of many of my hon. Friends, particularly my right hon. Friend the Member for Kincardine and Deeside (Mr. Buchanan-Smith), although I may be an even paler echo when I declare that I am not a shooter, unlike my distinguished predecessor but one as the Member for Saffron Walden.

I also confess to being nervous of guns. Apart from the school cadet force, the first time I picked up a gun with live ammunition in my adult life was on 9 January of this year when I visited a clay-pigeon shooting club in my constituency. When I say that it was Stansted airport clay-pigeon club my hon. Friends will say, where else?

I am all too well aware of the respectable role that the gun has in the rural community and amongst the wider shooting public. I have been impressed by the many representations that I have received, as I was when I was Parliamentary Private Secretary to Home Office Ministers in 1973 when the matter was last discussed in detail.

The Government had to do something in the wake of the Hungerford tragedy. Many legitimate shooters accept that the present law can and should be improved. As has been said time and again in the debate, it is a matter of arriving at the right balance between the legitimate interests of sportsmen and shooters, on the one hand, and the safety of the public, on the other. I have some unease about whether there is a direct connection between the problem as it is perceived by the public, and perhaps described by the police, and the action proposed by the Government.

If certain types of guns are banned, if there is control of ammunition and if there are tighter requirements for security, one must imagine that there will be a measurable improvement for the safety of the public. However, the danger is surely not the legal owner of the gun using it for crime but rather that the legally-owned gun may be stolen. That, it would appear, is the main cause for concern.

I gather that in 1986 there were 800 incidents of shotguns being stolen. In the same year firearms were used in 7·7 per cent. of homicides, 8·8 per cent. of robberies and

4·5 per cent. of crimes of violence endangering life. In what percentage of those cases were stolen guns actually employed?

I think we are right to question responsibly and constructively the advance that the Bill will achieve in curbing serious crime. That advance should not be overstated by my right hon. Friend. There is not such a conclusive case that amendment to the Bill should be beyond consideration. I hope that my right hon. Friend will not regard the Bill as it stands as a perfect entity, incapable of amendment.

Having confessed my general ignorance of the sport, if I dare venture into the types of guns, I am persuaded that the self-loading shotgun—a weapon which I handled on 9 January and with which I performed better than with any other weapon—should be used for sporting purposes. I noted that it had less recoil than other weapons. I am glad that my right hon. Friend is considering whether self-loading guns, with a restricted magazine capacity, might, after all, be exempted from clause 1 controls. Having handled such a gun, I wonder whether it is crucial that the dividing line should be between two and four cartridges. I cannot believe that having four cartridges rather than two makes that weapon inherently more dangerous or adds measurably to the danger to the public. What proportion of stolen guns, used in that small percentage of serious crimes involving firearms, were self-loading guns? The figure must be extremely small.

I share my hon. Friends' fears about the powers of the police. Constituents frequently express their worries to me about the possible variations of approach between different police forces and different police officers. I have been asked to countersign a shotgun application only twice in my life, and only quite recently. One countersigns passport applications any number of times, but rather more thought is involved in countersigning a shotgun application. I had known both people concerned perfectly well for many years and was pleased to sign their applications, but I could not possibly guarantee that some trauma might not happen to either of those people in later life, which could cause them, as owners of weapons, to do something wholly regrettable and tragic. It is a far-fetched possibility, but I could not guarantee that it might not happen, nor do I believe that any police officer could give such a guarantee.

There is a tremendous variation when officers of the state are given such responsibility. It happens time and again. For example, a factory inspector may demand one set of standards, yet his successor may demand another. It also happens when fire officers introduce fire precautions in various establishments throughout the country. It is not far-fetched to imagine that legitimate shooters might be worried about what might happen in one part of the country compared with another and about the conduct of one officer compared with another. My right hon. Friend must reduce the risk of variation in the best way possible.

I should also like to emphasise the point about compensation, and I welcome my right hon. Friend's promise of further consideration. It seems the unkindest cut of all to many legitimate gun owners that people should believe that they might misuse their weapons and that, if those weapons were taken from them, there should be no compensation. The fear has been expressed that guns which were not allowed to be handed in, with compensation, could find their way into the wrong hands. That idea was dismissed by the right hon. Member for Birmingham, Sparkbrook (Mr. Hattersley) and others, but it is a reasonable fear. We need only recall that a few years ago we tried to stop anything getting into Rhodesia, and we failed badly. We need only consider what is happening in any hot spot in the world where weapons are used to realise that they are getting into those places by all sorts of devious routes. The person who parted with the gun would not be responsible for the final destination. It would follow a shadowy trail, but it would get there in the end.

Mr. Faulds: Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Haselhurst: I promised to speak briefly, so I shall not take any interventions.

This is an immensely difficult matter in which my right hon. Friend may find the precedents discouraging, but he would do a great service if he were brave and made a special case for compensation in respect of those weapons. He was obliged to bring forward legislation. I hope that he will maintain a listening stance and be prepared to perfect the balance of his Bill in those matters which obviously cause a great deal of concern among our hon. Friends and those many people whom they represent. Then, indeed, his legislation will deserve to survive.

6.53 pm

Mr. Eric Illsley (Barnsley, Central): Like the hon. Member for Saffron Walden (Mr. Haselhurst), I am not a shooter and my experience of all weapons is limited. My speech is based on the lobbies that I have received from both inside and outside my constituency.

Any legislation which controls the illegal and criminal use or possession of firearms must be welcomed. However, the legislation will do nothing to affect illegally held firearms. The Bill seeks only to regulate legally held and regulated firearms. It imposes further restrictions on firearms holders who, in the vast majority of cases, are law-abiding and respectable people who have chosen shooting as their hobby. The Secretary of State has said, and it was admitted in the White Paper, that legislation cannot eradicate criminal intent. The question, therefore, is whether there is a need for this legislation and whether these proposals address that need.

Under the present law, there is very little regulation of shotguns, but there is considerable and necessary control of other firearms, such as rifles and pistols. The White Paper recognises the public's right to hold firearms for sporting and working purposes. Almost all firearms can be used for sporting or working purposes. Indeed, the self-loading rifle, which is at the heart of this legislation, is used in target competition. The balancing of the rights of shooters with the security of the public is a difficult task, but it must be clear that further regulation of known firearms will not stop any further incidents, such as those which occurred at Hungerford and elsewhere. The only way to achieve that is by the total prohibition of firearms which, as the Government said in the White Paper, is unrealistic.

A factor that should be made clear, and which constituents have made clear to me, is that a competent shooter can probably do as much damage using an old bolt-action type rifle as he can using a self-loading rifle. We should consider, in that light, whether that type of weapon should be prohibited. Therefore, if the law is being changed simply because of such incidents as Hungerford —the White Paper states that those events have shown

[Mr. Eric Illsley]

potential weaknesses in existing legislation — this legislation is inadequate. The only way to prevent such incidents is to ban all guns. The Bill cannot reduce the risk to the public because the firearms which remain under clause 1 are just as dangerous as those which the Bill seeks to prohibit.

What, therefore, is the real reason for the Bill? It cannot put any further control on illegal weapons, so the real reason may simply be to discourage shooters, to reduce their numbers by making it more difficult for firearms to be obtained, or to discourage them by not giving compensation. The granting of powers to the Secretary of State further to prohibit some categories of firearms will also discourage shooters from obtaining any type of gun which they fear could be barred by an order of the Secretary of State at short notice.

If the shooters are a responsible and law abiding group, there should be no question that their guns will be used in crime or that they will find their way into the hands of criminals. Here, I differentiate between firearms and shotguns, to which I hope to refer later.

All firearms covered by clause 1 are listed on a firearms certificate or licence. There are strict conditions governing the purchase and sale of such firearms and ammunition. The police, therefore, should have adequate records of these firearms. Further regulation can do nothing to prevent armed crime. The real problem is the firearms which are illegally circulating throughout the country. Recently, there have been five cases of shipments of arms from Libya finding their way to Northern Ireland or to this country.

There is perhaps a need for further regulation in respect of shotguns. At present, there is no record of the number of guns held by a certificate holder, so the proposal to list all shotguns is welcome. The Home Secretary may consider methods of ensuring that all such guns are recorded and that a serial number is stamped on each one, perhaps through an amnesty. The tightening of conditions regarding the shotgun certificate is also welcome as, to a certain extent, this will prevent shotguns being obtained, for no real reason. However, one can only guess at the numbers of unregulated and unlicensed shotguns that are in the country now.

Hon. Members know of the lobby against the prohibition of self-loading rifles, and I can only echo the concern expressed to me by my constituents and ask the Secretary of State to consider something like an approved list of self-loading rifles to enable disabled and frail shooters to continue their hobby. No one in his right mind would object to banning such weapons as rocket launchers, bazookas and mortars.

As well as having shotguns listed on the certificate, perhaps the Home Secretary should consider bringing them under section 1, as with firearms, and abolishing the shotgun certificate altogether, to give some sort of uniformity to the firearms legislation.

Compensation, to which several hon. Members have referred, is the one thing that is not in the Bill that most of the shooting fraternity want in it. Many shooters will lose considerable sums of money as a result of having to hand in guns that come under section 5 and that are prohibited. They will not be able to sell them on the domestic market or abroad. I am informed that there is no market for those sorts of firearms. The Home Secretary might consider the point that compensation will ensure that prohibited firearms are handed in when an amnesty comes into effect, whereas now there is a risk that some firearms will not be handed in because there is no compensation.

The Bill does not cover mail order sales. Public confidence cannot be maintained as long as people can look along the newsagents' shelves and see firearms advertised in glossy magazines and available for a small deposit. I suggest that further consideration be given to restrictions on mail order selling, not only of firearms but of other implements that form part of the packages offered in survival magazines—martial arts equipment, wheels darts and so on.

I think there should have been more consultation and that a better and more comprehensive Bill could have been brought forward. It will seem to the public that the Bill has been quickly brought forward in response to the Hungerford tragedy. Its main proposals were outlined by the Secretary of State in September at the conference of the Association of Chief Police Officers. The public will be disappointed when they find the Bill will do nothing to reduce the rates of armed crime.

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

Madam Deputy Speaker (Miss Betty Boothroyd): Before I call the next speaker, I remind the House that Mr. Speaker appealed for 10-minute speeches. Few hon. Members have responded to that appeal so far.

7.2 pm

Mr. Paul Marland (Gloucestershire, West): If being a game shooter makes it necessary to declare an interest in the debate, I do so. Unlike many other hon. Members who have spoken, I shoot game.

When discussing the Bill it is important to try to strike the right balance between liberty and restriction. Virtually all who enjoy shooting realise that their weapons are lethal and that if they fall into the wrong hands the consequences could be appalling. As a result, shooters respect their guns and treat them accordingly. Most people already keep their guns and ammunition under lock and key and are aware of the responsibility involved in owning a firearm. I understand also that shooting is now one of the fastest growing participatory sports in the country.

It would require a massive amount of legislation to prevent a gun from falling into the hands of a determined thief or killer, but Hungerford has added an urgency to our work on the Bill. I believe that today's legislation can stand a little tightening. However, as other hon. Members have said, we must be careful not to allow "Ryanitis" to cloud our judgment, or to allow the Bill to become a vehicle that could be put to a more sinister use in future by those who would seek to outlaw game shooting or wildfowling.

I cannot see the point of the proposal to transfer automatic-loading shotguns to section 1 of the Act. Automatic or pump-action shotguns are no more dangerous than the standard double-barrelled shotgun. In fact, they are less so, because the double-barrelled shotgun has a higher rate of sustained firing than an automatic which means that one can fire 10 cartridges down a regular double-barrelled shotgun more quickly than through an automatic. Furthermore, a double-barrelled shotgun can

be cut down to a mere 12 in. and still work. It makes a handy little weapon for a bank robber. Automatic or pump-action shotguns cannot be cut down, as their mechanisms will not work if shortened—so they cannot be concealed, like sawn-off shotguns. To move automatic guns to section 1 seems illogical. If we do so, we shall be the only country in the west that differentiates between shotguns in this way.

The powers that will be given to the Secretary of State and to chief constables under the Bill seem too vague, for we have no clear definition of what is a good reason to own a gun. We have no way of knowing that the chief constables will interpret the powers in the same way. As things stand, the Home Secretary could amend designations at will without consultation, and could eliminate whole classes of shooting sports, together with their firearms and ammunition. How do we know that a future Home Secretary or chief constable might not be an enthusiastic supporter of the League against Cruel Sports and could, at a stroke, eliminate all classes of game shooting? That would destroy a sport that is enjoyed by a growing number of people, and bring havoc to a growing industry in rural areas. We have the finest gunmakers in the world in this country. Thousands of gamekeepers, game dealers, game farmers, game feed merchants and manufacturers would lose their livelihoods overnight—not to mention the impact that such a move would have on farmers, who are today looking for alternative ways of raising money. Game shooting will undoubtedly be one of those.

If discretion in these matters is given to 52 chief constables, how do we know that they will interpret their instructions in the same way? I urge that this part of the Bill should be clarified. Why should uncertainty exist about how many guns a citizen may own and about the conditions under which they must be kept? Is it a good reason to keep a pair of Purdeys if one does not shoot, merely because one's grandmother gave them to one? Is it a good reason to own six guns because a person is a keen shot and wants to have an 8-bore for goose shooting, a 12-bore magnum for rough shooting, a pair of sidelocks for driven birds, a 20-bore for his wife or other members of the family and a muzzle loader for muzzle-loading shooting competitions? Is it a good reason to own 25 ancient guns because one is a collector, an investor, a student or a researcher of old guns — but not a practising sportsman? Museums will be allowed to do that, but what about individuals?

These doubts must be cleared up because, as others have said, relations between the shooting community and the police have never been better than they are today, and that is the way that we want things to stay.

The White Paper mentioned the secure keeping of shotguns in some detail, but little is said about that in the Bill. Here again, it is essential that clear guidance be given; otherwise, the police could use their powers seriously to curtail shotgun ownership.

There is confusion, too, over guns in transit—taken when travelling to a shoot or staying overnight, or sent through the post. Is control over transit to be tightened up or changed, and, if so, how? Shall we expect every bed and breakfast establishment that accommodates shooters overnight to instal a gun safe? We need clarification about that.

On the positive side, I hope that my right hon. Friend will be reassured to learn that I approve of the suggestion that police should keep records of all guns and be notified of transfers of ownership on long-term loans, and that gun licences should be produced on the purchase of ammunition. Records should be kept of who owns what gun and where it is. I do not suggest that ammunition purchases should be recorded, but the production of a licence implies an approved user and all shooters, regardless of what type of shooting sport they indulge in, accept that gun ownership implies responsibility.

It is interesting to note that, as others have said, the effects of firearms and shotguns have been held at a remarkably constant level over the last few years, which is a credit to the security arrangements of today's gun owners.

I believe that it is right that, as set out in the Bill, visitors to this country should be required to have a gun licence and a sponsor before bringing a gun into the country.

Turning to the very considerable extra police responsibilities envisaged in this Bill, with the need to keep these and the number of hours of work involved to a minimum so as to keep the cost to shooters to a minimum, I wonder whether it would be feasible to get organisations such as the National Rifle Association, for example, to take responsibility for ensuring that their affiliated clubs meet approved police standards. In this way an affiliated club would be a guaranteed establishment; it would be guaranteed to be responsible and secure. Surely this would cut down the amount of time needed for police inspection and approval and therefore reduce the costs to the club. Then, on approval of the club or of the sportsmen, what chance would there be, I wonder, of extending the period to the next inspection, as has already been discussed.

Lastly, I want to turn to the proposed amnesty. I am sure that it will work. I am sure that many people will hand in their guns, but I have two thoughts on that. Would it be possible to try to preserve ancient weapons which may be handed in during this amnesty by allowing interested parties such as museums and approved collectors to inspect the guns handed in to see if there is anything that is worth saving? Secondly, as we are all anxious that as many unwanted weapons as possible should be handed in, I too believe that some sort of compensation should be paid for these guns—not necessarily varying according to the value of the gun, but a flat-rate amount offered to everybody in return for handing in guns.

Those are the four points that I wished to contribute to this debate.

7.11 pm

Mr. William Ross (Londonderry, East): I declare an interest. I have fired a considerable variety of weapons in my lifetime, but I do not shoot in Great Britain, except when representing the House at Bisley against the other place. I am afraid that we have not done as well in recent years as we might have wished.

I was not surprised that the Home Secretary would not give way to me during his speech whenever I rose to challenge him on the question of compensation, because he was formerly the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland and presided over the system of compensation for weapons handed in by those who no longer needed them. I think that he would find it rather difficult to defend the position that he is now adopting in regard to compensation in Great Britain. It is quite clear that compensation is needed, but that is a matter that I can safely leave to right hon. and hon. Members who represent

[Mr. William Ross]

constituencies in Great Britain while I deal with the general thrust of the arguments for and against the legislation that is before us today.

I think that the House will agree that, coming as I do from Northern Ireland, I have a clear interest in gun control. When I look at the history of gun control in Ulster, I question very seriously the whole theory of gun control as at present practised in this country.

Hungerford has been referred to. I have to tell the House that last Sunday week a constituent of mine went to church early, returned home, let his wife go to church, proceeded to shoot dead his three small children, including a 14-month-old infant, shot his wife when she came home, and then shot himself. That happened in a part of the United Kingdom that has the most ferociously tight gun laws, and it could not be prevented by those gun laws. This is a matter to which I will return briefly.

Therefore, when I look at the Hungerford incident and at what has been put before the House, I really wonder what the Government are trying to do and what general principle underlies this legislation. The control of weapons in Northern Ireland is extremely tight. Also, in Northern Ireland there is a vast number of personal protection weapons, pistols and hand guns of various types, carried by many members of the security forces, present and past. The only net result of that has been that the incidence of suicide by young men using those weapons seems to have increased dramatically. One of my neighbours was such a victim. That would indicate that such weapons held by persons legally entitled to have them are not generally used in crime at all, even in the very violent situation in which we live in Northern Ireland.

Secondly, it is not only guns that are tightly controlled in Northern Ireland. If one buys ammunition for any sort of weapon the amount is restricted and noted on the firearms certificate. We have firearms certificates for all shotguns and bullet-firing weapons. What ammunition one buys, from whom one buys it and the date on which it is bought is shown. The ammunition dealer has to keep a similar record, which is looked over by the police at regular intervals. The reality is that this has not made a blind bit of difference to the number of weapons that are used in crime. It has not mattered.

I cannot understand why the Government are now trying to draw a line between the lethality of the various types of weapons that are available. This matter has been dealt with in passing by other hon. Members. The reality is that a shotgun is the most deadly weapon of all at short range. It is a surprisingly difficult weapon to transport and has to be cut down if criminals are going to use it; but it is still the deadliest and most murderous weapon of all, because it is much easier to hit one's target with a shotgun than with anything else.

All the controls in Northern Ireland have not stopped weapons of all sorts getting legally into the hands of unstable persons, such as the one who perpetrated the tragedy in my own constituency. Something must have gone wrong, but I understand there was nothing to show that even the day before. It was the same at Hungerford. The changes that are proposed in the Bill will not prevent another Hungerford or another Maghera. Nor will they prevent domestic murders by the use of legally-held weapons, and I think that a very large number o murders committed in the country generally w domestic murders.

The criminal will continue to steal legally-held we if they are available. We have heard mention of that t but we were not told how many stolen legall weapons were recovered. I suspect that some at l and perhaps a very large percentage—of those weapons were recovered. Terrorists, of course, i Province and elsewhere, will steal legally-held wea but that is not how the terrorist carries on his war.

The legislation that goes through the House is sup to be decided by rational argument. It seems to m that is the one thing that is completely lacking Government's approach to this matter. There has be real attempt to look seriously and in depth at the matter, to take advice, or to try to find out what countries are doing and what the result of legi controls in those countries has been. The Bill is the pr of haste and, above all, emotion.

I can remember—and I think that all hon. Me can remember—the introduction of the Preventi Terrorism (Temporary Provisions) Act. Every tin subject comes up in the House those who shouted l for it at the start now apologise and want to get ric as far as I can see. I can remember the dissolution Stormont Parliament because the Army shot d number of people in the Bogside in Londonderry Stormont Parliament had nothing to do with that, was perceived that in some way it was responsible. an action of haste and panic which has borne evi throughout the years.

The Anglo-Irish Agreement was signed by the Minister and supported by practically all hon. Me It was supposed to bring peace, stability and reco tion. We have seen the result in the extradition legi in the Irish Republic. Weapons have been brought the shipload by the IRA. Apparently, Prot paramilitary groups are bringing in by the c weapons that we are now told have to be removed their possession—mortars, rockets and heavy m guns. Terrorists do not go out looking for fi certificates for those weapons; they smuggle them use them. Firearms legislation will not stop terrorist getting weapons and using them.

The two measures that I mentioned were all, to extent, the product of emotional reactions to inciden had to be seen to be doing something.

Mr. Barry Field (Isle of Wight): A number o members are incarcerated in the prison on the Wight. What are the hon. Gentleman's views on ad self-loading rifles, so that they are no longer aut weapons, by plugging or welding up the gas inl removing the pistons?

Mr. Ross: That would make it more difficult fo weapons to be used. However, if gas-operated we were treated in that way, people would have to go b bolt-action weapons. In competent hands, a bolt- weapon is a most deadly weapon. It is extremely acc Such weapons were used by our military forces in t world war, to such effect that the attacking Ge thought that they were machine guns. Trying to de gas-operated weapons does no good at all.

The Government have adopted a fundamentally approach to the control of firearms. Reaction in h

usually wrong. Whenever I see the two Front Benches agreeing that something must be done, I am confirmed in my view that it will be wrong. Whenever they agree on something, it invariably turns out to be wrong. Whenever the Home Secretary, who was the author of the Anglo-Irish Agreement, supports something, I am further convinced that it is wrong.

Emotional reactions, especially reactions to horrific deeds such as that at Hungerford, cannot lead to a sensible and rational method of dealing with guns. The Bill is wrong. If the House divides tonight, I shall be glad to vote against it. I hope that, even at this late stage, the Home Secretary and other Home Office Ministers will listen carefully to what is being said against the Bill and will take it away, consider in depth what is wrong with present firearms law and come back to the House with a sensible recommendation.

7.23 pm

Sir Dudley Smith (Warwick and Leamington): I have listened to every speech in the debate. It is most remarkable that the Bill has very few friends. The speech of my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary was the only one that was fully in support of the Bill. I am not suggesting that there will be a Division tonight, or that people will vote against the Bill. Most hon. Members agree that the gun law needs to be tightened. But I am certain that the fallacies that have been exposed by right hon. and hon. Members on both sides of the House will give my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary and other Home Office Ministers great pause for thought.

Experience tells me that early reactive legislation is usually the worst kind. The Bill is an example of that. I have little doubt that the law needs to be tightened. All hon. Members agree that the Hungerford affair was horrific, but it was exceptional in our national life. Even in this dangerous age, I doubt whether there will be as serious an incident in the next 20 years. If there is not, it will not be because of the Bill.

I agree that the banning of certain firearms is probably desirable, but they should never have been available to the public in the first place. What happened at Hungerford was unique. It was imitative of what had recently happened in Australia and America. It was a copycat incident.

Like other hon. Members, I have had a considerable number of representations from constituents who belong to shooting and gun clubs. They have been writing to me articulately and have also come to see me. They ask, pertinently, why they should be penalised because of the actions of one man—however mad and terrible he was. They say, rightly, that the new laws will not stop murder and mayhem. They resent the implication that they are latent criminals because they own firearms. There can be no effective legislation against a man who eventually becomes unhinged and has access to firearms or other weapons. In my constituency, there was a terrible case of a man who wiped out his entire family, killing three people, and then committed suicide, but who had been perfectly normal until that time. Such things happen.

I fully support all that has been said by those who regard it as totally wrong that those who own particular weapons that they will now have to surrender should not be compensated. Those people regard it as a fine. If they must surrender firearms worth £200, £300, £400, or £500, the state would be fining them for daring to possess such weapons under the law as it then was.

I have great sympathy with the views of people whose sport is shooting, even though they are a small minority of the population. I am not a member of a shooting club, although I own a shotgun and am interested in game shooting and rough shooting. I do not do it on a regular basis because, as a Member of Parliament, I do not have the time. I wonder whether my licence will be renewed, because I do not shoot regularly.

The vast majority of people are not interested in firearms, or in owning them. However, they are influenced by the superficial instant reaction of the media to what happened at Hungerford and to the superficial calls for the public to be protected. A recent television documentary, to which my hon. Friend the Member for Newbury (Mr. McNair-Wilson) referred, sought to establish that the police were negligent and much too slow in responding to the horror of Hungerford. Given the unique circumstances of that case, I do not blame the police, who had to face an extraordinarily difficult and unusual situation. However, I do blame them for granting a licence for the acquisition of a whole range of deadly weapons to a young man who, by any standards, should not have owned them and who appeared to be unstable. This afternoon we heard the worrying suggestion that he was probably only a provisional member of a gun club.

As a result of what happened, all who possess guns will now be put to considerable inconvenience and cost. Yet those holders of guns, whether firearms or shotguns, are in 99 per cent. of cases among the most law-abiding citizens. Gun clubs and collectors will suffer most from the Bill. However, what will the Bill prevent? I submit that it will be very little indeed. My right hon. Friend the Home Secretary was asked how many stolen guns are used in criminal activities. I do not have the figure, but I believe that I am right in saying that there are very few. I understand that the firearm most used in the pursuit of crime is the pistol. That weapon is currently subjected to the most restrictive licence. But most pistols used in crime have not been stolen—they have been acquired illegally by criminals through criminal networks.

One of those shooters who will be affected drew my attention to the British Medical Association's publication, "Living with Risk", which studies the various hazards which can cause untimely death or injury in our society. Accidents with firearms, or the deliberate use of them against a person, come very low in the order of risk, especially with regard to legally held firearms. There are many other hazards facing us. For example, road accidents kill and maim far more people every 48 hours or so than did the exceptional case of Hungerford.

It may well be wise to remove repeater weapons from the public and to tighten up on licences, but I hope that my right hon. Friend and his successors will monitor and review the law regularly and analyse the situation. There are deep flaws in the Bill. Whatever view one takes of game and rough shooting and gun clubs, there must be fairness while such pursuits are tolerated and within the law. They must be permitted and they must be treated fairly.

7.30 pm

Mr. Nicholas Baker (Dorset, North): I shall repay your kindness in calling me, Madam Deputy Speaker, by being

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brief, because, apart from anything else, most of my foxes have been shot, whether with a shotgun or other firearm, I know not.

The annunciator screen should announce when the Front Benches are united on a piece of legislation, so that Back Benchers are suitably warned. Having said that, I support the Bill with a few qualifications, most of which have been mentioned, enabling me to be correspondingly brief.

The Bill is not and should not be a response to the tragedy at Hungerford. The proper response should be action on the spot — instruction to the police, and, possibly, the adjustment of how they behave to try to prevent similar catastrophes.

The Bill is not a response to the tragedy. It is necessary —I declare an interest as a possessor of a shotgun and a shooter of game — because the law is out of date. I support the Bill because a number of new and different species of weapons should be prohibited. There is a need for tighter control over guns and there is a small advantage to the prevention of crime in trying to limit the number of weapons in circulation. However, as many of my hon. Friends have already said, it is difficult to quantify the number of arms, and that is something that the Home Office should try to do.

In several respects, the Bill may have gone too wide and in others it needs more precise definition. However, the Bill is far better than the White Paper suggested it would be.

To those — no doubt all of us — concerned about crime, and possibly to those who think that crime will be reduced by legislating against legal holders of shotguns and other arms, I would say two things. First, we do not have the same kind of society as the United States, where the right to defend oneself with a gun is an important human right. We might be going that way, and I hope that, when the Home Secretary wears his other hat to look after broadcasting, he will do what he can to reduce the amount of, by our standards, violent, but by American standards apparently quite ordinary, material on our screens—in particular, violence with the use of guns. Increasing penalties for crimes aggravated by the possession of weapons is one way in which the kind of crimes that we are concerned about can be prevented.

Shooting interests in Britain are strong, and I suspect that there are many more interested in shooting than the Home Office calculated when it started on this legislative road. Many jobs depend upon shooting. Shooting as a field sport, in which I have a personal interest, is largely responsible for the maintenance of the countryside as it appears to us today. It is a vehicle by which a large amount of money goes from the urban areas, spread as they are over the south of Britain, to the rural areas, and that is good. Shooting also contributes to the ecological balance of our countryside. Shooting as a sport is a positive force for good, and I would not want to see anything in the Bill that would allow any future Secretary of State—I have in mind clause 1(5)—the power to diminish the rights of proper sportsmen and legal holders of shotguns.

On the granting and renewal of shotgun certificates and the good reason point, the interests of a bona fide collector should be specified. The hon. Member who suggested that that is already recognised has read the Bill inc wonder whether the interests of a genuine inves be specified.

I am less concerned than my hon. Friends abo the police to handle the safety and pe community aspects. That approach may wo enormous difficulties in trying to lay down in the precise storage, safety, and peace-to-the-c requirements. However, I have no doubt Committee will want to discuss that. I favour guidance procedures for police.

I agre that the three-shot pump-action shotg safe as an ordinary double-barrelled shotguns a not be cla sed as section 1 firearms. I also agre Home Off ce should press for compensation for firearms, a point that has been well covered.

One po t that has not been covered co estimate o police manpower that will be req application the Bill in practice will depend on it costs the mmunity. I hope that the estimate police is correct, but I cannot believe that that i but a considerable underestimate of the numbe and civilians who will be needed to enforce the that my right hon. Friend will look carefully a

The British Shooting Sports Council, wh pleased to say has its base in my constituency, that 220 more policemen and 50 more civilia required. That would be far too high a price to Bill such as this, particularly when, like many Members, I have lobbied the Home Secretary re an increase in the number of policemen to adm law in the streets of my constituency.

The proper and responsible use of firearms the country, the sporting community and verm Unlike my right hon. Friend the Member for and Sidcup (Mr. Heath), I do not think that th defence implications, although on other matt great pleasure to be able to agree with him for o may be defence implications. We do not need t as an earlier constituent of my constituency, Tory Prime Minister, Lord Salisbury, who sa that he would laud the day when there was a ri cottage in England, but I do believe that firearm owners and users will support the Bill that it is properly amended on the lines that I ar Friends have suggested.

7.38 pm

Mr. Michael Colvin (Romsey and Waterside) what my hon. Friend the Member for Dorset, Baker) said, in particular about police manpo take some 200,000 weapons from the category now qualify for shotgun certificates and inclu category 1, where they will require firearms that will have considerable implications manpower. I see from an answer to a par question that it takes the police 45 minutes shotgun certificate and 145 minutes to grant certificate, so if that difference is multiplied weapons it will mean a lot of additional wo police.

I must first declare my interests as an owner and rifles and as a user of them from a very ear father's advice to his son was,

"If a sportsman true you'd be,
listen carefully to me.
Never, never let your gun
pointed be at anyone."

It is because the British shooting fraternity has followed that advice that it was so outraged and shocked by the Hungerford tragedy on 19 August and other more recent events. It cautioned, quite rightly, against over-reaction by the public and the authorities. Shooting sportsmen accept that tighter controls may be required to protect the public and that the Government have a duty to respond to calls for reform.

We must, however, ask ourselves during the passage of the Bill, which I hope will proceed tonight, whether it will give greater protection to the public or will merely penalise the law-abiding shooting community for a crime they did not commit. That shooting community comprises some 4 million shooters and a considerable trade to support Britain's second most popular participatory sport. That is probably why so many sportsmen and supporters of the sport, who do not necessarily shoot, have reacted to the Government's proposals. Our mail bags and surgery lists are evidence of that. No one can deny that they have had a fair hearing, and I applaud the way in which Home Office Ministers have reacted to representations made to them.

A great deal of consultation has taken place. I part company with some of my hon. Friends who have said that there has not been enough consultation and that the Bill is being rushed through. There has been a great deal of consultation, from my right hon. Friend's speech in Torquay on 22 September, only a month after the Hungerford tragedy, through to the publication of the White Paper. In all that time Ministers have been only too ready to respond to representations made to us. There has been a constructive debate on the issue throughout that time.

I particularly pay credit to the work of the British Shooting Sports Council under the chairmanship of Lord Swansea. It represents a number of organisations, which I will read out so that their members will know that their views have been represented to Ministers. The council consists of the following organisations: the British Association for Shooting and Conservation, the British Field Sports Society, the Clay Pigeon Shooting Association, the Gun Trade Association, the Muzzle Loaders Association of Great Britain, the National Pistol Association, the National Rifle Association, the National Small-bore Rifle Association, the Shooting Sports Trust and the United Kingdom Practical Shooting Association. I add to the list of organisations the Shooters Rights Association, which has also been diligent and energetic in its contribution to the debate.

I welcome the Bill, but it is far from perfect. It will have to be amended during its passage because, in seeking to protect the public against the misuse of firearms, there is a danger that we militate unintentionally and unjustifiably against the legitimate, sensible and responsible owners and users of firearms. Farmers are major users of firearms. Four out of five farmers have at least one shotgun which can be fairly described as an essential tool of trade. They welcome most of the Government's proposals, but they have one major reservation about clause 3 relating to the grant and renewal of shotgun certificates by the chief officer of police. This will require certain shotgun owners and those seeking to possess one to show good reason why they want it. The onus is on the shooter to show good reason, but the onus should be on the police to say why he or she should not have the certificate.

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Douglas Hogg): I am reluctant to interrupt my hon. Friend, but the onus he prefers is the onus set out in the Bill.

Mr. Colvin: I am very pleased to hear that. Nevertheless, there could be great disparity in the implementation of the law relating to good reason as between one police authority and another. There are 51 police authorities and it should not be left to them to apply their own interpretation, nor should it be left to the courts to decide as a matter of common law. Although the Bill goes a great deal further than the White Paper on that subject, it is not nearly specific enough. It is far better to have clear guidelines as to what constitutes a good reason incorporated in the legislation. No mention has been made in the Bill of reasons such as investment or private collections.

In welcoming the statutory requirement that, for safekeeping, responsibility for weapons must be placed on the shoulders of the person, I feel that a code of practice is necessary. This raises the question of who should advise the Home Secretary on drawing up such guidelines and codes of practice. My hon. Friend will have seen the voluntary code of practice for safe custody of weapons and ammunition produced by the British Sports Shooting Council. It has suggested—the suggestion has received wide support in the House—that an expert consultative committee should be established to assist my right hon. Friend on an ongoing basis.

I refer briefly to compensation. The slogan on which we should fight this issue is "No confiscation without compensation". There is no doubt that if the measure is being introduced to protect the public, the public must be prepared to foot the bill for that compensation. The hon. Member for Londonderry, East (Mr. Ross), who is expert in the use of firearms and has great experience of their misuse, said that many banned firearms that ought to be surrendered may find their way on to the black market and his constituents rather than mine will be on the receiving end of their bullets.

The analogy has been drawn between the firearm and the motor car. People ask why we should have such restrictions on firearms when people are allowed legitimately to drive around in fast motor cars, but one must have a driving test before one is allowed to drive a car. Some people have expressed concern that the European legislation on firearms—dare I say it—when the harmonisation takes place, will apply to this country. Firearms legislation controlling the use of weapons in this country is almost the toughest in the world and any legislation we import from Europe is likely to be harmful to the control of weapons.

In some European countries it is necessary to take a test before one is permitted to use firearms. It might be worthwhile to consider that idea. We should also bear in mind that before one is allowed to drive a motor car it is necessary to have third party insurance and perhaps the Committee should also consider that in the context of firearms.

I believe that the Bill deserves a Second Reading. However, in the interests not only of the public, but of the

[Mr. Colvin]

growing number of people of all ages and both sexes who enjoy shooting, I hope that it will not reach the statute book before it has been amended along the lines suggested by my hon. Friends.

7.40 pm

Sir Hector Monro (Dumfries): I declare my interest as president of the National Small-bore Rifle Association and vice-president of the National Rifle Association, the Clay Pigeon Shooting Association and others. I find it hard to believe that a Conservative Government are putting the Bill to the House. I believe that the Ministers are out of touch with the members of the shooting world, many of whom are, of course, Government supporters.

In common with every hon. Member, I accept that we must have extremely clear, concise and effective firearms legislation. However, on this occasion the Government have got the balance hopelessly wrong, and it is heavily against those legitimate shooters who have carried the brunt of the battle on the effects and results of Hungerford.

Both target and sporting shooting are a recreation enjoyed by many thousands of responsible people. I am rather disappointed at being unable to speak to a Minister about a subject that concerns me greatly. The shooting world feels seriously let down and many have written to me to say they will not support our party again.

I spoke in the previous debate. As I said then, it is difficult to understand why there were no consultations — despite requests — before my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary made his policy speech on 22 September. From that date on he has hardly changed a thing, either in the White Paper or in the Bill. My hon. Friend the Member for Romsey and Waterside (Mr. Colvin) appears to have got the idea that there was close association, but he has been badly misinformed. The British Shooting Sports Council is hopping mad about the way in which its advice has been treated in the past two months. One might well ask: what is the point of a BSSC or other responsible bodies if Ministers will not accept advice, even on technicalities? The Bill contains many errors that will have to be corrected in Committee. Could one imagine a Minister of Sport changing legislation affecting cricket or football without first going to the Test and County Cricket Board or the Football Association, before making a policy statement? However, that is what has happened with this Bill.

The sheer technicalities of firearms encourages me to support warmly the idea of establishing a statutory expert consultative committee. That would help the Home Secretary with the administration of firearms legislation. It could also create a co-ordinated view among chief constables. Hon. Members have today drawn attention to the fact that the views of chief constables vary enormously throughout the country.

Advice on weapons — extremely technical stuff — should be welcomed by the Home Secretary, and it would certainly reduce the number of cases that will inevitably go to appeal. Attempting to draft the Bill is a bit of a nightmare because it is attached to the Firearms Act 1968. Most people would have great difficulty in finding their way through the Bill. The only immediate lighthearted comment I can make about the Bill concer We should all like to know how to f "simultaneously" out of any gun.

I am a strong supporter of the polic chairman of the Dumfries and Galloway pol Nothing I say is any criticism of the polic believe that the view of the police has swam Office firearms division. The Bill is what th it is not a fair balance between its views an responsible shooting public. The polic enormous powers under the Bill and this security and police discretion.

I am glad that my right hon. Friend has use" on the face of the Bill as an accept having a firearm. We already have the 1969 Those rules insist that security is mentioned a firearms certificate. I take it that those ru route by which my right hon. Friend will bri measures affecting shotguns. I believe that th be part of the Bill so that we can see what discuss them. In that way we could ensure be effective in the future. The Bill will have right of entry to inspect security and so on

Besides the firearms rules we have the guidance. Hon. Members have already s guidance is important. We should like to kn guidance is and how it will be effected. The guidance covers the security of weapons in is going to Bisley or to a shooting club and s of tea or whatever, it is necessary to lea locked in the boot of the car. However, peo prosecuted by the police for leaving weapo car boot. Such prosecutions are unsati represent a breakdown in relations betwee public and the police. The Home Office improve matters during the passage of the

When the rules are introduced, they w inspection of the home of every owner certificate or the home of a person applying the renewal of a shotgun certificate. Ther shotgun certificates. Consider the polic needed to inspect all those homes. Indeed, t inspect clubs. The Shooters Rights Associati estimate that more than 1 million police man necessary to undertake such work. However, that police manpower will be increased by that that means 80 civilians working compu headquarters. I repeat the question that I as debate: will the Minister tell us how many hours will be required to carry out the a onerous duties required under the Bill? W cost?

The Minister has clearly stated that he h the costs of shotgun and firearm certificat years and recover the full cost. A firearm c £33 and a shotgun certificate costs £12. If th certificates is meant to reflect the cost of 1 man-hours on the part of the police, heaven those certificates will cost. The prices of cert outwith the pocket of the normal man wh recreation.

I accept that the shotgun certificate ma number of shotguns held by a person, but th thousands of variations month by month and sell shotguns or lend them because a fri

is broken. Has my right hon. Friend considered the man-hours involved in checking all those variations in shotgun certificates as shotguns move from dealer to owner, owner to dealer and owner to owner? It will be a bureaucratic nightmare. My right hon. Friend has underestimated what he is taking on.

Self-loading shotguns are a contentious issue, and the Minister has gone too far. In the debate today we have explained umpteen times that the lack of recoil in the self-loading shotgun is important for women and the disabled and for others, especially in the world of clay pigeon shooting. I took the Wildlife and Countryside Act through the House of Commons after great consultation with everyone, including the Home Secretary of the day. We agreed on the two-round magazine and that one up the spout would be right for the self-loading shotgun. That is now to be put on a firearms certificate. I cannot get any sense from the Home Office as to how it believes that will make a dramatic difference. We have already explained that any competent operator with a double-barrelled shotgun can get off 20 shots far quicker than someone with a five or seven-shot self-loading shotgun, which takes so long to reload. There is no difference in terms of overall fire power, so it is quite unnecessary to put a pump-action or self-loading shotgun on a firearms certificate. That simply must be changed in Committee, and I hope that the Home Secretary will agree to that tonight.

My right hon. Friend the Member for Kincardine and Deeside (Mr. Buchanan-Smith) explained that many stalkers throughout Scotland use self-loading rifles. Many roe stalkers throughout the United Kingdom use five-shot self-loading rifles which are efficient and allow them to fire a second shot at a wounded beast. Those guns are not to be classified under section 1 but are to be banned for ever under section 5. That is surely illogical. The Home Secretary simply must re-examine the practical requirements of those who use self-loading guns.

I am glad that my right hon. Friend is reconsidering the question of visitors. There is a huge income to be had from wealthy people who come here to buy the best shotguns in the world. We must not make it too difficult for them to do that or to come here for shooting competitions. Bisley and other centres have a world reputation. If we are to hedge round such competitions with special regulations, we shall lose that reputation and lose our reputation for world marksmanship.

Conversions pose a whole host of problems. An expert committee would give the Home Secretary a tremendous amount of help. Hundreds of people have converted rifles to .410 shotguns. Those guns cannot be converted back; the gun cannot be re-rifled. Why on earth must they be dealt with in clause 1? In addition, there are a number of silly footling issues. Under clause 7, any weapon that has been converted will remain at its highest position on the list. Hand grenades and shell cases will be prohibited under section 5. Therefore, anyone with a first world war hand grenade which has been made safe will suffer. It will now be a criminal offence to have a hand grenade that has been made into a cigarette lighter sitting by one's fireplace to light one's pipe, because it will revert to being classified as a hand grenade. It will now be a section 1 criminal offence to have a shell case in which one is growing an aspidistra. The Home Secretary has not begun to think of what he is doing in the Bill.

I am glad that the hon. Member for Warley, East (Mr. Faulds) referred to museums. We have the finest armouries in the world—particularly at the Tower of London. Is my right hon. Friend really intending weapons there to be reactivated, ruining the actions or the bolts or the breeches? That would be like punching a hole in a Canaletto.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: My hon. Friend should bear in mind that holders of such collections can apply for a section 1 certificate.

Sir Hector Monro: We shall have to see about that in Committee. We must consider the Bill as drafted. As matters stand, it is entirely for the Home Secretary to decide what may go on in museums, as the hon. Member for Warley, East explained.

I am glad that the issue of clubs was raised. Of course the NSRA and the NRA would gladly supervise and manage the arrangements for clubs' licences. There is no need to involve the police. Think of the money that could be saved in that direction.

Lastly, we come to dealers and compensation. My right hon. Friend must have a guilty conscience about some aspects of the Bill. Paragraph 47 of the White Paper states

"We have concluded that as a matter of principle it is undesirable and unjust to require the taxpayer at large to pay for the removal from the public domain of weapons which are an acknowledged threat to life."

However, it is implied that one need have no worries if one wants to sell them abroad. It is immoral for the Home Secretary to adopt the attitude that it does not matter as long as one does not sell the weapon in this country.

My right hon. Friend the Member for Old Bexley and Sidcup (Mr. Heath) and other hon. Members have emphasised the importance of good compensation. Indeed, our friends from Northern Ireland have pointed out that there has been legislation in Northern Ireland. It has been acknowledged that there are various precedents for the payment of compensation. It would be unjust if many of our friends lost substantial sums because weapons that are legal today were made illegal at the end of July at the drop of a hat because those people would be losing money through no fault of their own. That is unacceptable.

I hope that the Home Secretary will consider the question of dealers. If we must sell section 5 firearms to dealers, we must bear in mind that in Scotland, for example, there are only six licensed dealers, who are allowed to have only five section 5 weapons at a time. How on earth are we to unload tens of thousands of weapons on to so few dealers?

While the Government are right to try to toughen up the firearms legislation to make it effective, all in all, they have gone too far. They have produced a ragbag of matters that will need to be corrcted in Committee because they are technically incorrect, and I certainly could not support the Bill tonight.

8.5 pm

Mr. Ron Davies (Caerphilly): I gather that the hon. Member for Dumfries (Sir H. Monro) used to play rugby. I am tempted to remark that if he had treated his opponents on the field with the ferocity with which he has treated the Home Secretary, he would have been banned for life—even in Wales.

Three aspects of the Bill concern me, and I shall attempt to deal with them as briefly as possible. First, the provision that bans paramilitary firearms for the first time represents

[Mr. Ron Davies]

a significant development in the British Government's treatment of the private ownership of firearms. It is an entirely new principle and it is being introduced without public announcement, debate or acknowledgement. When taking a step that represents such a radical departure from agreed practice, the Government should be honest about their intentions.

Secondly, it is proposed to introduce a registration system for shotguns. I understand why the Home Secretary is doing that, and most of us would regard that provision by itself as innocuous. However, it will set in hand a process that will result in every shotgun in the country being identified, located and registered in three, four or perhaps five years' time. I am worried that it will then be a fairly easy step for the Home Secretary of the day to follow the advice offered by the hon. Member for Newbury (Mr. McNair-Wilson) and abolish the distinction between shotgun certificates and firearms certificates. Once shotguns have been identified it will be relatively easy to require section 1 certificates to be obtained in respect of their ownership. That course of action is being pressed on the Home Secretary and will be available to him under the Bill. That development has not been publicly acknowledged. There has been no public debate and no justification has been offered for it.

My third reservation concerns the discretionary powers in the Bill. Clause 1 gives the Secretary of State discretionary powers to ban any firearm or ammunition without further primary legislation; it can be done by order. Are we to expect widespread public debate or consultation on that? I suspect not. Clause 3 contains the good reason provision. The Home Secretary explained that he would advise chief constables how to operate that provision. He said that he would give guidance by means of a circular. In an earlier intervention I tried to suggest that guidance might change from year to year. Therefore, not only would different parts of the country perhaps be treated inconsistently but there could be an inconsistence of treatment from one year to the next and from one Home Secretary to the next. We should give such a discretion to any Home Secretary only grudgingly.

We are all conscious of the disaster that befell Hungerford and sympathetic to the distress that it caused. However, I disagreed with the assertion of the hon. Member for Newbury that the Bill was not a response to the events at Hungerford. The House is divided on this point because the Opposition believe that this legislation is nothing more than a political response to the events at Hungerford. However, I accept that that view is not shared by all Conservative Members.

I want to draw to the attention of the House two items of evidence to support my contention that this legislation is merely a political response. The first piece of evidence is contained in the White Paper that was introduced to the House before Christmas. With reference to Hungerford it states:

> "These events have shown potential weaknesses in the existing controls. They have also created a climate of public opinion."

The Bill is a response to that climate of public opinion.

My second piece of evidence is to be found in the reply to a question that I tabled to the Home Secretary on 18 December 1986. Ironically, that w
Michael Ryan was granted his firearm
the Secretary of State
"whether he has any proposals to r
firearms."
The Minister replied:
"there are no plans at present to ame
1968."—[*Official Report*, 18 Decembe
642.]
Of course there was a review. Gove
legislation at all times. However, as lat
the Government had no plans to in
That is why I believe that this Bill is
The Government had to be seen to b
events at Hungerford. The Governme
to the Bill being rushed, inadequa
consultation. It is a political response
had to be done and it contains major

All hon. Members who have spoke
Tory Members, have criticised so
legislation. We have all realised that th
I want to refer to the three illogicalitie
referred to so far. Much reference ha
banning of pump-action shotguns. I
why the Home Secretary believes
shotguns have a greater rate of fire th
by-side, double-barrelled shotguns.
competent, dextrous shooter can achie
of fire with a double-barrelled shotgun
action shotgun and with a greater de
the Home Secretary is concerned about
I further suggest that a pump-action
reduced to a sawn-off shotgun. Th
shotgun is the usual sawn-off wea
Secretary wants to deal with the increa
held weapons, and if that could be a
weapons, the logic of the argument
barrelled shotgun should be banned a
shotgun should be retained. Howeve
have not accepted the logic of that ar

In my second point I want to retu
Hungerford. Michael Ryan used a Be
his victims in Hungerford. We have he
Kalashnikov. The Kalashnikov is ban
will not be banned. How on earth ca
response to the events at Hungerford? I
the Government should introduce suc

Thirdly, when the Secretary of Stat
2, he mentioned the reclassification
unition. He said that some ammunitio
other ammunition. The question of the
ammunition does not depend on the g
the distance from which it is fired. If
someone with any gauge of shotgun a
range, that person would be killed.
over distances of less than 20 ft. He
shotgun with any ammunition at that

Mr. Kenneth Hind (Lancashire, We

Mr. Davies: Twenty feet is the dista
and the hon. Member for Lancashire
who wants to intervene.

Mr. Hind: Perhaps the hon. Gentle
the principle that it is impossible to l
activities of a man such as Mr. Ryan.

one week after
certificate. I asked

ew legislation on

the Firearms Act
986; Vol. 107, c.

ments review all
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e between myself
West (Mr. Hind)

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slate against the
o doubt the hon.

Gentleman can appreciate the anger of one of the most law-abiding sections in our community, the shooters, at the Government's response to that incident and the fact that they will lose some of their weapons without compensation. That anger is particularly felt among those using pump-action shotguns to whom the hon. Gentleman has referred.

Mr. Davies: If the hon. Gentleman follows my argument, that is precisely the conclusion he will draw.

Those are the three illogicalities that I wanted to submit to the House. My hon. Friend the Member for Clwyd, South-West (Mr. Jones) moved an amendment and I hope that the House will have an opportunity to divide on it later. He made a compelling case about the gross irregularities that occurred in Hungerford when Michael Ryan was issued with a firearms certificate. I want to summarise those irregularities.

First, Michael Ryan should not have been granted a firearms certificate. Secondly, the speed with which the certificate was offered was wrong. Inadequate checks were made. Thirdly, he should not have been granted the variation which allowed him to purchase a heavy calibre rifle. Finally, he should not have been allowed to retain his certificate once it had been granted because there was more than adequate evidence in Hungerford of his unsuitability to hold such a certificate.

If there are ways in which controls can be introduced to enhance public safety, those controls must apply not to the weapons but to the individual. If an individual is fit to have a particular firearm, he must be fit enough to own any firearm because of the lethality, power and potential of any firearm for taking human life. Controls must be placed on the individual to ensure that the individual is fit. The control should not be aimed at ensuring that someone is fit to possess certain firearms but not others. That is the difference between the Government and the Opposition.

The Opposition have called for an inquiry into these matters. Most hon. Members who have spoken tonight are familiar in some sense with firearms. We all understand the power of firearms and we therefore understand the great courage that is required of a police officer facing the use of firearms. When we put the case that we should learn the lessons of Hungerford we are not being critical of the police. We are not detracting from our immense admiration of the courage with which the police face their task. Rather, we want to ensure that the lessons are learnt.

If we want to avoid a repetition of Hungerford, that can be achieved only if we learn the lessons. We can only do that if we have a full public inquiry into how Ryan broke every rule in the book to gain possession of his weapons. We must also have a proper inquiry into the police response. That is not to say that the police reacted wrongly. Mention has been made of a television programme that was supposed to be critical of the police. I saw it, but I did not think that it was critical. I thought that it asked questions. We have a right to ask those questions and the only way in which they will be answered properly is to hold an inquiry into the procedures leading up to Ryan becoming an armed maniac and into the police response. If we believe that there is an overriding need to safeguard the public we must examine the elements of what happened in Hungerford as well as the nature of permitted firearms.

There must be two pre-requisites. There must be a full and searching inquiry. Secondly, and I endorse the comments made by many Conservative Members, must be a statutory consultation committee to all Home Secretary to have access to expert opinio advice so that we do not again have the sorry s affairs of a Home Secretary coming to the Ho Commons with a set of proposals and failing to single Member of Parliament who will support the

8.19 pm

Mr. Henry Bellingham (Norfolk, North-West) pleased to follow the hon. Member for Caerphill Davies), who spoke a great deal of sense, particular regard to the need for an expert consultative com It is sad that he has been unable to persuade mor colleagues to attend and support his views.

I should declare an interest because I own a sh I consider myself to be a responsible shotgun use have owned one for many years. I also have a consti interest—representing a large rural constituency, hardly surprising—and, as a result of the White and the publication of the Bill, I have received letters.

We understood the pressures that the Governme under to react to the Hungerford tragedy, but always subscribed to that excellent Tory dictum tha it is essential to legislate it is very necessary not to le The Government have rushed into this matter with right amount of consultation. Unless we tear the Bi in Committee, we shall end up with an Act that we regret.

A number of hon. Members have said that by e this legislation we shall go some way to reduc number of firearms-related crimes. There has b increase in such crime of 237 per cent. between 19 1986, and the figure has doubled since 1979.

We have not considered the examples o countries. Switzerland has a 625,000-strong milit all keep their weapons and ammunition at h possesses 6,000 assault weapons and 2 million weapons in total. Kalashnikovs are very easy to there and no certification is required on transf armed crime in Switzerland is minimal.

The home guard in Denmark provides cover mobilisation and its members possess 60,000 weapons, all of which are kept at their homes. In 25 years, there have been only 13 homicides attr to those 60,000 weapons.

By contrast, Germany has the most draconian legislation and control, but its record of firearms crimes is far worse than those other two countr ridiculous to pretend that by legislating in this way reduce the number of firearms-related crimes and shall prevent a recurrence of the Hungerford trag shall not be able to achieve that.

With regard to the semi-automatic and self-loa clause, Kalashnikovs and other types of infantry weapons should be prohibited. We must draw somewhere. In the past, it has been drawn at guns, grenade launchers and weapons of that na

A number of self-loading rifles are used in com work, and I do not see why the Minister will not an amendment being moved in Committee that wi number of self-loading rifles that can be competition work.

I should like to make a new point relatin national defence aspect of the clause. If the

[Mr. Henry Bellingham]

through, it will be the first time in British history that civil marksmen will be prevented from owning and training with a current British service rifle. It will act retrospectively by banning previous self-loading rifles. Under the Bill as it stands, the last British service rifle that could continue to be used by civilians would be a world war 2 Enfield No. 4. I hope that the Minister will seriously consider that matter.

Does the Minister feel strongly about the standard of marksmanship in the community? Going back, does he remember the firearms amnesty of 1936 or 1937, when we had to appeal to the Americans to let us have weapons for the Home Guard? Has the Minister or the Home Secretary discussed that matter with the Ministry of Defence?

I entirely support my right hon. Friend the Member for Old Bexley and Sidcup (Mr. Heath) about compensation. Surely it is morally indefensible not to offer compensation. We are talking about law-abiding citizens who have proved to the police that they have a good reason to own a firearm, and were given a certificate, and who will have their weapons taken away. The arguments that have been made in favour of that so far do not stand up. I urge the Minister to listen to what has been said about compensation. If the Bill goes through and compensation is not offered, many people will think that we have acted in a thoroughly draconian and uncivilised manner.

A number of hon. Members have mentioned pump-action and self-loading shotguns. The hon. Member for Caerphilly and my hon. Friend the Member for Gloucester, West (Mr. Marland) said that it is far more difficult to adapt a pump-action or self-loading shotgun for crime because the barrel cannot be cut down. Those weapons are owned by people who cannot afford a more traditional type of shotgun, and they shoot clay pigeons or rough shoot. So far, no sustainable argument has been made that there is a link between the existence of these weapons and armed crime involving them.

In his speech to senior police officers at Torquay, the Home Secretary had to offer something, so he chucked this proposal at them. We are now on a hook that it will be difficult to get off. Unless we get off it completely, I urge the Minister to accept the limited magazine capacity compromise. I mentioned this to him and he said that it needed careful monitoring. Must we monitor more closely a sensible, orderly group of people? I suggest not. We could have a compromise. If someone broke the law on the limited magazine capacity, he could be prosecuted. The excuse of lack of monitoring for not agreeing to it does not stand up.

The good reason clause must be set out very clearly. During the election campaign I visited someone in a housing association flat. To begin with, the conversation was fairly difficult because he obviously did not share my politics. I discovered that he was a member of the local wildfowling club and that in his bed-sit he had no fewer than four shotguns. Why not — he was a keen wild-fowler? He had an 8-bore, a Magnum 12-bore and two other 12-bores. He was a law-abiding sportsman who was fanatical about the sport. If someone like that has a run-in with the local police — perhaps he is a bit of a character and the police have got it in for him — they could easily say, "You cannot have a firearm certificate. We do not believe that you have a good reason to possess

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8.29 pm

Mr. Michael Lord (Suffolk, Centra
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eloquence of my hon. Friend the M
will move the Front Bench.

I shoot a little and own a shotgu
a county in which game shooting an
major parts of our activities. In addi
depend greatly on owning a gun.

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of the time, so I shall gallop a litt
Deputy Speaker. I want to speak, fir
of the Home Office. I agree with the c
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Michael Ryan has
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had used 30-mile

an hour signs for target practice and boasted of that to friends and workmates. I think that is true. If it is, it points to the responsibility of ordinary men and women to bring such things to the attention of the police. That is a far more important aspect of the case than firearms legislation. We all bear such a responsibility. I am certain that had Michael Ryan's friends or acquaintances been the kind of shooters that we are talking about — responsible men and women who shoot regularly — those things would have been brought to the attention of the police.

I am sure that, following that event, the attitude was that something must be done. How often we hear those words, but now something is being done. I am prepared to accept that the legislation will do some good and that possibly it will be effective. It has some good points. For example, I thoroughly welcome the amnesty, provided that it is properly handled.

The number of shotguns listed on a certificate is crucial. That point was brought firmly home to me recently when I was talking to the police. Police are frequently called out to an incident where they know that there are shotguns. They sometimes visit a house, take the shotgun and leave. As they may be called back on another occasion, it is important that they know that the first shotgun that they took was the only shotgun and that they know exactly how many shotguns are held in the house. Otherwise they may go back to be confronted by another gun. It would help if they knew the number of guns owned by an individual. Some of the measures about the safe keeping of weapons are also good.

A few weeks ago I spoke at a conference in Suffolk. Towards the end of the conference I had a discussion with between 15 and 20 police inspectors who were drawn from police forces throughout East Anglia and the east midlands about the whole question of firearms legislation. Towards the end, I asked them their views about the need for further legislation. They were unanimous in saying that there is no need for further legislation. I think that is important.

My hon. Friend the Member for Saffron Walden (Mr. Haselhurst) and other hon. Members have said that most crimes are committed with illegally-held weapons. Therefore, how will crime be reduced if regulations are tightened up on people who hold weapons legally? It does not make sense. Little has been said about the fact that most crimes involving weapons are committed with handguns—*[Interruption.]* It is true.

Mr. Jerry Wiggin (Weston-super-Mare): The figures for 1986 for notifiable offences in which firearms were used show that of 9,363 offences, 5,886 were committed with air weapons. That point has been totally overlooked during the debate.

Mr. Lord: I am grateful to my hon. Friend for making that point. The point that I am seeking to make is that the majority of crimes that are committed using weapons are committed not with shotguns. It just happens that shotguns, especially sawn-off shotguns, are emotive and always seem to be hitting the headlines. Therefore, sadly, shotguns are always dragged to the forefront of our debates. That point should be remembered.

I shall deal quickly with two or three points of detail. First, it does no harm as far as my right hon. and hon. Friends on the Front Bench are concerned to repeat that it will be absolutely scandalous if compensation is not paid to people whose weapons are confiscated. The le may not technically be retrospective, but its effec that of retrospective legislation. It will be unworth party and Government if compensation is not pa

Secondly—this point has already been made- action shotguns are of great benefit. They have le than other weapons, and that is of enormous h worth pointing out that that greatly benefits wo young people who are keen shooters. I understu some of those who hope to represent us at the fort Olympics use such shotguns. The point has bee "What about allowing the gun to hold onl cartridges?" I can see no reason why that shoul taken on board.

Thirdly, the question of converted weapons raised with me. They could be old guns, often 410 have been converted a long time ago and may be 80 and 90 years old. There is no way in which th possibly be converted back to their original use. W happen to such guns? If they cannot be used lega will either be used illegally or handed to someone is less fussy about such things. I should like Friend to comment on that.

The safe keeping of firearms and the issue locked in car boots causes great concern. The p that arise when one goes to shoot elsewhere have to me. One must take one's gun and can lock it on car boot. But what does one do when one stops fo It is most important that the police take a sensib

A further point about police discretion is that treatment. The point was made earlier that it absolutely crackers if the rules governing the gra licences in one county are different from those in That would be intolerable and must be considere

I hope that when my hon. Friend replies to th he will devote his attention to some of these point are not new, but have been made several times du debate.

I shall support the Bill because I believe it to be attempt to reduce crime. It may succeed to som I believe, and hope, that my right hon. Friend th Secretary will listen to the shooting fraternity a alterations where he believes that they are respon appropriate. I beg him to listen carefully so that does not do more harm than good and that it does the innocent pleasure of thousands of shooters w shown themselves to be one of the most respons law-abiding groups of sportsmen and women society.

8.38 pm

Mr. David Nicholson (Taunton): One thing ma about this debate—the timing is right. There time to allow the understandably angry and atmosphere of last autumn, following the Hu tragedy, to settle. Since then, the minority of virtually all of whom are entirely law-abiding, v and carry guns have been subject to a degree of the media and the very definite threat of great bu this legislation. That concern was recognised by Friend the Member for Newbury (Mr. McNair- All hon. Members should note carefully what he

I refer to a letter that was sent to me by a con It is a copy of a letter that he sent to the *Sunday* which is hardly an anti-field sports newspaper, ref a comment in its editorial column. It states:

[Mr. David Nicholson]

"I object to being described as a 'gung-ho Briton', together with many thousands of others, I have used firearms for nearly fifty years. The only time anyone was in danger was when the Government instructed me to use them against the nation's enemies for three years, when they were no doubt very grateful for the fact that I could shoot straight!"

My hon. Friend the Member for Dorset, North (Mr. Baker) and, at greater length, my hon. Friend the Member for Norfolk, North-West (Mr. Bellingham) pointed out the military value in the past of rifle clubs and so forth. The Shooters Rights Association, whose meeting last night the hon. Member for Clwyd, South-West (Mr. Jones) and I sponsored, pointed out that, in 1859, the then Secretary of State for War became the first president of the National Rifle Association. The hon. Member for Londonderry, East (Mr. Ross) observed that, at the battle of Mons in 1914, the day was probably saved by the rapidity and accuracy of our rifle fire.

I must admit that I approach the matter with some care because, unlike most who have spoken in the debate, I have no vested interest axe to grind. Indeed, I have never used a firearm or similar weapon, apart from some innocent target shooting with an air rifle in my teens. I have, however, a constituency interest. My constituency is rural, and includes most of Exmoor. In terms of numbers of firearms and shotgun certificates, Somerset and Avon, my own police authority, ranks seventh of all the police authorities in England and Wales. Over 6,000 firearms certificates and over 30,000 shotgun certificates are held.

That is slightly counterbalanced by a trivial but sad episode, which I mention to show that I am not a gung-ho Briton. Just before Christmas our cat was found dead, close to our home, having been shot through the lungs by a ·22 bullet. With two very young children, my wife and I were understandably concerned that there was someone about with a firearm who, to put it at its most innocent, could not tell the difference between a cat and a rabbit.

Yet, with those disclaimers, the more I read about the Bill, and the more that I have read constituents' correspondence and met the groups concerned, the more I feel that it is a somewhat heavy-handed approach. Is it not true, I ask the Front Bench, that the Bill is substantially based on the draconian 1973 Green Paper, with which the then Government, and their successors—both Labour and Conservative—did not proceed?

Reference has been made—and we can argue about it until doomsday—to the role of the Hungerford tragedy in the bringing forward of the Bill at this time. However, Ministers admit that the Bill cannot prevent a repeat of Hungerford. In that respect, it is a sledgehammer that cannot deter or impede a nutcase. Nor, I fear, will it curb the use of guns in crime.

The Bill does, however, bear heavily on a small minority. A number of improvements have already been suggested, two of them by Opposition Members, which would strengthen the Bill in certain respects. One suggestion was that it should provide for a minimum age for holding firearms or shotgun certificates; the other was that it should pay some attention to—indeed, ban—armour-piercing ammunition.

The British Shooting Sports Council, on the subject of self-loading and pump-action shotguns, says:

"There is a very real fear that the Bill will increase the likelihood of crime with these weapons. There is some evidence of an increase in sale in advance of the Act. There is no record of the ownership of these shotguns. When the Act is passed those who do not secure a self-loading certificate will have to dispose of them at a time when the market has collapsed. There is a danger that they will find their way into the criminal market."

Another proposal made by the BSSC, and mentioned briefly by a number of hon. Members, is the establishment of a statutory expert consultative committee, which

"will create and keep up to date a Code of Good Practice covering all aspects of firearm security. It will maintain a watch on the development of firearms in sport. It will advise the Home Secretary on which firearms should be the subject of control, within the limits set by the Act."

I have had constituency correspondence from the members of the Sealed Knot organisation. I do not know how far the Bill will damage that organisation's interests, but it is sufficient to the atmosphere of alarm that the White Paper and the consultation on the Bill have produced that it is worried that its important traditional pastimes will be hindered.

Let me give another constituency example. A very responsible farmer, a near neighbour of mine, who occasionally has to protect his winter root crops by shooting deer, writes to me:

"As it is not always possible to kill cleanly with one shot, it is necessary to fire two or three to avoid a painful and lingering death to the animal. . . . My rifle is a 30·06 calibre rifle with a magazine holding only 4 rounds—not the larger magazine type of the military automatic rifle that was used so tragically at Hungerford."

He is afraid that he will lose the use of that gun.

That brings me to compensation. Every Conservative Member who has spoken has strongly urged the case for compensation. The only person who seems not to have supported it—indeed, to have positively opposed it—is the right hon. Member for Birmingham, Sparkbrook (Mr. Hattersley). I am amazed that he should, in his later days, have found such concern for public expenditure.

I have noticed, in some of the briefings on the Bill, that the precedent has been cited of no compensation being granted to business in respect of changes in the law with regard to health and safety or environmental factors. That is hardly a viable parallel. We are talking of business that exists to make profits, employs people and, no doubt, has an effect on the environment. The Bill is concerned with private individuals who have owned valuable property and now face the possibility of its being taken from them without compensation. Far from committing a crime, those people have scrupulously observed the law. However, they will be in a worse position than the holder of illegal arms who will sell them on the black market.

My hon. Friend the Member for Dorset, North has referred to the burdens on police administrative time and the dangers of prohibited weapons without a proper compensation scheme finding their way into criminal hands. I understand that at present the police support the Bill. If their view does not change, it is a view to which my hon. Friends and I will no doubt have to defer. I hope very much, however, that, as the Bill goes through Parliament, the police will study those two points as a matter of urgency. In the view of many of the Bill's critics, they are most important. I hope that, as the Bill goes through its remaining stages, we shall have the benefit of evidence from the police on those points. I hope that these and the other substantial criticisms made by hon. Members on both sides will be urgently considered in Committee and the remaining stages.

This is a matter on which this House rather than the other place should wield an amending power, for the simple reason that, in a sensitive matter of this kind, to leave the other place to make drastic amendments might play into the hands of the somewhat irresponsible political heirs and successors of the late first Earl Lloyd George.

I will support the Bill's Second Reading to ensure that it goes forward. However, I assure my right hon. and hon. Friends that much more work needs to be done.

8.49 pm

Mr. John Greenway (Ryedale): It is a proper convention of the House, much in evidence in the debate, to declare one's interest. One of two interests which I have to declare is unique; it is an interest of experience in that when I was a young police constable in the west end of London in the mid-1960s, aged 19, I had the unfortunate experience of being shot at by an armed criminal. It was indeed a frightening experience.

When a policeman is faced with a gun pointing at him, he does not stop to ask whether the firearm is legally or illegally held, whether it is a part 1 or a prohibited weapon, or whether it is a shotgun and, if so, of what type. His sole concern is the safety of the public and of himself and his colleagues. Recent incidents in which two armed gunmen were shot dead by police only serve to highlight the risks that the police face in policing our safe country. A split second decision has to be made. It is proper for us to pay tribute to the bravery of our police force in regard to firearms attacks on them and on the public.

It is of the gravest concern to me, as it should be to the House and is to the public, that in the 20-odd years since I had my unfortunate experience such incidents have increased. Reference has been made in the debate to the statistics on the use of firearms in the pursuit of crime. There was a 237 per cent. increase between 1972 and 1986. The number of incidents has more than doubled since 1979. That leads me to two possible conclusions. In 1968, not because of my experience, although it may have been a contributory factor, the Firearms Act which we are amending was passed. With the increase in armed crime one wonders whether the right conclusion to draw is that that legislation had no impact on illegally held weapons or on weapons used in crime. The alternative view is to ask how much worse things might have been if the regulations had not been tightened in 1968.

What strikes at the heart of the debate is that we do not know what effect the proposed legislation will have, but we dare not take the risk of not amending the present law. It is a responsibility peculiar to Parliament, which we must face with an open mind and a willingness to listen to all the arguments.

Many arguments have been put to hon. Members by interested parties. Here I declare my second interest, in that I represent a constituency where the use of the gun by sportsmen, gamekeepers, farmers and everyone concerned with the land is inextricably linked with the rural way of life. The voice of those people deserves to be heard just as much as the voice of those involved in the enforcement of the law.

There is another irony which perhaps only this House is capable of throwing up. Within the space of 24 hours in this Chamber we will have had a debate on a Firearms (Amendment) Bill, which is designed to preserve life, and another debate on the Abortion (Amendment) Bill, which is designed to protect life. As Members of Parliament we have a great responsibility to respond to our consciences as well as to the views that are put to us.

Much has been said in earlier debates in Parliament and at the time of the publication of the White Paper about the need to achieve a balance between the need to protect the public and the right of the genuine sportsman to use firearms. It is the effectiveness of the legislation rather than its success in striking a balance between conflicting viewpoints that really matters.

The debate has shown that many issues remain to be settled in Committee. I was much encouraged by a conversation with my hon. Friend the Under-Secretary about the willingness of the Government to make improvements. We all look forward with interest to his response to the debate.

Because of the pressure of time I need not go over much of the ground already covered in detail. As to compensation, it is offensive for the Government to say that it will be all right for a weapon which is illegal in this country to be sold into another country. That is indefensible. I hope that as a result of the comments today my right hon. Friend will agree to press for a compensation scheme.

Mention has been made of proper arrangements for visitors. Many visitors from abroad come to my constituency to enjoy their shooting and they bring a great deal of employment and wealth. The proposals in the Bill must not act as a deterrent to them coming here; instead, we must make sure that weapons do not get into the wrong hands.

Guidelines for the police have been discussed at length. Reference has been made to the need to have a proper set of precise directives which will apply uniformly across police forces. Concern has also been expressed about the amount of police time that will be spent on firearms. If I were a young police constable, reacting to the Bill, I would want to know much more clearly and precisely than has so far been apparent just what my powers and duties are. That matter needs to be addressed properly in Committee. Whether it can be done through the formation of an expert advisory committee on the use and control of weapons is another matter to be considered. Certainly no explanation has been put forward so far from the Government as to why such a committee would not be appropriate.

The proposals relating to shotguns also require detailed examination, in particular whether pump-action and self-loading shotguns should be classified as class 1 firearms. I cannot understand the logic of wanting to raise into a much more serious category of certification people who have a pump-action shotgun. It has become very much the vogue to quote correspondence from constituents. I should like to read briefly from a letter which a young constituent wrote to me last week:

> "I recently purchased a Beretta 303 Semi-Automatic which was designed . . . as a special sporting gun . . . they have very little recoil which . . . is why the gun is so favoured by me . . . because of a neck injury sustained by me in an accident 6 years ago. The man that hit me was on a motor-bike and was drunk, and I am left with this serious neck injury. I feel I would like to bring in a law banning motor-bikes!"

Is there not a danger that, in the Bill, we have concentrated our attention too much on the types of weapons and not given enough regard to the person possessing the gun? It is not the gun that kills; it is the person who pulls the trigger.

[Mr. John Greenway]

The editorial of the December issue of the magazine of the Police Federation stated:

"Every year there are dozens, if not hundreds, of incidents, involving the misuse of shotguns by holders of certificates who have satisfied the simple requirements of the law on age and absence of convictions for crime. In many cases, including tragic fatalities, evidence has emerged that such people should never have been allowed to possess a weapon, by virtue of their way of life, including their known temperament, alcoholism, mental state, and so on. The new law appears to leave the situation as it was. It has to be said that the safe keeping of a shotgun in the certificate holder's house is less important than finding some means to ensure that he can safely posseses a shotgun."

For me, the most disappointing comment of the White Paper is in paragraph 44, which states:

"The Government is not attracted at this stage to the option of seeking medical references from qualified practitioners in support of applications for firearm or shotgun certificates."

It goes on to say that

"reference to an applicant's medical record would provide no guarantee against the issue of a certificate to an unsuitable person."

There is no guarantee that the Bill, in its present form, will effectively reduce crime or prevent another Hungerford. We must consider the matter further and it should be reflected in the Bill.

Recently, I spoke to a number of shooters at one of England's famous game shoots at Helmsley in my constituency. I asked them what they felt about the Government's proposed firearms legislation, and they all welcomed its objectives. So do I, but there are many imperfections in the Bill which will need to be addressed in Committee.

9.1 pm

Mr. Graham Riddick (Colne Valley): Like so many other hon. Members who have spoken in this debate, I ought to declare an interest. I am a very keen sporting man and, like many others, enjoy my shooting.

There is a problem when a Government reacts to a specific event. That is what is happening in this case. There is a danger that the resulting legislation will be ill-considered, not to say hasty. When the hon. Member for Caerphilly (Mr. Davies) suggested that the Government were simply reacting to the Hungerford tragedy, he was right. If we want to stop incidents such as Hungerford, we should ban all guns. We should also ban all cars and motor bikes because they are probably far more lethal than guns. If an individual goes off his rocker, there is very little one can do to stop it.

I accept one or two proposals in the Bill which strengthen the gun laws, but it is vital that we protect the rights and freedoms of individual people. The shooting fraternity is, in my experience, a law-abiding and responsible group of people. Opposition Back-Benchers must warn their Front Bench colleagues about this point because, at the last debate on this subject on 26 October 1987, the right hon. Member for Birmingham, Sparkbrook (Mr. Hattersley) introduced the issue of class interest and said:

"guns are owned by one class of people and knives"—

he said that we were hitting the knife-owner harder than the gun-owner—

"are feared to be owned by a different class of society".—[*Official Report*, 26 October 1987; Vol. 121, c. 32.]

The right hon. Gentleman's hon. Friend the Member Dewsbury (Mrs. Taylor), a Front Bench spokesman, on the "World at One" on 15 October that she agreed proposals to place sporting shotguns in the same categ as rifles. She said:

"I think that no one should have a gun without very g reason".

Asked whether having a shotgun for sport was a g reason to have a gun permit, she replied:

"to my mind I would want to see more reason than t Certainly I would not allow someone who just wantec shoot birds for sport to hold a gun in their private home. N So I hope that Opposition Back Benchers will make it cl to their Front Bench that this is not a class issue and t millions of people from all sorts of different backgrou participate in, and enjoy, shooting of all types.

I make no apology for discussing the issue compensation, although it has already been wid discussed throughout the debate. Thousands of l abiding citizens have valuable property and own perfectly legally; but they will now have it taken av from them without compensation. None of those peo has committed a crime of any sort. On the contra because they have scrupulously observed the law they probably be in a worse position than the holder of ille arms, who will sell them on the black market.

I know that my right hon. Friend the Home Secret is a keen European. Perhaps he is doing his bit European solidarity and friendship, but I am not s whether the European countries that he believes will be recipients of the newly prohibited weapons will thank h for this part of the Bill. It is monstrous for us to take view that these weapons are too dangerous for people hold in the United Kingdom but that it is perfectly all ri for them to be exported overseas. There is a seric danger, too, that some of the weapons will fall into hands of undesirable people and terrorists. That is serious concern. The Government's refusal to g compensation is fundamentally immoral. It is a lo established right that a citizen's property should not taken away from him without proper compensation.

I was a little discouraged by my right hon. Frien response to my earlier intervention in his speech aski when compensation had been refused in simi circumstances. He mentioned scented erasers. At the tir I was not sure what he was talking about — perha rubbers of some sort. The right hon. Member Sparkbrook mentioned cars. When we made it mandato for car manufacturers to fit seat belts, for example, the c that were already made at the time did not have to ha seat belts fitted, and people were not forced to wear the either. So the owners of those cars suffered no financ loss. Of course there are precedents for compensation. O of my hon. Friends mentioned the sheep farmers who, or last year, received compensation after the disaster Chernobyl. So there are precedents, and I believe that t Government have taken that point on board. It has be made by almost every speaker in the debate.

But it must be absolutely unprecedented that the should be not a single Member of the House from a party prepared to support a Bill put forward by t Government. So I hope that they will take notice of tha

It really is absurd to transfer self-loading and pum action shotguns to section 1. These weapons, because their minimum recoil, are used widely by young peopl elderly people, handicapped people and, not least, wome

Therefore I suppose it could be said that this Bill is sexist as well as everything else. These guns are also considerably cheaper, which I believe is something that we should consider, since this brings shooting to many thousands of people who otherwise might not be able to shoot. I must ask my hon. Friend where the evidence is that criminals have been using weapons of these types to further their criminal pursuits. There is no evidence whatever, as far as I can see.

I realise that I must wind up now so that a response can be given to all the points that have been made, and they are certainly numerous. I must say, however, that the more familiar I have become with the Bill the less happy I have felt over recent days and weeks. Indeed, as I have listened to this debate I have become even more convinced that the Bill is seriously flawed. I shall be able to support it on Second Reading only because I am confident and hopeful that the Government will bring forward serious and numerous amendments at Committee stage. If they do not, I shall certainly find it necessary to vote against the Bill on Third Reading.

The Bill is clearly an ill-considered reaction to an appalling tragedy. The Government have a duty not to alienate and in some cases criminalise perfectly respectable and responsible members of the community.

I hope that my hon. Friend will take all these points on board.

9.12 pm

Mr. Robin Corbett (Birmingham, Erdington): May I first apologise again for the absence of my right hon. Friend the Member for Birmingham, Sparkbrook (Mr. Hattersley) on duties outside the House. He made clear, and I wish to underline, the need for a proper response to the murders at Hungerford and elsewhere. The public expect it and have a right to do so. The presence and the speech of the hon. Member for Newbury (Mr. McNair-Wilson) in this debate remind us of that, should any reminder be needed.

The public concern over the adequacy of the laws to control the possession and use of firearms and shotguns and their full enforcement is entirely justified and I think that the Government have been right to give the House the opportunity to revise them. Indeed, had they not done so there would have been loud complaints from the Opposition, because this is something that we have been urging for a long time, well ahead of the massacre at Hungerford.

I believe that, while recognising and trying to meet public concern, there are two tests against which these proposals must be judged. First, do they win the confidence of the police, who must enforce them? Secondly, do they have the general support of the holders of the present nearly 200,000 firearms certificates and almost 1 million shotgun certificates?

As to the first, I say to the Government that piling yet more duties upon the police, already sorely stretched in the battle against rising crime, is no guarantee of adequate enforcement. If the provisions of this Bill are to be effectively enforced—and if they are not we are wasting our time—the Government need to provide adequate resources. To that extent, I welcome the remarks of the hon. Members for Dorset, North (Mr. Baker), Romsey and Waterside (Mr. Colvin) and Dumfries (Sir H. Monro) and other hon. Members. We know now that there are to be an extra 300 police officers only in London in 1988-89 and as few as 500 in the other 42 forces in England and Wales. In the west midlands alone there was a request for an extra 1,000 officers over the next three years. That has been rejected and the chief constable has warned that this can only mean a poorer service to the public. Replacing police officers with civilians is some help, but there can be no proper substitute for a proper number of officers in preventing and combating crime. Certainly, without an adequate number of trained police officers, law enforcement on firearms as on other things will suffer.

As my hon. Friend the Member for Clwyd, South-West (Mr. Jones) said, the chief constable of Thames Valley police, in his report, said that Michael Ryan applied for a firearms certificate on 10 December 1986, and was given one the next day. I have to question whether that involved proper and full checks. It strikes me that it was an amazing coincidence that at that particular time the necessary clerks, police officers and an assistant chief constable were all readily available to carry out such a process which elsewhere can take weeks rather than hours.

Perhaps in that context the Minister will explain why an application form for a shotgun licence does not ask about the occupation of the applicant, although it requires a counter-signature. When people apply for a firearms certificate, on renewal, they have to say what they do for a living. Perhaps he can also say why, although both forms include the question: "Do you suffer from any mental disorder or defect?", there is no check that has to be made with an applicant's GP. That was mentioned with some force by the hon. Member for Ryedale (Mr. Greenway), who was a former police officer. I find that astonishing, especially given the judgments which police officers are called upon to make when considering applications.

That is important for applicants and for those seeking renewal. Indeed, it is important during the lifetime of a licence, since mental illness can strike at any time. A GP who had to comment on an original application would then be able to advise the police of any change affecting the applicant's suitability to hold either or both licences. I hope that the Minister will think again about that.

It seems wrong that the handling of applications for either firearms or shotguns should be left to any police officer who happens to be on duty. Surely there is a case for experienced officers in each police station to be designated as firearms officers and allowed to build up experience and expertise in the same way as we have custody officers under the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984. Similarly, it would be better for the inspection of premises of licensed dealers to be carried out by officers who are familiar with weapons rather than sending the last police officer who walks through the station door to make such inspections.

I am puzzled as to why the Bill does not require dealers to keep a daily, up-to-date inventory of the stocks of weapons and ammunition that they hold. They have to record the sale, but not the number and types of guns and ammunition that they have in stock. That is wrong, and opens the door to theft, which, without proper checking, could go undetected for a long period. I do not mean to be facetious, but if supermarket managers have to check their shelves, how much more important is it that shelves of weapons and boxes of ammunition should be similarly checked?

As for the storage of shotguns, it is admitted that under the present law we do not know how many shotguns the holder of a certificate may have, let alone where he or she

[Mr. Robin Corbett]

keeps them. I suspect that they are sometimes kept in various buildings around the farm or on separate farms some distance apart under the same management or ownership. That must enhance the risk of theft or illegal use.

In paragraph 22 of the White Paper, it was noted:

"there is no obligation on him to store his weapons securely when he is not using them. The Government believes that this control is too weak."

In paragraph 23, there was the categorical statement:

"This means that shotgun owners will be under a statutory obligation to keep their shotguns in a secure place when not in actual use."

The shotgun licence application asks no question about where shotguns will be kept, although the firearms application does. Can the Minister confirm that the new rules to be dealt with by statutory instrument will make that mandatory? Can he tell the House why that provision, which is recognised to be important by the Government in their White Paper, is not on the face of the Bill?

Why is it not possible to insist that every firearm and shotgun carries an identification number? I just do not understand it. I am advised that that can be easily achieved at a minimal cost and would be of great value in assisting police in tracking down the source and travel of weapons used illegally in the course of crime.

Why is there no provision for a national register of holders of firearm and shotgun certificates, again to assist the police? It is proposed that applicants should provide two rather than one photograph when applying, although there is no provision, as with passports, to have those endorsed by a responsible person who has known the applicant for some time.

What will happen to the second photograph is not explained. If, as I suspect, they are to be held by the police force issuing the certificate, probably alongside computer records, why cannot the system become a national computer register to give police immediate access to those records in the case of suspected crime? If that is good enough for the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Centre in Swansea, how much stronger is the case for dealing with suspected illegal unauthorised use of firearms? It can be achieved easily, at minimum cost, and would doubtless be welcomed by the police whom we expect to deal with such matters.

Can the Minister confirm that dealers will only be authorised to sell ammunition for the type of weapon covered by the licence? I can think of no legitimate reason for a certificate holder attempting to buy ammunition for a weapon for which no certificate is produced.

The Minister will recall that in our earlier debates the Opposition expressed concern about the mail order trade in firearms and questioned whether that could ever be fully proofed against misuse. Indeed, my right hon. Friend the Member for Halton (Mr. Oakes) mentioned that tonight, along with others.

Incredibly, paragraph 38 of the White Paper makes the astonishing assertion that

"there is no evidence that such sales are being used to evade the law."

I do not know how such evidence could be acquired. I appreciate that mail order sales are covered by the same legal restrictions and controls as over-the-counter sales, but surely effective enforcement is more difficult w order where the person attempting to purchase a or weapons is not physically present.

I do not want to weary the House, but I ha advertisements from magazines which make aste reading and should perhaps be referred for prosecution under the Obscene Publications Act. that one order coupon does is to provide a little sp the words:

"I declare that I am over 17 years of age."

Of course, if that is signed by somebody, they must 17, must they not, because nobody ever signs declaration falsely.

Another advertisement does not even go that fa is no space for a signature. All it says is:

"Age declaration required over 17 years."

Another whole page of advertisements for som fearsome looking pump guns and shotguns, afte that our flexible friend and others will be welcom

"Please enclose shotgun certificate when shotguns".

I know that certificates have to be sent with ord at the moment there is no way in which the ma dealer can check that the person who has placed th and enclosed the shotgun certificate is the aut holder of that certificate. Perhaps that is another ar for a national register so that a quick phone ca provide a check that that was the case. It must be that there is at least a risk of the improper use of c for mail order purposes where certificates hav reported stolen or lost or, unknown to the aut holder of the licence, they have simply been borro loaned for the purpose of making an order. It ca unknown in many families for youngsters, impatie their hands on those kinds of weapons, to find ou mother or father keep the licence and, at the very l tempted to use it to purchase weapons by mail or

The debate has been astonishing, although remember what happened last Friday. When a Prime Minister, the right hon. Member for Old Bex Sidcup (Mr. Heath), and many of his hon. Friends hon. Friends have expressed concern over the m compensation for prohibited weapons, I suspect th Minister will tell the House that he is prepared t again. If it is any encouragement to him, I tell him will listen if the Government will.

Mr. Hurd: That is a change.

Mr. Corbett: Labour is listening. The righ Gentleman should watch television more — we listening party now. When my right hon. Frie Member for Sparkbrook opened the debate, he ma his view. I have sympathy with the point that Conse Members are making and I have a suggestion abo it should be dealt with. If the choice were put constituents about taxpayers' money being paid t holding firearms which will become illegal unc legislation or into the Birmingham children's hos ensure that every child who needs heart surgery g the time he or she needs it, there is no question th vote would be to put that money into the National Service. Conservative Members must face up to tha are quite willing to dig their hands into the tax pockets for this purpose, but they will not join w right hon. and hon. Friends on larger and more im purposes.

Mr. Nicholas Baker: That is a totally absurd parallel. Is the hon. Gentleman in favour of nationalisation without compensation?

Mr. Corbett: No, I am not, but that has nothing to do with the debate. It has been estimated that guns to the value of some £50 million could be put at risk by the Bill. These are, as many hon. Members have said, weapons that were bought in good faith and legally and responsibly held by people. I understand the complaints of harshness. We were told during the debate that, perhaps not surprisingly, dealers are trying to take advantage of the position and to offer derisory amounts of cash for weapons which will become illegal. There is a temptation for even a handful of less scrupulous people to bypass authorised dealers and dispose of weapons on the black market.

I have heard a suggestion which may have some attraction for Conservative Members. The Government should pay compensation because, as was said by the hon. Member for Romsey and Waterside, there should be no confiscation without compensation. That brings me to the point of where the money will come from. It has been suggested that the money could be paid out of the Treasury and repaid over a period, either by a levy on new or renewed licence applications, so that all legitimate shooters share the cost of the change, or by a levy on the sale of weapons.

Let me repeat that we are faced with a choice about taxpayers' money. Conservative Members have a leader who keeps reading lessons about taxpayers' money. Some £50 million is at stake here and that money could get rid of a lot of the agony and misery presently suffered in the Health Service.

The Minister is aware that I have written to him about people who have private collections of guns. He will know that one of my constituents can trace his family back as far as Napoleon Bonaparte and more recently to the person who developed the Maxim machine gun. He has inherited a collection of antique weapons, many of which are incapable of being fired and he says it is virtually impossible to obtain ammunition for those that can be fired. He is not a member of a gun club and has no interest in shooting. I should have thought that there was a way that weapons held in such private collections could be certificated—perhaps via a proof house such as we have in Birmingham — so that they formed an exempted category. Restrictions on their transport and storage would also seem to be sensible. Perhaps an exemption certificate could disqualify, where necessary, the holder from the purchase of ammunition. I hope that the Minister will write to me about this matter in due course.

There is an enormous amount of concern about the impact that the proposals will have on visitors to this country, especially those who wish to take part in competitions. I believe that we can learn from countries. Spain, for example, operates a system whereby the United Kingdom licence is translated into Spanish by the London embassy for a cost of between £1·50 and £2. A duplicate of that certificate, together with a photograph, is then sent to Madrid. On arrival, the holder presents the authenticated translation and, for the payment of another £4, obtains a licence to take part in competitions in Spain. I refuse to believe that we cannot do something similar. If we do not act, we risk damaging not only competition shooting, but the tourist trade in rural areas that depends heavily on shooting.

I want to be told why the Government chose the route of listing weapons by type and class—this has already been mentioned in the debate. It has been demonstrated that such classification causes confusion and contention. Other countries have acted by prohibiting magazines with more than three shots. Indeed, the hon. Member for Dumfries (Sir H. Monro) described it as one up the spout and two in the magazine. It has already been said that rapidity of fire can be achieved with weapons which, on the face of it, do not look lethal, but which, in practised and experienced hands, can deliver. If we limited the number of bullets that can be carried in a magazine we could achieve what the Bill is seeking to do. An example was given about the need for a second killing shot after a stag has been culled for conservation purposes. A second shot may be needed to drop the stag.

We appreciate the need for a revision of firearms legislation, but we do not believe that there has been adequate consultation with the shooting interests. I hope that the Government will make no attempt to hurry us through the Committee in an attempt to avoid a proper discussion of the proposals. In the course of meeting public concern we must not needlessly restrict the rights of law-abiding shooters or land them with rules and restrictions that are complicated and unworkable. We shall approach the Bill with that attitude and for that reason we shall not divide the House.

9.33 pm

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Douglas Hogg): I am not certain whether it is necessary for me to declare an interest, but I do so. In common with almost every hon. Member who has spoken—certainly from the Conservative Benches—I have a shotgun certificate. I shoot frequently, although perhaps not as frequently as I would like, and I rather fancy that after this debate I will receive fewer invitations.

When my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary introduced the Bill, he reminded the House of the need to achieve a proper balance between the legitimate interests of the shooting community and the need to provide a proper and sufficient system of firearms control. Both of those considerations are important to us and when we framed our proposals we tried to take them both into account. Our purpose has been to make firearms legislation more effective in its implementation and more reassuring to the public, without imposing on the shooting community restrictions that are unjustified in their objective or unreasonable in their application.

I acknowledge that we have brought our proposals before the House with some dispatch. That was our duty. However, we have consulted widely and shall continue to do so. The pillars of the policy are in place and I hope that they will remain in place. But my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary and I are not so arrogant as to assume that the Bill is necessarily perfect. *[Interruption.]* I fancy that that observation is attractive to my hon. Friends. Because we are not arrogant, we shall examine carefully the suggestions and criticisms that will certainly be made during the Bill's passage through Parliament.

Let me say something brief about the official Opposition. It merits only a few brief words. The right hon. Member for Birmingham, Sparkbrook (Mr. Hattersley) claimed responsibility for some of the Bill's provisions. He flatters himself. He referred to our discussions of the "good reason" provision on 26 October

[Mr. Douglas Hogg]

1987. On that occasion he called for the full application of section 1 control to shotguns. The Government decided that that was wholly unjustified because under section 1 control the applicant has to establish a good reason in each and every case. That is not what we propose for shotgun applicants.

Moreover, we have taken care to ensure—I shall return to this—that the definition of "good reason" is placed on the face of the Bill to protect the legitimate interests of the shooting community, of which I am a member. Therefore, it is wrong for the right hon. Member for Sparkbrook to claim that he was responsible. Furthermore, in October the right hon. Gentleman said that there should be a justification for each shotgun and said that it should be subject to an individual certificate. Once again, the Government took the view that that was a wholly unjustified proposal.

The Opposition's approach to the matter was well summarised by the right hon. Member for Sparkbrook on 26 October. He said:

"If youths in the inner cities are to be searched for knives, we cannot allow more prosperous adults to hang around country public houses with shotguns in the boots of their cars, or allow ammunition to be carried carelessly and pointlessly from place to place."—[*Official Report*, 26 October 1987; Vol. 121, c. 33.]

That gives a flavour of the attitude adopted by the Labour party, and it is not good enough.

I said that I would refer briefly to the Labour party's position, because that was all that it merited. I have finished with Opposition Members; I have nothing more to say about them.

Mr. Corbett: But——

Mr. Hogg: No. I have made the position wholly plain and I now propose to deal with the constructive contributions of my hon. Friends.

First, I want to consider the question of compensation. I feel like the boy on the burning deck. All my right hon. and hon. Friends have called for compensation. I clearly understand the force of their arguments. However, I hope that they will understand that we have confronted difficulties of principle and practice. Indeed, my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary referred to some of the problems. However, in view of what has been argued so powerfully, we are prepared to look again at the issue of compensation and we will do so against the background of what has been said in the debate. However, I must emphasise the difficulties to which I have already referred.

Mr. Corbett: Will the Minister give way?

Mr. Hogg: No, I am afraid I will not.

I now want to deal with many particular points. My first point concerns Ryan. Mr. Ryan has been referred to frequently in the debate and I want to re-emphasise what my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary has said. It is not true that Mr. Ryan was given a firearms certificate the day after he applied for it. His application was received at divisional level on 26 November 1986. It was processed and sent to headquarters and the certificate was issued on 10 December.

Mr. Ron Davies *rose*——

Mr. Onslow: Will my hon. Friend give way?

Mr. Hogg: No, I want to finish this point.

With regard to Ryan's possession of unlawfu
there is no evidence to show that he possessed a
sub-machine gun. There is evidence to suggest
a pistol crudely converted from a Belgian
However, the evidence suggests that that i
weapon that Ryan owned unlawfully.

Mr. Onslow: My hon. Friend will understan
has been said about the 24-hour issue of a lice
from what was said by the chief constable
Valley police in his report to his police comm
did that erroneous statement come to be mad

Mr. Hogg: I think that it was made because
for compression. We have looked into this m
carefully and the account which my right hon.
Home Secretary and I have given to the H
account that we believe to be accurate.

Mr. Ron Davies: Will the Minister give way

Mr. Hogg: No.

The procedure took 24 hours at headquarte
application was received at divisional level mu

Mr. Ron Davies: Give way.

Mr. Hogg: I have made it perfectly plain t
Gentleman that I do not propose to give way

I now want to consider the question of a
which is the subject of the reasoned amendmen
Friend the Member for Newbury (Mr. McN
rejected that call and I entirely agree with him.
already been an investigation into the relevant
not think that anything of particular value
discovered. What is more, I am certain that t
would cause increased misery to the people of H
I am fortified in my view of that by the support
Friend the Member for Newbury.

Mr. Martyn Jones: Will the Minister give w

Mr. Hogg: I want to consider pump-action
self-loading shotguns, because I appreciate that
matters of great concern among my right hon
Friends. Anxiety has been expressed by aln
Conservative Member who has spoken in t
There are two justifications for putting large
guns in section 1. The first is their increased firep
the period of initial discharge.

Mr. Ron Davies: On a point of order, Mr.
can understand that the Minister is not prepa
way to Labour Members wishing to check cer
with him, but is it in order for him to igno
Members so completely that he turns his back

Mr. Speaker: I do not think that the Ministe
order. I think that he was addressing the Chai

Mr. Hogg: One of the difficulties tha
Members are not facing up to is the need to a
Chair. They frequently ignore the Chair, whic
not recommend to any hon. Member.

During the initial period of discharge, large
guns have a higher rate of fire than the more
side-by-side or over-and-under guns. For m
activities for which self-loading or pump-actio
used, a traditional side-by-side or over-and-un
do as well.

I can well understand the argument that
advanced by my right hon. and hon. Frien

happens if manufacturers bring pump-action or self-loading shotguns on to the market, the magazine of which cannot take more than two cartridges? As a proposition, it would be highly attractive to exempt those guns from the application of section 1.

I can well understand that my right hon. and hon. Friends would also say, "What happens if existing owners of magazine shotguns can have their guns converted in such a way that the magazine cannot hold more than two cartridges and cannot be readily reconverted to a larger magazine?" There is considerable attraction in the proposition that those should be exempted from section 1. There is a problem in ensuring that the conversion is reasonably carried out and that reconversion is not readily possible.

I am giving urgent and careful thought to the ways in which we might be able to achieve that. I cannot give a guarantee, save that I am seriously considering it.

Mr. Riddick: I still do not understand the need to put this category of weapon in section 1. Will my hon. Friend give one instance in which such a weapon has been used in the pursuit of crime?

Mr. Hogg: There is no evidence that they are used more frequently in the pursuit of crime, but there is an increased degree of lethality over the period of discharge. A pump-action shotgun is not necessary for most of the activities that shooting people pursue.

My hon. Friend the Member for Newbury mentioned armour-piercing ammunition. There would be a great deal to be said for what my hon. Friend has suggested if we could do it. The problem is to identify what is meant by armour-piercing in a way that gives itself to a statutory definition. So far, we have been unable to achieve that. There is a residual power in section 1(5) to put certain specified classes of ammunition and guns into section 5.

I appreciate that the discretion of police officers and the meaning of "good reason" cause considerable concern to some of my right hon. and hon. Friends. I have already given the approach that we propose to adopt for shotguns. It is not for the applicant to prove a good reason. A shotgun certificate will issue, subject to the other criteria, unless the chief constable is satisfied that there is not a good reason.

We have put on the face of the Bill a definition of "good reason" which we believe is wide enough to protect the legitimate interests of those constituents whom most of us represent. I do not agree that the last element in the definition of "good reason" has the effect described by the right hon. Member for Sparkbrook. However, I fancy that that is a Committee argument, rather than a Second Reading argument. Incidentally, if hon. Members feel that the definition of "good reason" is not sufficiently wide, that matter can be explored at length in Committee, where it will be seriously considered by my right hon. and hon. Friends.

On the question of the discretion of chief police officers, to which many of my right hon. and hon. Friends referred, notably my right hon. Friends the Members for Woking (Mr. Onslow) and for Kincardine and Deeside (Mr. Buchanan-Smith) and my hon. Friend the Member for Warwick and Leamington (Sir D. Smith), it is obviously desirable to achieve as much uniformity as possible. However, there are many activities for which total uniformity is not possible—for example, applications for liquor licences. That is one reason why we have put "good reason" on the face of the Bill. However, there is the right to go to court on appeal which, again, will give a degree of uniformity.

My final point in this context relates to guidance. Since 1969, the Home Office has put out a memorandum of guidance, the purpose of which is to achieve a degree of uniformity. The document is not legally binding in itself because, ultimately, it is subject to the courts. However, it is guidance. I recognise that the shooting community would like to be involved in the formulation of what goes in to that guidance. Indeed, that has happened and will happen. In fact, we consulted the shooting interests at considerable length about the contents of a new memorandum of guidance. We shall do so again. When the Bill is enacted, we intend to publish a new memorandum of guidance. Before that is done, we shall consult the shooting interests and we will publish the memorandum.

Mr. Martyn Jones: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. Will you confirm that we are discussing my amendment? If so, and as there are only eight minutes left, can I rely on the Minister to give a view of my amendment?

Mr. Speaker: That is correct. The hon. Gentleman's amendment was called.

Mr. Hogg: The amendment was called, and I said that I could not commend an inquiry to the House. I summarised my arguments in about two lines, which is what the amendment deserved.

Mr. Jones: Further to that point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Hogg: No, I shall not give way—*[Interruption.]*

Mr. Speaker: Order. It may not be a point of order; it may be a point of disagreement.

Mr. Jones: It is a point of order.

Mr. Hogg: I am not giving way. If it is a point of order, that is one thing; if it is an intervention, that is another. [HON. MEMBERS: "That is for Mr. Speaker."] I am not giving way to an intervention—*[Interruption.]*

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. Hogg: I shall deal briefly with the matter of a consultative committee. I know that it has troubled several of my right hon. and hon. Friends. Although I am not sure that an advisory committee of a non-statutory kind will add to the consultative process, through which we are prepared to operate as it is, I am not wholly hostile to it by any means, and nor is my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary. This matter needs consideration and we shall give it serious consideration.

On the question of foreign shooters, which has been raised by several of my right hon. and hon. Friends, for example, by my hon. Friend the Member for Windsor and Maidenhead (Dr. Glyn), we agree entirely that it is right that people who want to come to shoot in this country should be able to do so. We have set out a regime in the Bill—I think it is clauses 12 and 13—which we believe will enable them to do so without unreasonable restrictions, but with reasonable restrictions still being imposed.

A balance must be struck. If my right hon. and hon. Friends feel that the balance has not been struck correctly,

[Mr. Hogg]

the Committee is a way to explore the matter further. However, I think that we have got the balance broadly right.

Mr. Hardy: The Minister has mentioned facilitating arrangements for foreign visitors. Would a foreign visitor be required to have a licence? Secondly, will the Minister confirm that the certificates will continue to be a self-financing exercise? Will his right hon. and hon. Friends be pleased with the deluge of complaints when the licence goes up so substantially?

Mr. Hogg: In answer to the hon. Gentleman's first question, the provisions on visitors' licences are clearly set out in the Bill, and I recommend that he read it. On the question of licence fees, we intend that the shooting interests should be fully consulted, and that they should play a part in a working party. However, we anticipate that the costs incurred in the licensing regime will be recoverable.

We intend to require shotgun owners to keep their guns in a secure place. I cannot say that I regard that as wrong; it is something that I do myself, and I hope that everyone would do the same. However, I recognise that there are difficulties when people transport their guns from the place where they keep them to the place where they use, repair or even wish to sell them.

That is precisely the kind of question that we can resolve in discussion—first with the shooting community and secondly in Committee — and that is what we propose to do. For today's purposes, our proposal is that we should have powers to require a gun of that kind to be kept in a secure place.

Mrs. Ann Taylor (Dewsbury): Will the Minister give way?

Mr. Hogg: I am afraid not. I am running out of time.

Mrs. Taylor *rose*——

Mr. Hogg: I am afraid not. I am running out of time.

Mrs. Taylor *rose*——

Mr. Hogg: I am becoming very repetitive. I am afraid not; I am running out of time.

My hon. Friend the Member for Gloucestershire, West (Mr. Marland) referred to the power under clause 1(5) of the Bill to put other weapons into section 5 control. The justification for that residual power is the risk that some manufacturers will put on to the market a gun designed to be outwith section 5. For example, a paramilitary shotgun with a barrel measuring less than 24m will be controlled by section 5 if the Bill is carried. But if the barrel was extended, it would not be so controlled. It could never be a sporting weapon, but the manufacturer would have designed his way out of the restriction. That is not satisfactory, and we wish to take reserve powers to deal with it. The question is whether we should qualify those reserve powers.

I can well understand the argument being put by my right hon. and hon. Friends, that a Labour Government might behave unreasonably: I am sure that they would, if they ever returned to power. I am advised that the Bill would not lend itself to that, but I will look again at whatever the powers should be restricted to, for example, fast-firing guns, which would, I think, go a long way to meet points made in the debate.

Several of my right hon. and hon. Friends to deactivation, and I understand their point considering the possibility of finding a way, bureaucracy, of certifying that a gun was tru — that is, that it could not readily be firing state.

I appreciate that there are many points t answered—*[Interruption.]* I feared that tha reaction—but I mean no discourtesy to h Time, not discourtesy, is the cause. I shall m we are in the business of trying to impr legislation without imposing undue Inevitably, that is a question of judgment cases, or of striking a balance.

We are not so arrogant as to assume necessarily got it entirely right. We hope tha the policy will stand, and, on the basis that a fair and reasonable assessment of what nee but with a willingness to re-examine so Committee, I commend the Bill to the Hou

Question put, That the amendment be m

The House divided: Ayes 55, Noes 185.

Division 148]

AYES

Armstrong, Ms Hilary
Barnes, Harry *(Derbyshire NE)*
Battle, John
Beggs, Roy
Bennett, A. F. *(D'nt'n & R'dish)*
Buchan, Norman
Callaghan, Jim
Campbell, Ron *(Blyth Valley)*
Cummings, J.
Davies, Ron *(Caerphilly)*
Dixon, Don
Dunnachie, James
Eastham, Ken
Evans, John *(St Helens N)*
Ewing, Mrs Margaret *(Moray)*
Flannery, Martin
Flynn, Paul
Forsythe, Clifford *(Antrim S)*
Golding, Mrs Llin
Hardy, Peter
Haynes, Frank
Howarth, George *(Knowsley N)*
Hoyle, Doug
Hughes, John *(Coventry NE)*
Illsley, Eric
Jones, Ieuan *(Ynys Môn)*
Kilfedder, James
Lamond, James
Macdonald, Calum
McKay, Allen *(Penistone)*
McLeish, Henry
Madden, Max
Mahon, Mrs Alic
Martlew, Eric
Meale, Alan
Molyneaux, Rt H
Morgan, Rhodri
Morley, Elliott
Mowlam, Marjor
Nellist, Dave
Patchett, Terry
Pike, Peter
Powell, Ray *(Og*
Primarolo, Ms D
Redmond, Martin
Ross, William *(L*
Salmond, Alex
Skinner, Dennis
Smith, Andrew *(*
Steinberg, Gerald
Thomas, Dafydd
Walker, A. Cecil
Welsh, Andrew *(*
Wigley, Dafydd
Williams, Alan W

Tellers for the Ay
Mr. Martyn Jo
Mr. Bob Cryer

NOES

Alexander, Richard
Alison, Rt Hon Michael
Allason, Rupert
Amess, David
Amos, Alan
Arbuthnot, James
Arnold, Jacques *(Gravesham)*
Arnold, Tom *(Hazel Grove)*
Ashby, David
Ashdown, Paddy
Aspinwall, Jack
Baker, Rt Hon K. *(Mole Valley)*
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Baldry, Tony
Batiste, Spencer
Beith, A. J.
Bellingham, Henry
Bennett, Nicholas *(Pembroke)*
Benyon, W.
Bevan, David Gil
Boscawen, Hon
Boswell, Tim
Bottomley, Peter
Bowden, A *(Brig*
Bowis, John
Braine, Rt Hon S
Brazier, Julian
Bright, Graham
Brooke, Rt Hon
Brown, Michael *(*
Browne, John *(W*
Bruce, Ian *(Dors*
Bruce, Malcolm *(*
Buchanan-Smith,
Budgen, Nicholas
Burns, Simon

Burt, Alistair
Butcher, John
Butterfill, John
Campbell, Menzies *(Fife NE)*
Carlile, Alex *(Mont'g)*
Carrington, Matthew
Carttiss, Michael
Clarke, Rt Hon K. *(Rushcliffe)*
Colvin, Michael
Coombs, Anthony *(Wyre F'rest)*
Coombs, Simon *(Swindon)*
Cormack, Patrick
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Davis, David *(Boothferry)*
Day, Stephen
Dorrell, Stephen
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James
Dunn, Bob
Durant, Tony
Fookes, Miss Janet
Forman, Nigel
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Galbraith, Samuel
Garel-Jones, Tristan
Goodhart, Sir Philip
Greenway, John *(Rydale)*
Ground, Patrick
Grylls, Michael
Hamilton, Hon A. *(Epsom)*
Hamilton, Neil *(Tatton)*
Hampson, Dr Keith
Hanley, Jeremy
Hargreaves, A. *(B'ham H'll Gr')*
Harris, David
Haselhurst, Alan
Hawkins, Christopher
Hayward, Robert
Heath, Rt Hon Edward
Heathcoat-Amory, David
Hicks, Mrs Maureen *(Wolv' NE)*
Hogg, Hon Douglas *(Gr'th'm)*
Howarth, Alan *(Strat'd-on-A)*
Howarth, G. *(Cannock & B'wd)*
Howell, Ralph *(North Norfolk)*
Howells, Geraint
Hunt, David *(Wirral W)*
Hunter, Andrew
Hurd, Rt Hon Douglas
Irvine, Michael
Jack, Michael
Jackson, Robert
Janman, Timothy
Johnson Smith, Sir Geoffrey
Jones, Gwilym *(Cardiff N)*
Jones, Robert B *(Herts W)*
Kennedy, Charles
Key, Robert
King, Rt Hon Tom *(Bridgwater)*
Kirkwood, Archy
Knapman, Roger
Knowles, Michael
Lang, Ian
Lawrence, Ivan
Leigh, Edward *(Gainsbor'gh)*
Lilley, Peter
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
Lord, Michael
Lyell, Sir Nicholas
Macfarlane, Sir Neil
MacKay, Andrew *(E Berkshire)*
Maclean, David
McLoughlin, Patrick
McNair-Wilson, M. *(Newbury)*
Major, Rt Hon John
Malins, Humfrey
Mans, Keith
Marland, Paul
Marshall, John *(Hendon S)*
Martin, David *(Portsmouth S)*
Maxwell-Hyslop, Robin
Meyer, Sir Anthony
Michie, Mrs Ray *(Arg'l & Bute)*
Miller, Hal
Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)*
Mitchell, David *(Hants NW)*
Morris, M *(N'hampton S)*
Moss, Malcolm
Needham, Richard
Neubert, Michael
Newton, Rt Hon Tony
Nicholls, Patrick
Nicholson, David *(Taunton)*
Nicholson, Miss E. *(Devon W)*
Onslow, Rt Hon Cranley
Page, Richard
Paice, James
Patnick, Irvine
Pawsey, James
Peacock, Mrs Elizabeth
Porter, David *(Waveney)*
Portillo, Michael
Raffan, Keith
Redwood, John
Renton, Tim
Rhodes James, Robert
Rhys Williams, Sir Brandon
Riddick, Graham
Roe, Mrs Marion
Rowe, Andrew
Ryder, Richard
Sayeed, Jonathan
Shaw, David *(Dover)*
Shephard, Mrs G. *(Norfolk SW)*
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Sims, Roger
Smith, Sir Dudley *(Warwick)*
Speller, Tony
Squire, Robin
Stanbrook, Ivor
Steel, Rt Hon David
Stern, Michael
Stevens, Lewis
Stewart, Andrew *(Sherwood)*
Stradling Thomas, Sir John
Summerson, Hugo
Taylor, Ian *(Esher)*
Taylor, Matthew *(Truro)*
Taylor, Teddy *(S'end E)*
Thompson, D. *(Calder Valle*
Thompson, Patrick *(Norwich*
Thorne, Neil
Thurnham, Peter
Townend, John *(Bridlington)*
Tracey, Richard
Twinn, Dr Ian
Waddington, Rt Hon David
Wakeham, Rt Hon John
Walden, George
Wallace, James
Waller, Gary
Ward, John
Wells, Bowen
Wheeler, John
Widdecombe, Miss Ann
Wiggin, Jerry
Wilkinson, John
Wilshire, David
Wood, Timothy
Yeo, Tim

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. Mark Lennox-Boyd
Mr. David Lightbown.

Question accordingly negatived.

Main Question put and agreed to.

Bill accordingly read a Second time, and committed to a Standing Committee pursuant to Standing Order No. (Committal of Bills).

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Ordered,

That, at this day's sitting, The Duchy of Lancaster may be proceeded with, though opposed, until any hou

[Mr. Maclean.]

Firearms (Amendment) Bill *[Money]*

Queens Recommendation having been signified—
Motion made, and Question proposed,

That, for the purposes of any Act resulting from the Firearms (Amendment) Bill, it is expedient to authorise—

(a) the payment out of money provided by Parliament of any administrative expenses incurred by the Secretary of State in consequence of that Act; and

(b) the payment into the Consolidated Fund of any sums received under that Act by the Secretary of State.—*[Mr. Douglas Hogg.]*

10.12 pm

Mr. Bob Cryer (Bradford, South): Money resolutions tend to go through the House rather too easily. I suspect that the money involved in this Bill is not great, but we have had no explanation of how much is involved. The Minister said that the intended costs of the licensing regime will be covered. That shows that there will be some sort of increase in the licensing fee. In addition, we should be interested to know what calculations have been made, because the people interested in shooting as a sport are reasonably entitled to know what the new regime will cost.

Secondly, the legislation places more duties on the police. There is an extension of the licensing system, and the Government have argued that that has been introduced—*[Interruption.]*

Mr. Speaker: Order. Will hon. Members who are standing beyond the Bar kindly be quiet?

Mr. Cryer: No one would object to an improved and safer regime. The questions that have been raised tonight are whether the Government have acted over-hastily and whether they have planned for and calculated the effects of their legislation. I should have thought that, when planning the legislation, they would have had some consequential notion of the increased load on the police. For instance, chief constables will provide scrutiny of people who engage in trade as firearms dealers, under clause 9. They will have to decide whether a person engages in a substantial way. That involves work and that will not be carried out by the chief officer of police; it will be delegated. The police will be required to scrutinise more people for firearms certificates. I do not suppose that any hon. Member would object to that, provided that it is recognised that this is going to produce a higher standard of safety, because that is the whole point and purpose of the Bill.

What sort of increase in police time is this going to cause? Clause 11(5), for example, gives extra powers to police constables in relation to entering premises occupied or used by a club approved under this clause.

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Sir Paul Dean): Order. I must remind the hon. Gentleman that the money resolution is comparatively narrow. He is now going rather wider than that. It deals with the administrative expenses of the Secretary of State under clause 11 and payments into the Consolidated Fund of any fees received by the Secretary of State. The debate must be restricted to those provisions, which are what the money resolution involves.

Mr. Cryer: That is precisely my point, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I am making the point that, first, there are going to be increased administrative expenses. That is precisely the point that I made about the work of the chief constables, because they are going to be carrying out the administration of this legislation——

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. I am sor
hon. Gentleman again. This issue
Administrative expenses are covered by t
money resolution.

Mr. Cryer: I am naturally grateful f
Mr. Deputy Speaker.

None the less, there are going to
licensing fees, and all we have had so fa
Minister is an indication that the cost
regime will be recovered. That is his int
the area covered by the money resolutio
Minister the opportunity to elaborat
resolution, which consists of about half a
relevant clause and on the Order Pape
assure us that the planning behind th
indeed been done and that the admini
covered by the money resolution are
Government in relation to the propose
If there are going to be any increases i
House should be told about them.

If, in the course of his reply, the Minis
the additional costs to the police, becau
the Home Office, that would be of adva

10.18 pm

Mr. Edward Heath (Old Bexley a
Second Reading some of my right hon.
and I asked about compensation for thos
are now made illegal under this Bill. M
Minister is this: if his right hon. Fr
Secretary and the Chancellor of the Exch
conclusion that compensation should
included in the definition of
"adminstrative expenses incurred by the S
If it is not an administrative expense
have thought from my experience that
difficult to define it as an administrati
will it be covered by Her Majesty's Gov

10.19 pm

Mrs. Ann Taylor (Dewsbury): I was
speak in this debate until I heard the Mi
I wish to raise the point raised by the ri
for Old Bexley and Sidcup (Mr. Heath)
that the Minister made certain statemen
up speech which are very significant and
for the money resolution attached to th

As it is written, the money resol
expenditure on increased police resources
will be offset by increased income from f
for the expenditure incurred by the Sec
connection with the approval of clubs
museums, which will also be offset
approvals and licences. There is no menti
extra money being made available
compensation scheme that the Minister
willing to look at, and half indicated he w
hon. Friend the Member for Birmingham
Corbett) outlined how a self-fundin
scheme could be produced. The Minister
relied entirely on vague promises to Co
Benchers about his own compensati
Minister may have conned some of his
voting with him, but he owes it to the
explain whether the financial resolu
possibility of compensation.

10.21 pm

Mr. William Ross (Londonderry, East): The previous two speakers raised the question of compensation. Whatever the Minister said in his winding-up speech, he made it perfectly clear that the Government were prepared to look at the Bill in great detail in Committee. From that I assume that we will be able to consider that matter in depth in Committee, including the amount of money that will be needed.

If hon. Members will cast their minds back to the proceedings on the Shops Bill, they will recall that a large number of amendments were tabled, and the Home Secretary gave an undertaking that the Bill would not be guillotined. Will the Home Secretary give a similar undertaking so that the Bill can be properly explored and made into a real vehicle to improve the firearms legislation?

10.22 pm

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Douglas Hogg): Three points have been raised. The first was raised by the hon. Member for Bradford, South (Mr. Cryer). It is nice to see the hon. Gentleman in the debate, but it is a pity that he could not spare a few minutes of his time during Second Reading.

Mr. Cryer: On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. The Minister is rather ignorant and rather arrogant. He failed to notice that I was present during most of the opening speech by the Home Secretary. *Hansard* will show that I received a courteous response from the Home Secretary to my intervention. Unfortunately, I must confess that I also heard the appalling speech made by the Under-Secretary.

Mr. Hogg: That means that the hon. Gentleman was here for about 40 minutes and that he was not here for about five hours and 30 minutes. That is not a particularly constructive approach to the debate.

As for the hon. Gentleman's question, the answer is fairly well summarised in the explanatory memorandum. He raised the point about the working party and firearms fees. It is perfectly true that it is intended that the cost of implementing the scheme shall be largely recoverable. We intend to discuss the level of the fees with the shooting interests. Before embarking on those consultations, it would be unwise of me to pluck a particular figure out of the air. However, the hon. Gentleman will be aware of the existing fees.

Turning to the point raised by my right hon. Friend the Member for Old Bexley and Sidcup (Mr. Heath) and the hon. Member for Dewsbury (Mrs. Taylor), as the Home Secretary and I said during the debate, there are considerable difficulties of principle and practice in the way of a compensation scheme. We said that we will go away and look again at those difficulties and see if we can find a way through them. Until we have decided the principle of compensation, and its precise form, it is not possible exactly to identify the source of the money. Therefore, with the greatest respect to my right hon. Friend, I cannot answer his question, because we must first decide the policy. The same response applies to the hon. Lady.

Mrs. Ann Taylor: Is the money resolution adequate to allow for the type of compensation scheme that he would consider? After all, what is the point of considering a compensation scheme in the context of the Bi money resolution is not sufficient to cover a scheme? What does he intend to do if there are costs and the money resolution is inadequate them? What will be his proposals in Committee?

Mr. Hogg: Our proposal will be to put our order. First, we must determine the policy. On th my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary and I ha our position plain. We have not come to the Hou with a compensation policy. I accept that my ri Friend has said that we shall look again at the is must determine that fundamental question o before I can answer the wholly relevant and question of my right hon. Friend the Member Bexley and Sidcup. I cannot respond until the p been determined. Therefore, I hope that my ri Friend and the hon. Member for Dewsbu understand that I cannot answer in precise f questions that they have posed.

Mrs. Ann Taylor: I am not asking the Ministe precise cost of any compensation scheme. I am ask he is considering the compensation scheme if it be allowable under the money resolution.

Mr. Hogg: If there is a problem, we shall hav our house in order in one way or another. That do if we determine the policy in the way that, for my right hon. Friend the Member for Old Be Sidcup has commended that we should.

10.26 pm

Mr. Ron Davies (Caerphilly): I do not know my questions can be answered by the Minister or you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, will have to guide understand it, we are about to determine wh approve the money resolution, which will auth payment of any expenditure arising from the imp tion of the Bill.

If I understood his remarks properly, the Mi his winding-up speech, gave a fairly broad hint hon. Members who had raised the matter of comp that that would be looked at sympatheticall understand it, a nod is as good as a wink.

I have looked again at the Bill and there is no of compensation in its long title. There is cert clause which will allow the question of compen be raised. Therefore, unless the Government i table a new clause or to introduce new princip Bill, they would not be empowered under the money resolution to incur expenditure on comp

If that is the case, can you, Mr. Deputy Speak appropriate, the Minister, confirm that if the resolution and Bill are accepted, the Governmen prevented from introducing any further me Committee or subsequently allowing any compe

10.27 pm

Mr. Gerald Bermingham (St. Helens, South) listened only to the end of the debate and say no m this. It occurs to me that if the long title does no terms of compensation, there is no way in which brought into the Act. Therefore, the Minister is, ways, misleading the House by saying that he wi the principle again. If that is not within the lon cannot be within the Act.

[Mr. Gerald Bermingham]

That leads me to my second point. I declare an interest, having a shotgun or two. If the Government have to pay compensation, on what basis will they do so? Will it be upon the basis existing before the Act or after the Act? If it is on the basis before the Act, compensation will be small. After the Act—*[Interruption.]* I realise that I may be going outside the terms of the debate, so I return to my original point. Are we being misled by the Minister? Perhaps you can advise us, Mr. Deputy Speaker. If the long title does not contain any reference to compensation, any assurance that the Minister gives us has no meaning.

10.28 pm

Mr. James Molyneaux (Lagan Valley): I too feel that we must have some fairly clear guidance before we can agree to the money resolution. With great respect, the Minister has not replied specifically to the point that has been made about compensation. It would seem from what the Minister has said that if he and the Home Secretary agree to accept the principle of compensation, the logic would be that they would have to return with another money resolution.

Mr. Cryer: On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. During my remarks you intervened and said that the money resolution was very narrow and related only to administrative expenses of the Bill. As a consequence, I decided to ignore compensation, as you had helped and guided me in the matter, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and I always follow your guidance very gratefully. Does it follow from what you said about the very narrow resolution that compensation cannot arise under the Bill because it is not an administrative expense?

Mr. Deputy Speaker: It is not quite as simple as that. The hon. Members who followed used their normal skill and linked the remarks on compensation to administrative expenses, so that was just — but I stress only just — within the bounds of order. Before I call another hon. Gentleman to speak, I say that the money resolution is narrow and we must stick to its terms.

Mr. Cryer: Further to that point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. You are saying that the administration of a compensation scheme might be within the terms of the Bill, but not the compensation money. That would render any compensation proposal by the Minister completely void and meaningless, because the Government would only be able to push about bits of paper on compensation, but could not give any compensation at all. That is how I understand the gist of your remarks, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. This is a matter for argument; it is not a matter of order for the Chair.

Mr. John Evans (St. Helens, North): Further to that point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Will you reconsider your last remark, as all resolutions passed by the House are absolutely binding on the Committee that will consider the legislation? There are no circumstances in which the Committee, whether by Government or Opposition amendment, could move outside the terms of the money resolution. Does it not seem odd that the Minister has told the House that the Government intend to bring in some form of compensation scheme, but not make any provision for compensation in the Bill?

I ask the Home Secretary whethe
under the money resolution before th
be able to introduce any amendment
Committee which could give effect
scheme. Is it not remarkable that we
after the Second Reading debate whic
principles in the Bill, with the Home
come to the Floor of the House and
resolution to the House before he ca
a grave dereliction on his part that, u
no hon. Members will be able to
Committee about a compensation s
Chairman of the Committee will rule a
out of order, as the Committee will be
money resolution? This is a remark
remarkable Bill.

Surely the Home Secretary has don
House by bringing forward such a
resolution. He should have come p
provision in the long title to ensure th
produce a compensation scheme, it
modated without having to return t
House.

Mr. Ron Davies: On a point of
Speaker. I seek your advice, because th
importance. The Second Reading of th
largely on the ground that the
undertaking to look seriously at
understand that, in the light of th
Government got their majority on the
it is the case——

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. This
order. The hon. Gentleman has made
cannot make a second speech on the n
he has a point of order, it must be a
I can deal with.

Mr. Davies: It is. I ask you to bear w
Speaker. If the money resolution is
Second Reading be null and void and w
have to reintroduce new legislation
resolution?

Mr. Douglas Hogg: With permis
Speaker, I will seek to answer the p
troubling right hon. and hon. Membe

First, we must determine the policy
Right hon. and hon. Members who ha
the debate know the Government's
have determined that question we shall
House, one way or another, with our c
time we shall have to ensure that there
for the money, whether it is done by a
or by money resolution. It is evident th
do that. There is no way that we shall
with a compensation scheme that we
decide to commend a compensation p
we shall make arrangements to ensure
funded.

Mrs. Ann Taylor: Will the Ministe
change to allow compensation can
Committee—as he earlier implied to
unless there is a change in the money r
my hon. Friends and myself will be incli
the money resolution if it is inadequa
implied earlier by the Minister.

he is aware that
House he will not
or new clauses in
a compensation
all be faced, just
has agreed to the
cretary having to
ut a new money
proceed? Is it not
ess that happens,
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such amendments
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appalling money
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the Floor of the

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matter is of grave
Bill was accepted
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compensation. I
assurance, the
cond Reading. If

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is speech and he
ney resolution. If
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me, Mr. Deputy
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the Government
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on, Mr. Deputy
t that is clearly

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x gratia payment
we shall have to
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nnot fund. If we
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hat it is properly

confirm that the
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hon. Friends—
olution? Some of
d to vote against
for the purpose

Mr. Hogg: I cannot confirm that. Clearly this is an extremely technical matter, upon which myself and others will require advice, because it goes to the root of the proceedings of a Committee. I would be astonished if the Committee did not have ample opportunity to discuss the question of compensation.

Mr. John Evans *rose*——

Mr. Hogg: I will just finish this point and then I will give way.

No Conservative Member will stand on the technicalities so as to frustrate the efforts of hon. Members to discuss the question of compensation.

Mr. Evans: On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Will you confirm that the Committee will be unable to discuss any compensation scheme because there is no clause in the Bill that mentions any such scheme? Therefore, no amendment may be tabled referring to it. The Minister is either wittingly or unwittingly deceiving the House or himself. The Committee will simply be unable to discuss a compensation scheme because there are no terms on which to hang it.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: It is a matter for the Committee, not for me now.

Mr. Heath: Further to that point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I understand full well why my hon. Friend cannot give a precise answer at this stage to the question that I posed. I welcome the assurance that he has given to the House that should the Government reach the conclusion that compensation, in some way or other, should be paid, they will take the necessary steps, with the House, to finance that decision. I welcome that assurance and I hope that the House will accept it as such.

Mr. Frank Dobson (Holborn and St. Pancras): Further to that point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. A considerable number of my right and hon. Friends have supported the Bill, in principle, throughout and did not vote against it tonight. They heard assurances from the Minister of State——

Mrs. Ann Taylor: The Parliamentary Under-Secretary.

Mr. Dobson: I am sorry that I have over-promoted the old Etonian hon. Gentleman and I duly apologise to whoever I have offended.

The Parliamentary Secretary——

Mr. Hogg: The Parliamentary Under-Secretary.

Mr. Dobson: Worse still, I apologise. The Parliamentary Under-Secretary gave undertakings that a compensation scheme would be considered. A considerable number of my hon. Friends and, I have no doubt, Conservative Members accepted those undertakings in the belief that, as in the usual way, it would be possible for the Committee to consider and deliberate on a compensation scheme. We now understand that it is impossible for the Committee to deliberate on such a scheme because of a shortcoming in the money resolution.

Before this matter is put to the vote we seek your guidance, Mr. Deputy Speaker, on whether it is true that the Committee will be unable to consider amendments or new clauses in relation to a compensation scheme without the prior passing of a different money resolution.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: As I have just said, it is not for me to say what will be in order in Committee. That will be a matter for the Committee when it eventu
I am sorry but I cannot help the hon. Gentlem
stage.

Mrs. Ann Taylor: Further to that point of
Deputy Speaker. It is within your remit to co
suspicions about the money resolution. Is it not
even if the Committee could discuss compens
money resolution as it stands does not allo
funding of a compensation scheme? That is the
we are discussing. The money resolution is ina
deal with the question of payment of compe
which the Under-Secretary used to persuade s
hon. Friends to vote with him this evening. E
Committee can discuss compensation, the G
will not be able to pay out compensation.

Mr. Douglas Hogg With the permission of t
Mr. Deputy Speaker, there are many thing
Government can do in an ex gratia way. If we
make compensation available, it must be funde
think that compensation need necessarily be pr
in the money resolution. It could be part of a
scheme. If that is what we decide to do, the r
simply have to be made available.

Mr. Cryer: Does the Minister agree——

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. Is the hon.
raising a point of order? He cannot make anot
on the money resolution.

Mr. Cryer: On a point of order, Mr. Deput
The Minister said, "With the permission of the
assume, therefore, that the House has given th
permission to speak a third or fourth time. Coul
confirm that when the Bill emerges from Comm
be subject, in the usual way, to amendments o
Will the usual rules apply on Report? You sa
cannot comment on the Committee stage, bu
comment on the position on Report? Will the
the same—that is to say, that the money res
drafted will not allow for the introduct
compensation scheme?

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The hon. Gentleman
a long way ahead. I have already made it cl
House that it is not for me to say what will be
Committee. Until the Bill has had its Commi
amendments to the Bill on Report ar
hypothetical. We should conclude our proceedi
money resolution.

Question put:—

The House divided: Ayes 158, Noes 37.

Division 148]

AYES

Alexander, Richard	Bennett, Nicholas (I
Allison, Rt Hon Michael	Benyon, W.
Allason, Rupert	Bevan, David Gilroy
Amess, David	Boscawen, Hon Rob
Amos, Alan	Boswell, Tim
Arbuthnot, James	Bottomley, Peter
Arnold, Jacques (Gravesham)	Bowden, A (Brighto
Ashby, David	Bowis, John
Ashdown, Paddy	Braine, Rt Hon Sir I
Baker, Rt Hon K. (Mole Valley)	Brazier, Julian
Baker, Nicholas (Dorset N)	Bright, Graham
Baldry, Tony	Brooke, Rt Hon Pet
Batiste, Spencer	Brown, Michael (Br
Beith, A. J.	Browne, John (Win

Bruce, Ian *(Dorset South)*
Buchanan-Smith, Rt Hon Alick
Burns, Simon
Burt, Alistair
Butcher, John
Butterfill, John
Campbell, Menzies *(Fife NE)*
Carlile, Alex *(Mont'g)*
Carrington, Matthew
Carttiss, Michael
Clarke, Rt Hon K. *(Rushcliffe)*
Coombs, Anthony *(Wyre F'rest)*
Coombs, Simon *(Swindon)*
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Davis, David *(Boothferry)*
Day, Stephen
Dunn, Bob
Durant, Tony
Fookes, Miss Janet
Forman, Nigel
Gale, Roger
Garel-Jones, Tristan
Greenway, John *(Rydale)*
Ground, Patrick
Grylls, Michael
Hamilton, Neil *(Tatton)*
Hampson, Dr Keith
Hanley, Jeremy
Hargreaves, A. *(B'ham H'll Gr')*
Harris, David
Haselhurst, Alan
Hawkins, Christopher
Hayward, Robert
Heath, Rt Hon Edward
Heathcoat-Amory, David
Hicks, Mrs Maureen *(Wolv' NE)*
Hogg, Hon Douglas *(Gr'th'm)*
Howarth, G. *(Cannock & B'wd)*
Howell, Ralph *(North Norfolk)*
Howells, Geraint
Hunt, David *(Wirral W)*
Hunter, Andrew
Hurd, Rt Hon Douglas
Irvine, Michael
Jack, Michael
Jackson, Robert
Janman, Timothy
Johnson Smith, Sir Geoffrey
Jones, Gwilym *(Cardiff N)*
Jones, Robert B *(Herts W)*
Key, Robert
King, Rt Hon Tom *(Bridgwater)*
Kirkwood, Archy
Knapman, Roger
Knowles, Michael
Lang, Ian
Lawrence, Ivan
Lennox-Boyd, Hon Mark
Lester, Jim *(Broxtowe)*
Lightbown, David
Lilley, Peter
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
Lord, Michael
Lyell, Sir Nicholas
MacKay, Andrew *(E Berkshire)*
Maclean, David
McLoughlin, Patrick
McNair-Wilson, M. *(Newbury)*
Major, Rt Hon John
Malins, Humfrey
Marshall, John *(Hendon S)*
Martin, David *(Portsmouth S)*
Maxwell-Hyslop, Robin
Miller, Hal
Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)*
Mitchell, David *(Hants NW)*
Moss, Malcolm
Needham, Richard
Neubert, Michael
Newton, Rt Hon Tony
Nicholls, Patrick
Nicholson, David *(Taunton)*
Nicholson, Miss E. *(Devon W)*
Paice, James
Patnick, Irvine
Pawsey, James
Peacock, Mrs Elizabeth
Porter, David *(Waveney)*
Portillo, Michael
Redwood, John
Renton, Tim
Rhodes James, Robert
Rhys Williams, Sir Brandon
Riddick, Graham
Roe, Mrs Marion
Rowe, Andrew
Ryder, Richard
Sayeed, Jonathan
Shaw, David *(Dover)*
Shephard, Mrs G. *(Norfolk SW)*
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Sims, Roger
Smith, Sir Dudley *(Warwick)*
Speller, Tony
Squire, Robin
Stanbrook, Ivor
Steel, Rt Hon David
Stern, Michael
Stevens, Lewis
Stewart, Andrew *(Sherwood)*
Stradling Thomas, Sir John
Summerson, Hugo
Taylor, John M *(Solihull)*
Taylor, Matthew *(Truro)*
Thompson, D. *(Calder Valley)*
Thompson, Patrick *(Norwich N)*
Thorne, Neil
Thurnham, Peter
Tracey, Richard
Twinn, Dr Ian
Waddington, Rt Hon David
Walden, George
Ward, John
Wheeler, John
Widdecombe, Miss Ann
Wiggin, Jerry
Wilkinson, John
Wilshire, David
Wood, Timothy
Yeo, Tim

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. Alan Howarth and
Mr. Stephen Dorrell.

NOES

Beggs, Roy
Boyes, Roland
Callaghan, Jim
Clwyd, Mrs Ann
Corbett, Robin
Davies, Ron *(Caerphilly)*
Dewar, Donald
Dixon, Don
Dobson, Frank
Eastham, Ken
Evans, John *(St Helens N)*
Flynn, Paul
Forsythe, Clifford *(Antrim S)*
Foulkes, George
Galbraith, Samuel
Golding, Mrs Llin
Haynes, Frank
Howarth, George *(Knowsley N)*
Jones, Ieuan *(Ynys Môn)*
Kilfedder, James
Lamond, James
McKay, Allen *(Penistone)*
Madden, Max
Martlew, Eric
Maxton, John
Molyneaux, Rt Hon James
Nellist, Dave
Powell, Ray *(Ogmore)*
Randall, Stuart
Ross, William *(Londonderry E)*
Skinner, Dennis
Smith, Andrew *(Oxford E)*
Steinberg, Gerald
Taylor, Mrs Ann *(Dewsbury)*
Walker, A. Cecil *(Belfast N)*
Wigley, Dafydd
Williams, Alan W. *(Carm'then)*

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. Bob Cryer and
Mr. Gerald Bermingham.

Resolved,

That, for the purposes of any Act resulting from the Firearms (Amendment) Bill, it is expedient to authorise—

(a) the payment out of money provided by Parliament of any administrative expenses incurred by the Secretary of State in consequence of that Act; and

(b) the payment into of the Consolidated Fund of any sums received under that Act by the Secretary of State.

Duchy of Lancaster Bill

Not amended (in the Standing Committee), considered.

New Clause 1

LEASES FOR MILITARY PURPOSES

'Any lease of land for military purposes to a Secretary of State shall cease to have effect if the land ceases to be used for military purposes.'.—*[Mr. Dobson.]*

Brought up, and read the First time.

10.54 pm

Mr. Frank Dobson (Holborn and St. Pancras): I beg to move, That the clause be read a Second time.

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Sir Paul Dean): With this it will be convenient to take the following amendments: No. 5, in page 1, line 14, at end insert—

'(2C) No land or property within a national park shall be leased by the Chancellor and Council of the Duchy of Lancaster for military purposes to a Secretary of State for more than 21 years and the lease shall cease to have effect if the land ceases to be used for military purposes.'.

No. 7, in schedule 2, page 2, leave out lines 8 to 11.

Mr. Dobson: New clause 1 and amendments Nos. 5 and 7 refer to what might be described as military use of Duchy of Lancaster land. At present, the use of land belonging to the Duchy of Lancaster is restricted by the provisions of the Military Lands Act 1892. That restricts the capacity of the Duchy of Lancaster and the Duchy of Cornwall to grant leases for military purposes to a maximum period of 21 years. That section in the Military Lands Act also requires such a lease to cease if the land is no longer to be used for military purposes. Our Victorian predecessors obviously anticipated what might be described as the Crichel Down principle, as long ago as 1892. The Bill would provide for no restrictions whatever on the capacity of the Duchy of Lancaster to lease land for military purposes.

On Second Reading, the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster claimed that there was a need to lift the restrictions that generally applied to leases granted by the Duchy, because developers would not be willing to take a lease of Duchy land for as little as 99 years because they would not be able to obtain the funds on the market for an invesment on that basis. One may think it strange that the sharks in the City, who are trying to make money in about 20 minutes flat, find a 99-year lease too short a period over which to lend money. However, that is apparently the case. I am dubious about some of those claims about the present state of the market in property speculation, but that is what we have been told.

Over the past few years, the Government have brought forward proposals that extended the maximum period of leases of the Crown estate and the Duchy of Cornwall from 99 years to 150 years. The Bill would lift that time restriction altogether. Whatever justification the Chancellor of the Duchy has put forward for lifting the restrictions on urban land that might be the subject of speculative property developments into which the Duchy might like to enter in, say, the Savoy estate around the Strand, which is undoubtedly its most valuable property, that has absolutely nothing to do with lease of land for military purposes.

Our Victorian predecessors were clearly sensible and prudent in deliberately limiting the power of the Duchy to grant leases of land for military purposes. At that time —1892—they thought that a maximum period of 21 years was quite sufficient to alienate land for use for military purposes. They also required that such a lease should cease if the military use ceased.

Those requirements cannot possibly have any effect on the sites and properties in the Savoy part of the Strand on which the Government are attempting to justify the general changes. If the Army, the Navy, the Air Force or the Marines want to lease a piece of Duchy land, they do not have to raise the capital for it on the market—at least so far. No doubt the Prime Minister is considering privatising the armed forces, in which case they would have to raise money on the market if they wanted some of the property. Therefore, the lessees do not face any problem in having a restriction as short as 21 years. It seems wholly artificial for the Government to suggest that, in the case of leases of land for military purposes, the present limit needs to be either extended or lifted altogether.

11 pm

Mr. George Foulkes (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley): I am slightly confused by the arguments put forward by my hon. Friend. I am not clear whether he is arguing that there is likely to be military activity in the Strand, or whether there is any likelihood of the Army and the Navy having leases in the Strand. I can understand why the Army and the Navy might want leases in Victoria street, but the Strand is slightly outwith my comprehension.

Could my hon. Friend, the shadow Leader of the House, explain the exact relationship between the Strand, the Savoy and military leases? I am at a loss, and I think that some of my hon. Friends are as well, to relate military leases with what is happening around the Savoy. I know that sometimes men, and even women, of military bearing are seen going in and our of the Savoy, but I cannot quite relate the military context to that of the Savoy properties. I hope that my hon. Friend will explain the connection.

Mr. Dobson: I am sorry if I have not made the position sufficiently clear to a person as acute as my hon. Friend, whose constituency has such a long name that I can never remember it. The Duchy of Lancaster, in its peculiar way, owns more land in Yorkshire than in Lancashire, but the bulk of its property—36,000 acres—is agricultural land. A further 15,000 acres is moorland in north Yorkshire and south Wales, and the estates include 175 agricultural tenancies and about 3,000 acres of woodland. But, quite distinct from that, the Duchy holds the freehold of properties in the Manor of Savoy—as it was—along Lancaster place, the Embankment, Savoy hill and the Strand——

Mr. Dennis Skinner (Bolsover): Is that why they do not have television licences?

Mr. Dobson: Probably.

Mr. Hal Miller (Bromsgrove): Could the hon. Member for Holborn and St. Pancras (Mr. Dobson) help his hon. Friend by referring him to the Savoy operas and the Duke of Plaza Toro, who led his regiment from behind? That would seem to me to be the military use involved.

Mr. Dobson: I would not suggest for a moment that the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster is leading from behind, although in his role as a Cabinet Minister he seems always to be one step behind someone in the House of Lords.

Mr. Foulkes: I am sure that my hon. Friend would agree that the Chancellor is

"the very model of a modern Major-General."

Hon. Members will notice that I did not sing that, for obvious reasons.

Can my hon. Friend tell me, while he is reading out the property owned by the Duchy of Lancaster—I think that he has a clear account of it there—whether any of it is in Scotland, and particularly whether any of it is in the constituency of Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley? That will give him a clue to the name of my constituency.

Mr. Dobson: To the best of my knowledge—I am dependent on a parliamentary answer, and we can all make our own assessments of the accurancy of parliamentary answers—no property of the Duchy of Lancaster appears to be within the whole of Scotland, least of all in—[HON. MEMBERS: "Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley."]

The position is this. The property that the Duchy owns at the end of the Strand, which is less than three acres, is of immense value. It is developed land, and it offers immense gains to those who are willing to join the Duchy in speculating there, if they knock it down and put up new buildings. It is for those purposes that the Chancellor of the Duchy has come to the House and said that 99-year leases are too short and that these far-sighted people in the City wish to invest for 150 years or more in that property. However, they are unwilling to invest for about five years in something productive, such as a factory. Indeed, they are willing to invest in property there only if they have leases for 150 years or more.

That is not the case with agricultural land so far or with moorland in the north Yorkshire moors national park. In the patches of agricultural land and in the property in north Yorkshire and south Wales there are examples of land which is presently let for military purposes. None of that land requires a lifting of the Victorian maximum for a lease of land for military use, which was set in 1892 at 21 years. Therefore, it would be consistent for the Chancellor of the Duchy to accept the restrictions which are proposed in the new clause.

Mr. Bob Cryer (Bradford, South): Is my hon. Friend sketching a position which shows that the Government, in a shabby manoeuvre, are allowing the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster to link up with speculators of the sort condemned by no less a personage than Prince Charles—who, one would have thought, might have had some influence in the Tory ranks, but apparently not—and to raze buildings to the ground in order to build monstrosities with long tenure which the Prince and many ordinary working people, with just as good an eye as the Prince, have long deplored because they ravage the skyline of our capital city?

Mr. Dobson: It is undoubtedly the case that the Duchy of Lancaster wishes to join private speculative developers in the further development of land on the Savoy estate. I am not sure in this case whether the Prince of Wales, who is also Duke of Cornwall, is entirely, so to say, in the clear in the matter——

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. I must remind the House that references to the royal family, particularly if used in support of arguments, are not in order.

Mr. Dobson: It might undermine my argument, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

I make no reference to the Duke of Cornwall, but not very long ago the Duchy of Cornwall came to the House to seek to extend the maximum period for its ordinary leases from 99 to 150 years.

Mr. Foulkes: On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I should like clarification from you. We are talking about the Duchy of Lancaster. Is it in order in doing so to make reference during the debate to the Duke of Lancaster?

Mr. Deputy Speaker: It is certainly in order to refer to the Duchy of Lancaster in so far as it is relevant to the debate. I am saying that it is not in order to invoke in argument, to criticise or, indeed, to praise members of the royal family. That is the distinction that I am drawing.

Mr. Foulkes: And that includes the Duke of Lancaster?

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Indeed.

Mr. Dobson: I am glad that that point has been clarified.

I am subject to correction, not necessarily directly by the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, who is gracing us with his presence, but by those who advise him. So far as I know, the Duchy of Cornwall remains subject to the 21-year maximum period for leases of land for military purposes. My copy of the legislation currently in operation suggests that that restriction still applies to the Duchy of Cornwall; and to the extent that the Duke of Cornwall is responsible for that, it is praiseworthy.

As it is extremely unlikely that there will be any military, sub-military or semi-military use of the expensive Savoy estate and its surroundings at the end of the Strand, or of the other urban properties owned by the Duchy in Harrogate, and—in bits and pieces—in Leeds, Leicester, Bradford, Lewes and London—I assure my hon. Friends that I am referring to Lewes near Brighton, not to Lewis in Scotland——

Mr. Skinner: Have we any assurances in the Bill that the Kuwaiti Investment Office cannot extend its little empire beyond the oil industry and get on to the end of the Strand? I do not know what repercussions that might have. Perhaps we should be discussing whether there are any such safeguards.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. We must stick to leases for military purposes.

Mr. Dobson: To the best of my knowledge, the Duchy of Lancaster is completely indiscriminate in this matter, and is willing to sell to anyone who has the money. I do not know whether it would be willing to let a lease to the Kuwaitis if they wanted it for military purposes—to keep the discussion within the rules of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker—but as far as I know, if some potential speculator or developer has the money, the Duchy will deal with him, whatever his nationality or origin. As I have been trying, and perhaps failing, to explain, it seems extremely unlikely that there will be any military or paramilitary use of the really valuable urban properties of the Duchy of Lancaster, yet that is the basis on which the relaxation of restrictions is proposed in the Bill.

The bulk of the property that might be let for military purposes will be rural, probably in north Yorkshire or south Wales. A considerable quantity of the land that might be used for military purposes is likely to be in national parks or other beautiful areas, far from major centres of population; so wildlife, flora and fauna are likely to be damaged by use for military purposes. That applies not only in the areas that are leased but to areas outside their boundaries. We should try to keep military uses to a minimum, particularly in areas of significant beauty such as I have been discussing.

In 1892, when the Military Lands Act was passed, the number of people in the British armed forces was much greater than it is now, yet our Victorian predecessors felt it right and proper to place these limitation restrictions on the use of Duchy of Lancaster and Duchy of Cornwall land for military purposes. We should stick by what they did.

There is a great deal of technological change in military affairs at present, and it is ludicrous that the Duchy should be empowered to enter into leases for the use of land for military purposes that might be rendered wholly out of date within five years. Even if a lease ran out, it would still be possible for the Ministry of Defence to keep the property and deny ordinary people access to it on the ground that it might be needed at some time in the future. We should keep that sort of alienation of useful, beautiful land to a minimum.

11.15 pm

If there is not some hidden explanation for the Government's proposal to apply this to military land, I cannot see any reason why the Chancellor of the Duchy, who is here tonight, should not be quite willing to accept the specific terms of this new clause and the two amendments. The new clause provides:

"Any lease of land for military purposes to a Secretary of State shall cease to have effect if the land ceases to be used for military purposes."

One would have thought that it was in the interests of the Duchy of Lancaster to have that power in the Bill. It seems to me that it is ceding some of its powers as a landowner to the Ministry of Defence unless it maintains the protection that was provided in the Act, part of which will be amended by the Bill.

Amendment No. 5 would be less restrictive in a sense than the new clause, because it would provide:

"No land or property within a national park shall be leased by the Chancellor and Council of the Duchy of Lancaster for military purposes to a Secretary of State for more than 21 years and the lease shall cease to have effect if the land ceases to be used for military purposes."

That element of protection that we propose would apply only to Duchy of Lancaster land within a national park.

There is no way on earth that a property speculator is going to demand a 150-year lease on property in a national park—unless such parks are going to be privatised as well. It may be that this is a sort of paving measure for all sorts of monstrous activities on the part of the Government.

Finally, amendment No. 7 would delete from the schedule of Acts to be repealed the section of the Military Lands Act 1892 which maintains the protection that I have been advocating. It seems worth recalling at this point that at one time the Duchy of Lancaster had no restrictions on the way it conducted its affairs, and the Crown chose then to dispose of its assets, get the capital and spend it. That bears a remarkably close resemblance to the policies of the present Government, who are selling off public assets and using the capital as revenue, which would be unacceptable to the auditors of any private organisation. If they were not the Government, they would get done by the auditors.

Parliament, in its wisdom, decided over the years that this was not a sound way of going on and that if Crown revenues were to be maintained, restrictions should be imposed. One of those restrictions was the restriction on the use of the Duchy's land for military purposes. It seems to me that the reasoning applied by our Victorian predecessors is wholly sound and solid. The Prime Minister talks about Victorian values. These are Victorian values set out in a Victorian Act of Parliament. If the Chancellor of the Duchy wants finally to get that position in the Cabinet where he is the boss of his own Department, and get the failed property speculator who is his boss in the House of Lords out of the way, the best thing he can do is stick by the Victorian values in the Military Lands Act 1892 and accept the new clause that I am proposing.

The Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister of Trade and Industry (Mr. Kenneth Clarke): The Bill's purpose is to free the Duchy of Lancaster from some rather outdated restrictions on its ability to lease land. The Duchy of Lancaster is a fairly substantial landowner, as the hon. Member for Holborn and St. Pancras (Mr. Dobson) has described from an accurate answer to a parliamentary question. Obviously, it is the duty of the Duchy to administer the estate in the best possible way to maintain the long-term health of the estate and to obtain a reasonable return for the benefit of the privy purse.

All that the Bill, including the part that we are now considering, seeks to do is to put the Duchy on exactly the same footing as any other major landowner, with no legal restrictions that are no longer required, but with no intention of behaving other than as a sensible developer and maintainer of its land.

As far as I am aware, in Committee and again today, no one has so far raised the slightest criticism of the behaviour of the Duchy towards any part of its estate. It is fair to say that in modern times the Duchy has given rise to no kind of controversy. I do not think that we are responsible for any undesirable development; if anybody thinks we are, I shall be only too anxious to consider such representations about the way in which we are dealing with the estate or any of its tenants or property.

The Bill is necessary because in the last century quite a bit of legislation was passed which put restrictions on the Duchy's ability to manage, lease and dispose of its land. The hon. Gentleman is right to say that the origins of the oldest legislation with which we are dealing go back to times when the estate was beginning to be managed somewhat irresponsibly, when royal finances were in a fairly desperate state and parliamentary interest in the Duchy may not have been as strong as it should have been. However, largely in the early 19th century, all kinds of restrictions were placed on the Duchy which at that time were essential to make sure that the estate was not run down and capital used for discharge of royal debts over which Parliament thought that it should take an interest.

It is an anachronism that all this legislation still lies on the statute book. Modern practice in the management and development of land has changed. Some of the restrictions are now getting in the way of our being able to develop

[Mr. Kenneth Clarke]

some of the more important holdings of land in a desirable way. That is the principal purpose of the Bill and the repeals that are covered by this part of it.

Mr. Dobson: Does the Minister accept that the collapse of the speculative property market in the early 1970s would suggest that, as well as modern practice being around, there is also modern malpractice? The fact of the matter is that the restrictions presently placed on the Duchy of Lancaster, which, as the Minister said, has a good record for managing its estate, spring partly from the fact that it is restricted and does not do anything stupid or venal as do a considerable number of other property companies.

Mr. Clarke: Sensible practice and development of land in the end depend on well-judged decisions being taken on good advice about what is right for a particular plot of land, a well-put-together proposition and the Duchy acting in its own best interests and entering into a lease with a developer on terms that the market at that time is used to and requires for that kind of development.

I have no evidence that at the time of the collapse of the property market in the early 1970s, these statutory restrictions on the Duchy played any part in protecting the Duchy against any schemes that might otherwise have gone ahead. I do not think that any of the provisions of the Acts that we are now repealing have had the slightest practical effect on anything for many years, except that now they inhibit the Duchy's ability to contemplate some of the more ambitious development schemes that we would like to have a look at, in particular for parts of the Savoy estate.

We are dealing with the Military Lands Act 1892. The hon. Gentleman is concerned with one of the least significant of the statutory restrictions. First, let me describe the extent of our interest in military land. To the best of my knowledge and belief, the entire Duchy estate has one drill hall used by the Territorial Army. That is the full extent of our military property that I have been able to discover on, admittedly, a fairly cursory search. That drill hall is not let under the 1892 Act, nor is it covered by that measure. So at present we have absolutely no property covered by the Act and I think that we have not had any covered by it for a long time.

The Duchy is at present not contemplating any military use for any part of its estate. So not only is the provision about which we are talking applicable to absolutely no real live situation, but there is nothing pending which is likely to cause us to need to look at the provisions of the 1892 Act.

Mr. Foulkes: In view of the extensive nature of the lands of the Duchy, is it not surprising, given the extensive military activity throughout the United Kingdom — I have land in my constituency being used for that purpose — that no Duchy lands are being used for military purposes, apart from the Dad's Army type of drill hall to which the Minister referred? If I were permitted to refer to the Duke of Lancaster, I would ask whether this had anything to do with the fact that she is also Commander in Chief of the armed forces. Is it not strange that none of the Duchy's lands are being used for that sort of patriotic purpose?

Mr. Clarke: The great majority of land in the Kingdom is not used for military purposes. The bulk Duchy of Lancaster comprises agricultural estates, castles, some woodland, some moorland including the national parks—so we are sensitive to the n preserve the wildlife and its natural beauty—this estate in the middle of London and estates in a few in the north, including Harrogate.

I do not think that the military have seen any it; we have not received any applications for its n use and none has been let for years. So this importa Act which the hon. Member for Holborn and St. P is defending has not played a great part in our n affairs, or even the affairs of the Duchy, for a lon

The Duchy would contemplate the use of its la a military purpose only if any of the military auth showed interest in any of it, which they are not d present, and if the national interest in some way re part of the land to be made available for military u would contemplate that only if that hypothetical sit arose, and we would go along with that only if w persuaded that the national interest was involve would give a lease for more than 21 years only if tha requested, and then only if it were in the interest Duchy.

The Duchy is not giving up any landowner's pow this measure. We will remain in the position of any landowner approached by the military authorities possible use of its land, and we would be able to ac refuse in the usual way, subject to the representations of the Secretary of State for Defe whomever wanted to use it.

We are talking about a wholly academic point repeal of a late 19th-century piece of legislation whi not made the slightest difference to any part of the C Palatine for years and is not likely to make any diff in the future. While the hon. Member for Holborn a Pancras put his case well, he is pressing a minor po this and later amendments standing in his name.

Mr. Dobson: Is it not a fact that the Duchy woul a power, since the measure would make any land us military purposes revert to the Duchy as soon as it st being used for those purposes?

Mr. Clarke: Our power would be to let or not to land, in the same way as any other landowner would that decision, and to let it on whatever term conditions we wished, with a possible reversion if not needed for military purposes. At present, the 18 imposes a constraint on the Duchy because, unlike landowners, this statutory provision would restrict 21 years and make the land revert if the military cea use it. With the repeal we would still be free, like any landowner, freely to consider any approach by the m authorities, in the event of any approach being ma

I think that this is a minor point. Given the fac this opportunity is being taken to repeal obsolete la might as well repeal the lot. There will not be many Bills; now that there is one, we might as well tak opportunity to get rid of all the 19th-century legis that is no longer serving a worthwhile purpose.

The hon. Member for Holborn and St. Pancras g reason for a 21-year limitation. He used the extraordinary argument—that, because it was th to be right in 1892, for reasons which, as far as I ca

he has not looked up, it must still be right in 1988. That is not a proposition that usually commends itself to the House. Our Victorian forebears no doubt had some reason at the time for imposing the restriction, but none of us knows what on earth it was. As it no longer has any application to the current management of the Duchy land, I suggest that there is no need for it to continue. Therefore, I hope that the House will reject the new clause and the associated amendments.

11.30 pm

Mr. Dobson: Does the Minister not accept that a 21-year lease was the standard short lease in 1892?

Mr. Clarke: It may have been, but it is not now. The fact that it was the practice in 1892 should not guide us when legislating in 1988.

Mr. John Marston (Glasgow, Cathcart): I am interested in what the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster has said about Victorian Acts of Parliament. For eight years I have listened to his revered leader saying that this Government were based upon Victorian values. Why is he suddenly throwing them out of the window in this callous manner?

Mr. Clarke: In the parlours of Victorian England, their values may have been regarded as largely determined by the Military Land Act 1892, but I doubt it. I think that this Act was regarded as fairly obscure at the time that it was passed. I do not think we shall be shattering Victorian values if we repeal it now.

Question put and negatived.

New Clause 2

Treatment of Receipts

'The premium element of any transaction carried out under the provisions of this Act shall be treated as a capital receipt not available for payments to the Keeper of the Privy Purse.'.—*[Mr. Dobson.]*

Brought up, and read the First time.

Mr. Dobson: I beg to move, That the clause be read a Second time.

The new clause goes to the heart of the Government's intentions. On Second Reading, the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster said:

"The Duchy's original Charters of Incorporation were not subject to any limits on the powers of the Chancellor and Council of the Duchy of Lancaster to act as they saw fit"—

I draw attention to the words "as they saw fit"—

"in the management of the Duchy's inheritance. But certain improprieties took place, largely during the time of the Stuarts and those abuses had to be corrected."

The official view is that the Duchy's revenues, along with those from the Crown estates, were severely depleted during the 17th century and the early part of the 18th century. Duchy property was charged to provide income for members of the royal family, other than the sovereign, or was sold to make up the revenues which could not be obtained from Parliament. Further depletions were checked by the Crown Lands Act 1702, which included the Duchy of Lancaster in its application. This Act, whose detailed provisions have subsequently been amended, but the principles of whose restrictions remain in place, prohibited all grants of the freehold, restricted powers of leasing by limiting terms of years up to a maximum of, as it was then, 21 years and required a rent to be paid of not less than that paid previously and not less than one third of the market rental value.

The Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster then went on to say:

"A limit was imposed, which, at present, is 99 years on the term of what can be conveniently described as a 'building lease' and a restriction on the amount of rental, receivable under such a lease, which could be received by way of premium. A maximum of one third of such rental value can be capitalised in that way." — [*Official Report, Second Reading Committee*, 17 November 1987; c. 3.]

That applies at the moment. The proposal is that in future there should be no limits whatever on the length of leases granted or on the proportion of rental value that can be capitalised.

One of the reasons restrictions were first put on, in the immortal words of the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, was that the Chancellor and the Council could act "as they saw fit". That was regarded as objectionable. The Bill says that they will be able to

"lease land forming part of the possessions of the Duchy on such terms as they think fit."

In other words, it is proposed that we revert to a position that was regarded as objectionable because it was thought appropriate to place restrictions on the way in which the Duchy conducted its business.

Those restrictions have worked rather well over the years. As the Chancellor himself said, there have been no scandals. They have not been able to fiddle on the capitalisation because the law prevented it. There has been no temptation. It was stopped by the law.

We believe that there is a need to put continuing restraints on all organisations. Restraints, in a limited way, are usually good for most organisations and if all the restraints on the conduct of an organisation are taken away, sooner or later it is likely to get out of hand. We might as well shut up shop in this place if we say that all the organisations in the City work well and there is no fiddling or financial chicanery. We would not need laws to control companies or anything like that. We could rely on the good faith and common sense of the managing companies.

The Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster says to us now that we can rely on the competence, common sense and good faith of those who will be, from time to time, the Chancellors and Council of the Duchy. It is an absurd proposition that there should not be any restrictions on the way in which they conduct business; obviously there should be some restrictions.

We are talking about sensible limits. One of those sensible limits would be some sort of restriction on the length of time over which they can sell a lease, which is at present 99 years. In recent changes in the law that were made to extend the powers of the Duchy of Cornwall and of the Crown Estates, neither of those organisations sought extensions beyond 150 years. What is different about the Duchy of Lancaster; why does it need all its restrictions lifted?

Mr. Foulkes: Will my hon. Friend help the House by saying who are the other members of the Council of the Duchy of Lancaster? We know the Chancellor only too well. He is the deputy supremo of the enterprise culture. I realise that I should know the answer. I should have done my homework as well as my hon. Friend. It would be helpful for us to get a picture of who it is we are expected to place our trust in.

Mr. Dobson: We shall have to rely on the Chancellor to disclose his colleagues. The only thing that I was able

[Mr. Dobson]

to verify in Committee was the fact that Lord Young of Graffham, who was once a property speculator but gave it up because he was losing money, is not a member of the Council of the Duchy of Lancaster. We are all grateful for that. The great deregulators apparently want wholly to deregulate the Duchy of Lancaster. That is an unsound proposition.

I come to the nub of the amendment, which is how the Duchy of Lancaster should treat the premiums it receives when leases are entered into. In Committee I pressed the Chancellor about how premiums would be treated and whether the change in the law might make it possible for the Government—as is their custom these days—to treat premiums, which are capital, as revenue and thus disburse the money and spend it. The Chancellor was good enough to write to me to explain. In his letter, he said:

"The treatment of the premium element of the transaction as a capital receipt is a matter of established accounting practice."

Apparently we are now to rely on "established accounting practice" to make sure that the Duchy of Lancaster treats these premiums as capital and not as revenue.

As hon. Members know, accounting practices change and unless we have some provision in law to ensure that these premiums are treated as capital, it is possible for accountancy practice to change and for the Duchy to be able to spend the premium income as if it were revenue. If it did that, it would be following the example of every Government Department that has disposed of public property since the Government came to office in 1979. That might be described as "established Government practice."

If the Duchy followed established Government practice, it would take the money in as capital and then spend it as revenue. We want to prevent that, and that is why we tabled new clause 2. That new clause imposes no new restrictions whatever on the Duchy of Lancaster because, according to his letter, that is "established accounting practice." I am sure he accepts that accounting practice can change. Therefore, this is not at present an additional restriction on the way that the Duchy conducts its business. However, it is a prudent provision to make sure that the capital possessed by the Crown and the revenues that it receives from that capital are maintained in future against any pressure at any time to treat the capital as revenue. I see no sound reason whatever why the Chancellor should not accept the provision in this new clause.

Perhaps the new clause is not drafted as well as it ought to be. I am always willing to acknowledge, indeed proclaim, the shortcomings of my drafting and would be quite willing to accept new drafts put forward by the Chancellor or by his staff or colleagues. It would be wholly sound and prudent to apply this restriction for the future in order to protect the ultimate revenues of the Crown. I hope that the Chancellor will accept my proposition. If this is not the right way to do it, I hope that he will do something through the House of Lords to meet the objective that I hope I have set out.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: The hon. Member for Holborn and St. Pancras (Mr. Dobson) would be on a perfectly sensible and serious point if there was a risk that the Duchy would revert to the long outmoded practice of treating its capital receipts, its premiums, as if they were revenue available as payments to the Keeper o Purse. The hon. Gentleman fears that there is of the Duchy Council being able to revert to th reputable practices that it followed at the t feckless Stuarts and in the days of the early H when Parliament felt obliged to put some rest the way the Duchy of Lancaster was operated

11.45 pm

Mr. Foulkes: Will the hon. Gentleman give

Mr. Clarke: I see that the old pretender from and Doon Valley is roused by my remarks.

Mr. Foulkes: The young pretender.

When the Chancellor is talking about th Stuarts, perhaps he would answer the questio hon. Friend the Member for Holborn and St. Pa Dobson) was reluctant to answer and tell us w as his 'oppos' in the operation—not in all things he is doing; we have faith in him in his Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster. Who do about him — John of Gaunt and all th chappies? We want to know who they are so whether the House can put its trust in him.

Mr. Clarke: My starting point is that the trust the present Duchy Council not to start b a disreputable way and using the premiums a The Attorney-General of the Duchy is Mr. member of the Bar in silk; the vice-chancel County Palatine is Mr. Justice Scott, a High C in the Chancery Division. The other membe Council are Sir Ashley Ponsonby, Major Shar Mr. John Slater, and Mr. Simon Towneley, v Lord Lieutenant of Lancashire. It is a reputa which has had a good record in managing th recent years. If the composition of the Duchy Co to change and we were to come under improp to apply premium income as revenue, I assur Member for Holborn and St. Pancras and his ho and the House that they would not be free to d without his new clause.

I have written to the hon. Gentleman and I this matter in Standing Committee, but he is rig the point. I will spell out the combination of restrictions, accounting practice restrictions an restrictions, coupled with an assurance that I am to give on behalf of the Treasury to reassure hi fears are groundless.

The manner in which premiums should be de clear, having regard to the statutory requiremen remain and will not be repealed by the Bill. The Lancaster Lands Act 1855 and earlier legislation the treatment of proceeds of disposals. The D remains subject to the proper accounting proce practices when preparing accounts by the D Lancaster and Cornwall (Accounts) Act 1838. G in the last debate, the hon. Gentleman expre respect for venerable legislation, he will be glad that these two Acts are surviving.

The Duchy of Lancaster Lands Act 1855 mak that, although all proceeds of the dispositions property belong legally to the sovereign in rig Duchy, capital receipts must in accordance wit be retained and invested by the Chancellor and C the Duchy. Receipt of a premium as a re

disposition of land would be a capital receipt. I have already given assurances on the point in my letter to the hon. Gentleman and in the Standing Committee, when I quoted my letter yet again.

I give a further assurance to hon. Members, in case they still think that the treatment of a premium is in some way discretionary by the Duchy Council. The Treasury has confirmed that all proper accounting practices and procedures are followed and would, if ever required, make a direction to the effect that premiums should be treated as capital. That safeguard is in addition to the independent audit of the Duchy accounts, which I have already given assurances about. No reputable auditors would accept a sudden decision by the Duchy to start using premium income as revenue, as is feared.

I told the Standing Committee the name and standing of the auditor the Duchy uses, who seems to be extremely reputable. Any fear that the passage of the legislation might enable the Duchy Council to behave in some irresponsible way is ill founded; for that reason, I advise the House that the new clause is simply not required.

Question put and negatived.

Clause 1

Extension of powers to lease Duchy land

Mr. Dobson: I beg to move amendment No. 8, in Page 1, line 8, after 'Duchy', insert

'within Greater London and the District of Harrogate'.

The amendment seeks to restrict the deregulation of the Duchy of Lancaster, if I may describe it thus, to the Duchy's property in those areas on which the justification given by the Chancellor of the Duchy is based. Throughout the whole piece he has made it clear that the problem of partnership developers wanting longer leases than 99 years is apparent in the urban areas where the value of the land is extremely high.

The Chancellor has made no suggestion—indeed, no one in his right mind would make such a suggestion—that anyone has said that they will not take an agricultural lease because it runs for less than 150 years or that people refuse to buy a lease for less than 150 years for shooting on the north Yorkshire moors because they cannot raise the money on the market.

The justification for lifting the restrictions is based upon the alleged need to develop further the estate owned by the Duchy around the Savoy in the Strand, and possibly in Harrogate, which I understand is the Duchy's next most substantial land holding in an urban area.

We must get this matter into perspective. So far as I can discover, there are 2·5 acres on the Savoy estate, including the Savoy chapel and the surrounding garden. It is understood that no revenue is derived from them. Presumably the Prime Minister did not pay anything when her son got married at that chapel. One would have thought that that marriage would have occasioned some revenue, but apparently not.

On the assumption that the Duchy does not intend to redevelop the Savoy chapel and its garden, there are probably less than two acres of land on the Savoy estate available for development. Therefore, the whole justification for lifting the statutory restraints on the conduct of the Duchy are based on the possible needs of two acres in central London as against an estate of 36,000 acres of agricultural land. There are 2,800 acres in Northamptonshire and Lincolnshire, 13,000 acres in Staffordshire, Cheshire and Shropshire, 10,900 acres in Lancashire and 9,300 acres in Yorkshire. On top of that there are 15,000 acres of moorland in north Yorkshire and south Wales, most of which is subject to common rights, and some other smaller sections of developed property in Leeds, Leicester, Bradford, Lewes and parts of London other than the Savoy estate.

I believe that it is preposterous for the Chancellor to say that he must lift all the restrictions on all the thousands of acres of land on the basis of a justification that springs from problems arising on less than two acres of land down the other end of the Strand. Such a justification is an absolutely preposterous absurdity.

The Chancellor has mentioned absolutely no need, let alone backed it up with argument, for the lifting of the restrictions to apply to the rest of the Duchy's estate anywhere in the country. The problems are specific to the limited urban sites. The proposal in the amendment would limit the lifting of the current restrictions to areas within greater London and the district of Harrogate. That is wholly proper and reasonable. I am happy to concede that if it is reasonable for the Duchy of Cornwall and the Crown Estate to have restrictions lifted in respect of their urban property, it is all right for the Duchy of Lancaster to have restrictions lifted in respect of its urban property. But it is to stand the whole thing on its head to change the law affecting such a large area of land simply because of the problems of one small area.

The Chancellor of the Duchy and I read the history of the estate completely differently. The right hon. and learned Gentleman is a lawyer, and one might have thought that he would believe that the law affected people's behaviour. Apparently he does not. He seems to think that the existence of a body of law over a considerable period has had no effect whatever on the conduct of the Duchy of Lancaster. As a junior Minister, and now as a senior Minister, he has brought Bill after Bill to the House on the basis that if one changes the law, one changes the way in which people do things. Yet he now says, "You can change the law and it will not make a ha'p'orth of difference."

I cannot believe that. Perhaps that is because I am not a lawyer and hold the law in more respect than the right hon. and learned Gentleman, who is so familiar with it. However, his proposition that changing the law does not change the way in which organisations act is preposterous. It is just as preposterous to suggest that we should change the law covering 50,000 acres of land because of the problems that occur on less than two acres. I hope that he will come up with a better justification than hitherto for the sweeping deregulatory changes that he proposes.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: The hon. Gentleman spoke to the amendment in his usual pleasant manner and style, but he used fairly strong language, calling the Bill an absurdity and the argument that we should lift the restrictions on the more rural parts of the estate preposterous. With respect, his argument contains a slight illogicality. The main restriction that the Bill seeks to repeal is the 99-year restriction on anything in the manner of a building lease with which the Duchy is still fettered. He says that there is not the slightest prospect of the Duchy ever wanting to give a lease for more than 99 years in the moors o

[Mr. Kenneth Clarke]

Goathland. He then says that because of that we should keep a restriction legally to prevent the Duchy from granting a lease for more than 99 years.

The hon. Gentleman demands that we maintain the present restrictions in the law for those parts of the estate where he says they are meaningless and ineffective anyway. It is probably true that most of the 19th century provisions have never had the slightest effect upon the behaviour of the Duchy in the moorlands of south Wales and north Yorkshire, the agricultural estates of Cheshire and Lancashire or the large tracts that the hon. Gentleman described. It would be nonsense for the Bill removing the restrictions to apply only to London and Harrogate. I now realise the logic of that rather curious geographical definition.

The hon. Gentleman sought to identify the urban part of the estate, where he thinks that the repeal of the restrictions might have some relevance. As he conceded, he has not mentioned all the urban areas; he mentioned Bradford, Leicester and Leeds in passing in his own list. In addition, we have property on the outskirts of Crewe, Pontefract and Newcastle-under-Lyme. Furthermore, the Duchy is perfectly free to acquire——

Mr. Eric Martlew (Carlisle): Is the right hon. and learned Gentleman aware that the property in Pontefract is a castle? I doubt whether the right hon. and learned Gentleman would try to raise revenue on a castle.

12 midnight

Mr. Clarke: I do not think that we are considering a major building lease on the castle. The hon. Gentleman is quite right on that point. However, that is not the only property that we have near the town of Pontefract, although the castle is probably our most distinguished holding there.

The Duchy is perfectly free to acquire more land. It is not a fixed estate and it does not simply comprise all the land owned by John of Gaunt. The Duchy manages the estate and sometimes makes acquisitions and sales. We have no means of knowing whether the Duchy will acquire property in future and the present limitations in the law would impose restrictions for no good purpose on the ability to manage the estate. Therefore, I think that the hon. Gentleman's point is not worth pressing.

It would be nonsense to keep all the old restrictions on the parts of the estate where the hon. Gentleman argues that the estate has no relevance. While we are taking the opportunity to free the Duchy from restrictions, we might as well do that properly and not include the extraordinary amendment which would involve passing an Act that would apply only to London and Harrogate. No doubt that would be unprecedented in 19th and 20th-century legislation.

Amendment negatived.

Mr. Dobson: I beg to move amendment No. 6, in page 1, line 14, at end insert—

'(2D) Before any new lease shall be granted for any land or property forming part of a National Park, or area of outstanding natural beauty or of special scientific interest, the Chancellor and Council of the Duchy of Lancaster shall consult *(a)* the appropriate National Park Board, *(b)* the Nature Conservancy Council, and *(c)* the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds; and in the event of any of these bodies objecting to the terms of the new lease the Chancellor and Council of the Duchy of Lancaster shall following an affirmative resolution by bo Parliament.'.

This amendment is intended to provi protection for land owned by the Duchy o national parks, areas of outstanding natur areas of special scientific interest.

It is particularly appropriate that we sh to provide additional protection now understand that the Secretary of St Environment is considering privatising prop the Nature Conservancy Council. If the Cha Duchy of Lancaster is a reluctant deregulato right hon. Friend the Secretary of S Environment is an absolutely fanatical dere all, his family made its money out of der mines a long time ago. There is every reason in favour of deregulation to try to get them b as possible.

The Government are in the process of great deal of deregulation in rural areas. I ha the idea of selling land belonging to Conservancy Council. There are also substan in the Department of the Environment and of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food for c approach to the control of development in r have the opportunity tonight to provi protection for some of the property which public sector at the moment, if I can descri of Lancaster in that way.

It would be right to place restrictions granting of new leases in national par outstanding natural beauty or areas of spe interest, as the Bill proposes to lift all othe We need some compensatory protection. If no limit to the period for which leases can b for such sensitive areas as national par outstanding natural beauty and areas of spe interest, it is only proper to introduce some ensure that the purposes of the national p outstanding natural beauty and areas of spe interest are protected. It would be a failure allow the Duchy to have utterly free play ov those areas, as is envisaged in the Bill.

The amendment proposes that, before the into any new leases, with its new unbounded what will be the Duchy of Lancaster Act 19 lease is granted for any land or property fo a national park, area of outstanding natu special scientific interest, it shall consult th national park board, the Nature Conservan the Royal Society for the Protection of Bi those bodies objects to the terms of these unfettered, leases, the Duchy of Lancaster w proceed only following the affirmative resol Houses of Parliament. The Chancellor may is going a bit far and that it might not be th providing the protection that we are seekin

I have no great brief for the amendment drafted. They may be faulty in their detail, bu faulty in their intention. It is right and prop compensatory protection. I hope that the C accept the wording as it stands or promi protection will be introduced when the Bi House of Lords.

Mr. Martlew: I was a little puzzled when I read the Bill and its Committee stage, but, having heard the Chancellor, I am completely confused. I gained the impression that he was trying to say that he wants to put the business of the Duchy on a more professional basis.

I note that there are two clauses missing from the Bill. The first should be to get rid of the post of the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster. In reality, a professional organisation would have a highly paid chief executive. I understand that the Chancellor is paid £2,000 per annum. I do not know whether, for the work that he does, that is highly paid or not.

Under the present arrangements, the person holding the post is a politician—he may be a very good politician—and for political reasons he needs to be in the Cabinet. The Prime Minister is of the opinion that the right hon. and learned Gentleman cannot be trusted with a Department so she has made him Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster. I do not want to offend the Chancellor, but the cap fits.

Perhaps the Chancellor will say how much of his time is spent on the duties——

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. I realise that the hon. Gentleman has not been a Member of the House for long, and I have allowed him a preamble. I hope that he will come to the amendment.

Mr. Martlew: Amendment No. 6 is specific and if it is not dealt with it would consume more of the Chancellor's time if he had to bring it back to the House because of a disagreement. One of the Chancellor's predecessors in the 1930s said that he spent half an hour a week on the business of the Duchy.

Parts of the Duchy's property—other than the Savoy, which does not have much wildlife; it might at various times of the night—lie in areas of outstanding natural beauty, such as Cheshire, Staffordshire, Lancashire and Yorkshire. Unfortunately, it has sold its land in Cumbria.

If the Duchy were to be put on a par with the private sector, its tax arrangements would have to be altered. I understand that the Duchy's taxes go straight into the privy purse.

We should not expect to get rid of the Duchy or change its tax position, because it is something special which should be preserved. The Duchy is not a property company; it has looked after the countryside and its wildlife since 1265, so far as I am aware. There is no reason why, for short-term financial gain, we should change that or endanger any of the areas of outstanding natural beauty. Therefore, we do not need to change the leasing arrangements of the Bill, and perhaps we need to accept the amendment. If I have one criticism of my hon. Friend's amendment, it is that there is an omission from it, but I hope that the Minister will accept that we should consider it.

Being a Cumbrian Member of Parliament, I am aware of the debate that took place only yesterday in my area about the problem of fox-hunting in the national park. I hope that the Chancellor or the Duchy will consider whether, as well as protecting the wildlife in the area, we should ban the use of hounds for hunting animals on land that is owned by the Duchy of Lancaster. It is barbaric that we should allow that practice to continue. Although it is part of our history—just as it is part of the history of my constituency that we did not allow Scotsmen to walk around the city after dusk and we also used to hang sheep stealers — *[Interruption.]* There were exceptions with regard to Scotsmen. Although it is part of our history, it should be forgotten. Therefore, I should be happy to hear the Chancellor of the Duchy say tonight that he is prepared to accept the spirit of my hon. Friend's amendment and to consider banning the use of hounds for hunting animals on Duchy land.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: I am entirely in sympathy with the spirit and intention of the amendment moved by the hon. Member for Holborn and St. Pancras (Mr. Dobson). Although I do not go along with the arguments of the hon. Member for Carlisle (Mr. Martlew) about field sports on Duchy land, I share his desire to look after its natural beauty.

The amendment seeks to get the approval for every new lease that we enter into of the appropriate national park, the Nature Conservancy Council and the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds. I have been a member of the RSPB for years. I am not sure whether I have got my new status correct, but I think that I am now a fellow— [HON. MEMBERS: "Hear, hear."] It is an absolute qualification for being Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster. I am sure that my colleagues on the Duchy Council share a general desire to make sure that we look after the wildlife and preserve the countryside on tracts of land that are owned by the Duchy, inside the national parks. So far as I am aware, the Duchy has never been accused of doing anything to damage sites of scientific interest of national park areas—certainly not in my time in the House. However, I shall look at any complaints, if people can find any, in any part of the County Palatine.

The Acts that we are repealing have not had much to do with that. Previous legislation allowed building leases up to 99 years. During a 99-year lease one can do a lot of damage to a stretch of moorland or to the foreshore that we own. In this case, I do not think that it is legislative protection that has made the Duchy a reasonable custodian of the areas of natural beauty that it owns.

The hon. Member for Holborn and St. Pancras correctly predicted that I would think that his amendment went too far. In his enthusiasm, he has sought to require that every new lease should require consultation with the three bodies, and that if any one of the three objects to a new lease it should have to come to both Houses of Parliament for an affirmative resolution. In the areas of land that we are discussing, enormous numbers of transactions could be described as new leases. The amendment would mean that every cottage letting, every farm letting and every sporting letting would have to be submitted to each of the three bodies for its opinion.

I am not sure that any of the three bodies concerned would welcome that, because they would require substantial staff to be able to handle the flood of matters on which they would have to report back, and we would have an unnecessary restriction on the whole estate.

12.15 am

In case the House feels that the Duchy Council and I are a band of amateurs for seeking to protect the national parks — the hon. Member for Carlisle (Mr. Martlew) understandably doubted my qualifications for being chairman of the Council managing such a large estate—I hasten to assure the House that I receive £2,000 a year, which is probably all that I am worth as Chancellor of the Duchy. My belief when I was appointed that the £2,0

[Mr. Kenneth Clarke]

was a bonus extra to my salary as a Cabinet Minister was rapidly shattered: my Cabinet salary is docked by the appropriate amount, to ensure that I am not better paid than any of my colleagues. The hours that I spend on the Duchy each week are therefore not wildly rewarded, but they are rewarding in themselves.

More to the point, there is a professional staff. There is a clerk to the Council, and people with expertise in surveying all the aspects of the estate who carry out a good deal of the management of the Duchy lands, and do so very well.

I hope that the House is persuaded that the Duchy is an extremely reasonable custodian of areas of great natural beauty and interest, and that this proposal would be excessive and probably unworkable.

Amendment negatived.

Motion made, That the Bill be now read the Third time.

[Queen's Consent, on behalf of the Crown, signified.]

Question put and agreed to.

Bill accordingly read the Third time, and passed.

STATUTORY INSTRUMENTS, &c.

Motion made and Question put forthwith pursuant to Standing Order No. 101(5) (Standing Committees on Statutory Instruments &c.)

Local Government Finance

That the Code of Local Government Audit Practice for England and Wales, a copy of which was laid before this House on 26th November, be approved.—*[Mr. Lennox-Boyd.]*

Question agreed to.

PETITION

Abortion

12.16 am

Mr. Max Madden (Bradford, West): With nine and a half hours or so to go before the debate on the Abortion (Amendment) Bill, I beg leave to present a petition signed by Sandra Grice of Burnett place, Bradford 5, and 343 of my constituents, many of whom are students at Bradford university, who wish to pray

To the Honourable the Commons of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland Parliament assembled, the Humble Petition of United Kingdom Residents Showeth That The Abortion (Amendment) Bill, which proposes to reduce the upper limit for abortion will, if enacted, restrict women's choices, endanger their health and open the door to further attacks on the 1967 Abortion Act. Wherefore, your Petitioners pray that your Honourable House do Vote against the Abortion (Amendment) Bill.

To lie upon the Table.

Kampuchea

Motion made, and Question proposed do now adjourn.—*[Mr. Lennox-Boyd*

12.17 am

Mrs. Ann Clwyd (Cynon Valley): I opportunity of this Adjournment debate

It is now nine years since Pol Pot and regime were ousted from Kampuchea Vietnamese army. Some weeks ago, w country visiting Oxfam-supported pro senior Government officials, the first p resolve the conflict were taking place Kampuchea's Prime Minister, Hun Sihanouk, former ruler of Cambodia an president of the so-called Coalition Democratic Kampuchea, which is dom Rouge and receives cash and recogniti Governments. At this moment, the secr is going on in Paris.

People in Kampuchea are very excit about the talks, because they are desper is not surprising in a country where ov were killed, tortured, starved and persec and 1978.

The Vietnamese invasion at that time Kampucheans from being killed by Po reason that they stay there, and the K their presence, is that the Khmer Ro launch guerrilla attacks within the coun border.

Incredibly, Pol Pot and the Khmer international recognition at the United the components of the Coalition Democratic Kampuchea. Britain w Governments who, incredibly, support

On our first day in Phnom Penh we guide to see a school in which the K imprisoned, tortured and killed about 16 Only five were known to have esca Vietnamese liberated the city from Pol guide, in a shocking reminder of the months and 20 days of Pol Pot terror, before the Pol Pot regime. "A student said, "hoping to become a teacher." "An dreams have been changed," he said qu

We were taken to see the mass grave of the villages. The remains are now to exhibition. Hundreds of skulls were stac other human bones were in a separate saw the film "The Killing Fields" will rec those scenes.

In Phnom Penh itself, the capital, on civilised city, now almost no house ground floor level and there are few ind cattle and hens wander around the main supply is erratic. There is little street lig curfew at 9 o'clock every night becau guerrilla attacks by the Khmer Rouge.

The city's waterworks is one of the pro assists. It would cost millions of poun Without bilateral aid, that would be im currently has a £1·5 million programme supporting such infrastructure work no the United Nations or by bilateral

Government do not recognise the Kampuchean Government. They consider them to be a puppet of Vietnam and therefore give no aid. Oxfam is assisting in the rehabilitation of an essential ferry link and workshop, and also with the important jute industry. These have all been the object of guerrilla attacks by forces morally backed by Western Governments.

Since 1979, Kampuchea has made progress in education, health and industry, but it is still a long way behind the standards of other developing countries. At the rate it is going, it will be many years before it can restore the damage done by wars to the country and especially to the people. The lack of educated and technically skilled people is a major problem for a country attempting to rebuild. Thousands were deliberately exterminated by Pol Pot.

There are only five vets in the entire country, and of 20,000 teachers only 5,000 remain. By 1979 Pol Pot had destroyed education, money, industry and culture. There was no public transport, no telephones or postal system and hardly any clean water, electricity or sanitation. Now only 1 per cent. of the population has access to a clean water supply.

In the main paediatric hospital in Phnom Penh the doctor in charge told us that only six doctors out of 500 of his generation had survived. Now one in six children under five dies from fever, typhoid, dysentry and diseases related to malnutrition.

Compared with several African countries, Kampuchea clearly has many resources. It has the potential to be self-sufficient in food and even to export. Today it cannot even produce enough to feed itself. The quantity of aid received by the country means that it can only stay at that level of development. Other countries are generous in emergencies, supplying food and seed, but they will not provide the tools that would help Kampuchea to rehabilitate, for example, the irrigation sector to enable it to improve control of the water or the equipment to increase the catch of fish. The absurdity of the present position is that everything is there to make the country self-sufficient.

There is a feeling of great insecurity. People do not know what is going to happen tomorrow, let alone next week or next year. They are afraid and discouraged. They cannot get the kind of aid they want. The backing they had hoped for from from the West is not there, and they are being dragged into a strong alliance and debt with the Eastern bloc, especially Vietnam.

From conversations with senior Government Ministers, officials and others in Kampuchea I am certain that they do not want that. They would like a more open system and relationship with the West. Under the present climate of hostility and repeated warfare, the Hun Sen Government in Kampuchea have never been given a chance to establish good relations with the West. Certainly no one would dispute that in foreign affairs and security matters there is a strong Vietnamese influence because they see Kampuchea as a legitimate security interest for them. They do not want a country backed by China on their southern as well as their northern border. So it is important for them that Kampuchea remains friendly.

There seems no reason to doubt Vietnam's repeated assertions that it is prepared to withdraw completely from Kampuchea by 1990, and before then, if a political settlement can be reached. A few miles from the border of Kampuchea in Thailand, about 275,000 Kampucheans are living in eight closed camps. They are controlled by three political groupings that make up the United N recognised Coalition Government of Dem Kampuchea. The strongest military group is the Rouge, still led by the same people who were res for killing the Kampucheans between 1975 and 1

Although ostensibly civilian, the camps serve th function of supporting the anti-Vietnamese re movement. According to the International Co Voluntary Agencies and the Foreign Affairs Committee, the camps are all used as rest and re centres for soldiers returning from the front. Fou camps run by the Khmer Rouge are closed monitoring, which is ironic, as one of the argume by the West for not giving aid to Kampuchea i cannot be monitored. That does not seem to matt it comes to giving aid on the border.

Surely the greatest need is to get people ou camps because they are virtually prisoners there. not want another Palestinian camp on the bo south-east Asia. How long are the West and th prepared to leave those people rotting on the bo

Meanwhile the people of Kampuchea cont suffer. Trapped between super-power and rivalries, they are still isolated by the majo Governments as though they were personally to bl the presence of the Vietnamese.

I urge the Government, who could play important role in this matter, to reconvene th Geneva conference on Indochina, which was co-ch the United Kingdom and the Soviet Union, promote a negotiated settlement that would isolate and the Khmer Rouge. In the meantime, I Government, as a matter of the greatest urg provide reconstruction and development aid as possible to Kampuchea, a country that has suf much for so long.

12.28 am

Mr. Jim Lester (Broxtowe): I am pleased to be join the debate briefly. It deserves more time on occasion.

I agree very much with the description by t Member for Cynon Valley (Mrs. Clwyd) of our Kampuchea, Phnom Penh and the other regio pleased that, since we returned and spoke to Friend the Minister for Overseas Developm Government have changed their policy and are to consider humanitarian schemes in Kampuche is a step forward that we welcome.

Kampuchea is a victim of international circu trapped between the two major nations of Thail Vietnam. Historically, it has always been a between them, either for security or for env potential for agricultural development. Ther question but that the talks yesterday and the n rounds of talks give hope for the peace th desperately desired by the people living in Kam and for an end to the uncertainty and nightmare occurred there since I entered the House in 197 when Pol Pot arrived and was defeated.

Then there must be progress, as the hon. La towards self-sufficiency. Kampuchea is a country potential. It is beautiful, and could not only sufficient but could play a part under a recon Government in ASEAN. It would be helpfu Government, with their traditional diplomatic sk

[Mr. Jim Lester]

asked by ASEAN and other countries to reconvene the international conference, which, it is to be hoped, would follow an agreement between Prince Sihanouk and Hun Sen that would restore that part of the world.

I have also travelled to Thailand and have visited the camps on the border. There is no way in which those people have a future in the present situation. There is no opportunity for third country development. There has been an agreement since we went to Kampuchea before Christmas, with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, I think, that those refugees can now, should they be allowed to leave the camps, return to their homes and to the acres of potential agricultural development. One million hectares are currently lying idle.

I support the suggestion that we play as active and as diplomatic a role as possible to bring an end to the suffering of that country and that region.

12.31 am

Mr. Chris Mullin (Sunderland, South): I congratulate my hon. Friend the Member for Cynon Valley (Mrs. Clwyd) and the hon. Member for Broxtowe (Mr. Lester) on raising this issue. I think that the British public will be very surprised that Her Majesty's Government are supporting, and have supported for some years, the dreaded Khmer Rouge. It is in my view a wicked and cynical state of affairs, the purpose of which is to bleed Vietnam. I know that many British diplomats in the area who have dealt with this in one capacity or another are deeply ashamed of what has quietly been going on.

I recognise that we are a very junior partner in this enterprise and that the main villains are China, which supplies the guns, Thailand, where the guns are transported in Thai army lorries directly to the Khmer Rouge, and the Americans, who have organised the lobby at the United Nations that causes our representative and the representatives of many other Governments to vote each year, first of all for the Khmer Rouge directly, and in the last few years for the coalition which is a thinly disguised front for the Khmer Rouge. As I say, we are only a junior partner in this enterprise, but it is one of the most humiliating examples of our satellite status in relation to the United States.

I have travelled in that region quite a lot in the last 15 years. I was in Kampuchea during the war, before the rise of Pol Pot, and I was there in the immediate aftermath of Pol Pot.

A couple of years ago, in Bangkok, I called at the British embassy and said to a gentleman there that we appeared to be supporting the Khmer Rouge. He said, "Oh, no. It is all going to be different this time. Mr. Reagan has promised that the Khmer Rouge is to have free elections." I said, "Please tell me that I am not hearing this." He repeated what he had said. He said, "I know why you are worried, I have read the books; but it is all going to be different this time." I repeated, "Please tell me that I am not hearing this." He said "Are we talking off the record?" I said that we were and he said, "Quite frankly, I think it is appalling." That was a representative of Her Majesty's Government.

Everybody connected with this shameful enterprise is deeply ashamed of it and I hope that in his speech this evening the Minister will face up to the situation squarely and not try to pretend that we are not supporting the coalition with Mr. Son Sann and Sih look respectable. The people who a are the Khmer Rouge. The guns are The food is coming from the We contribution to that food. We knov going, and the only way we have got years is by not talking about it, and the days when we do not talk about end.

12.34 am

The Parliamentary Under-Secretar and Commonwealth Affairs (Mr. Th hon. Friend the Member for Broxto the hon. Member for Sunderland, So congratulating the hon. Member for Clwyd) on raising this subject and graphic account of her recent visit to

During this debate I will refer to C Kampuchea, because, of course, Ca which is preferred by the majority inhabitants to the term Kampuche brought into vogue by the Khmer R

Let me say at the outset that th share the concerns raised by hon. Me of the House in this debate. We too w can to help the Cambodian people terrible hardships that they have su continue to suffer.

I very much welcome this opportu policy. Our policy is based on the peace, stability and long-term prosper country, and, indeed, of the region, establishment of an independent Cambodia. That means a Cambodia troops. It means a Cambodia with a chosen by its own people.

Our policy is rooted in the fundar the United Nations' charter and I am a Members for Cynon Valley and for have not referred to that. At last year's proposals based on those principles w overwhelming majority. Indeed, th endorsed for the past nine years.

The tragedy is that that annual end necessary, that we should have to say a these basic principles should apply to apply to the rest of the world. The rea do that is simple and straightforward completely illegal occupation of C Vietnam's cynical and flagrant disregar of international law.

Mr. Mullin: Will the Minister give

Mr. Eggar: The hon. Gentleman has in the debate. I want to try to make my Government's position clearly and I Gentleman will understand if I prefer

The description given by the hon. M Valley of the relationship of Cambo might most charitably be described as

Vietnam can be in no doubt about th opinion. Last year 117 countries—mor — supported the United Nations Cambodia. Those 117 countries could h

as they have been tonight, as "a group". But Vietnam, and its Soviet paymasters, ignore the views of that overwhelming number of countries, just as they ignore Cambodian demands for freedom. We cannot, and will not, accept this unlawful, cruel and oppressive occupation.

Cambodia is governed by a regime which is utterly without legitimacy. *[Interruption.]* The dependence of the so-called Heng Samrin — *[Interruption.]* The hon. Member for Sunderland, South has not been a Member of the House for long, but he should have learned by now to listen to the contributors to an Adjournment debate. I did him that courtesy, despite the fact that he did not tell me that he wished to take part. I request at least some courtesy in return.

Cambodia is governed by a regime utterly without legitimacy. That regime was hastily cobbled together by the Vietnamese on the eve of their invasion. Without the presence of massive Vietnamese forces, the regime simply would not exist.

Vietnam's supporters say that the United Nations' vote is a vote for the odious Khmer Rouge. That is nonsense. The annual vote is a ringing endorsement of the rights of the Cambodian people. But when the Vietnamese seek to join the worldwide protest at the Khmer Rouge record on human rights, let us not forget that for years it was the Vietnamese who tried to block discussion in the United Nations and elsewhere. Is this a conversion on the road to Damascus, or a cynical tactic? Only yesterday the House was hearing of the continuing plight of the boat people. The House yesterday drew a clear conclusion about the regime in Vietnam.

We have no doubt that, given a free choice, the people of Cambodia would resoundingly reject the Khmer Rouge. We withdrew recognition from the appalling Pol Pot regime in 1979. Hearing the words of the hon. Members for Cynon Valley and for Sunderland, South tonight, it is strange to recall that it was a Labour Government who saw fit to establish relations with Pol Pot in 1976.

The resistance to the Heng Samrin regime is broadly based. The resistance, in the shape of the Coalition Government of Democratic Kampuchea, represents not simply the Khmer Rouge but the non-Communist groups of former Head of State Prince Sihanouk and of Mr. Son Sann.

Prince Sihanouk in particular retains widespread loyalty among Cambodians, both within and outside Cambodia. The Vietnamese know this only too well; it is one reason why they retain such massive military forces in Cambodia. They cannot trust Heng Samrin's troops to fight the resistance. Too many of the regime's troops share the aims of the resistance.

The continuing talks between Prince Sihanouk and Hun Sen are a welcome breakthrough in the diplomatic impasse. We hope they may be the first steps towards a negotiated settlement, but we cannot underestimate the obstacles.

Vietnam should withdraw all its troops from Cambodia now and signal its readiness to enter serious negotiations. Sadly, we have seen no evidence of a change of heart in Hanoi. Instead, Vietnam, supported by the Soviet Union, flagrantly and consistently ignores world opinion. It talks grandly of international conferences, but shows no readiness to negotiate. Vietnam's talk of an international conference is nothing but a smokescreen and a propaganda ploy.

Hon. Members have rightly raised the appalli of the ordinary people of Cambodia. We alr substantial aid to the most affected Cambodia forced by Vietnamese aggression to flee across t to Thailand. In 1984, there were 230,000 peo camps. Today there are 275,000. More are arriv day. They have fled in search of safety. Yet Vi aggression on the Thai-Cambodian border ha further casualites. Last year saw the cynical shelli Vietnamese of the main refugee camp, site 2.

We and most other aid donors agree that it help these people, and I too have visited the ca view was endorsed by the Foreign Affairs Com this House only last year. Since 1985, we have c £3·7 million through the United Nations bor operation, the UN High Commissioner for Refu Red Cross and other voluntary agencies, and I p to the work of those agencies.

We are ready to respond to further appeals organisations, within the limits of resources av should stress that this aid is solely humanitarian medical and food supplies. We give no military and no aid whatever goes to the Khmer Rou directly or indirectly.

Hon. Members have also called for aid to C itself. I understand, and share, their desire to suffering. With other donors, we keep under review the possible need for emergency relief. I hon. Friend the Member for Broxtowe that we w open-mindedly at support for any interr organised relief effort inside Cambodia.

But we cannot accept that at this time we sh development assistance to a regime which depe very existence on Vietnamese occupying forces. W allow Vietnam to bankroll its oppression of C with western aid. It would be a negation of principles of aid itself.

Vietnamese cynicism knows no bounds. Vi bankrupt. Even its Soviet paymaster is grumbli misuse of aid it has given. But, instead of pulli Cambodia and setting its own economy in order, holds out a begging bowl to the west. A Go whose policies have led to the forced expulsion million of their own inhabitants plead for "huma assistance. What an irony.

We watch with interest recent diplomatic m wish them well, but the fundamental require change of heart in Hanoi and in Moscow. We on Vietnam to enter negotiations, and on the Sov to use its influence to promote those negotiations for a will to negotiate and a will to find an end to

Our condemnation of Vietnamese occupati the widest international support. Our position is our partners in the European Community, it is our friends in the Association of South East Asia and it is shared widely, as evidenced by the among the non-aligned.

The Government believe that we must maintain and strengthen this unanimity of int view. It offers the best, and indeed the only, p restoring independence to Cambodia and safeguarding the lives and well-being of its peo

Question put and agreed to.

Adjourned accordingly at fifteen minutes to O

House of Commons

Friday 22 January 1988

The House met at half-past Nine o'clock

PRAYERS

[MR. SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

PETITIONS

Abortion (Amendment) Bill

9.35 am

Mr. Chris Smith (Islington, South and Finsbury): I have the honour, Mr. Speaker, to present a petition on behalf of about 400 or 500 of my constituents. It is headed "Fight Alton's Bill" and states:

To the Honourable the Commons of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland Parliament assembled, the Humble Petition of United Kingdom Residents showeth that the Abortion (Amendment) Bill which proposes to reduce the upper limit for abortion, will, if enacted, restrict women's choices, endanger their health and open the door to further attacks on the 1967 Abortion Act.

Wherefore, your Petitioners pray that your Honourable House do vote against the Abortion (Amendment) Bill.

To lie upon the Table.

Mr. Jeremy Corbyn (Islington, North): I wish to present a petition, Mr. Speaker, to

the Honourable the Commons of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

The petition

showeth that the Abortion (Amendment) Bill which proposes to reduce the upper limit for abortion will, if enacted, restrict women's choices, endanger their health and open the door to further attacks on the 1967 Abortion Act.

Wherefore, your petitioners pray that the Honourable House do vote against the Abortion (Amendment) Bill.

It has been signed by 1,065 people, the majority of whom are my constituents. I am pleased to be able to present the petition on their behalf, and I fully support it. I trust that the House of Commons will reject the Bill that is to be debated today.

To lie upon the Table.

Mr. Geoffrey Lofthouse (Pontefract and Castleford): I beg leave to present a petition from the women's council of the Pontefract and Castleford constituency, signed by hundreds of my constituents. They beg to ask the House not to pass the Abortion (Amendment) Bill.

Wherefore, your petitioners pray that your Honourable House do vote against the Abortion (Amendment) Bill.

To lie upon the Table.

Abortion (Amendment) Bill

Order for Second Reading read.

9.38 am

Mr. David Alton (Liverpool, Mossley Hill): I beg to move, That the Bill be now read a Second time.

In coming to the debate this morning, three months after I presented the Bill, I thank those hon. Members on both sides of the argument for the way in which, generally, the debate has been conducted. This is a difficult issue, which rouses sensitivities, anger, bitterness, and, sometimes, even hatred. By and large, Members of this House have conducted the debate in the country with great dignity and decorum, giving this issue the respect to which it is entitled. I hope that we shall be able to mirror that in the House today.

Fifty-nine years after the passage of the Infant Life Preservation Act and 20 years after the passage of the Abortion Act, it is my hope that the House will today allow this Bill to proceed to Commitee. Public and parliamentary opinion clearly believes that, in the light of medical and scientific advances, a clear upper time limit beyond which abortion may not occur should be established.

Wherever we come from in this debate, be we pro-life or pro-choice, opposed to or in favour of abortion, no one can be sanguine about the nature and consequences of late abortions. That is the issue before the House today and this Bill provides a vehicle for public policy to be reviewed.

The existing statute regulating abortion comprises three pieces of legislation—the Offences Against the Person Act 1861, the Infant Life (Preservation) Act 1929 and the Abortion Act 1967. No upper time limit when abortions may occur is specified in the 1967 Act. No distinction is made between late and early abortions. Indeed, section 5(1) declares:

"Nothing in this Act shall affect the provisions of the Infant Life (Preservation) Act 1929."

Those who framed the 1929 legislation came to the question after an assize judge had before him a case in which a child had been killed shortly before the moment of birth and before it had an existence independent of its mother. It emerged that the killer could not be charged with any criminal offence, so a Bill was introduced in the House of Lords by one of the Lords of Appeal to fill the gap between abortion and murder. In framing the legislation, it was considered necessary to exclude the case where a foetus was destroyed at a time when it was not capable of being born alive, so a rule of thumb was created in section 1(2) of the Act to the effect that, at any time after the 28th week of pregnancy, the child is, prima facie, assumed to be capable of being born alive.

It does not seem unreasonable, 59 years after the passage of that Act, to ask Parliament to reconsider this rule of thumb. Indeed, given the gigantic strides in medicine and technology, where medical knowledge has increased by leaps and bounds, it is incumbent on any civilised or ordered society to review its public policy and to strike a proper balance between claimed rights and responsibilities.

Many of us hold powerfully held convictions about the right to life over the notion that we have the right to choose to take life, but this debate is not about that. It is about what, in the judgment of individual Members of

[Mr. David Alton]

Parliament, the public interest requires and what people as a whole can be brought to accept as a rational solution to an intractable problem.

Sir Jim Spicer (Dorset, West): The hon. Gentleman will know that I wrote to him three days ago, enclosing a letter which I sent to my constituents concerning this point about what the time should be. Most hon. Members agree that 28 weeks is not acceptable, but, equally, many hon. Members do not accept 18 weeks. Will the hon. Gentleman give the House an assurance, during the debate, that he is prepared to accept a middle-ground time, which will bring many people on to his side?

Mr. Alton: That is a helpful intervention and I am happy to answer the hon. Gentleman's question. Many hon. Members have written to me. Some have suggested that the time limit should be more in line with other European countries where the average is about 14 weeks. Other hon. Members have suggested that it should be 14, 16, 18, 22, or anything up to 28 weeks. I have made it clear that, although in my judgment 18 weeks is about the right time, I recognise that there are strongly held views on this subject throughout the House. Indeed, it would be proper to examine in Committee other possible points where a time limit might be established. I give the hon. Gentleman and the House the assurance that, if an amendment were suggested, provided it did not emasculate the Bill beyond the point of recognition, I should be happy to accept anything that could be done to rationalise the law.

Mr. Dafydd Wigley (Caernarfon): The hon. Gentleman said that, in his judgment, 18 weeks was about the right time. What does he have to say to the parents of one, two or three disabled children who are yearning to have another child who is not disabled? How does he advise the mother when the choices are either to have a disabled child with whom they cannot cope or to have a child who will suffer so much that they are not willing to see such suffering? Is he prepared to close the door on that family having additional children?

Mr. Alton: The hon. Gentleman and I have discussed this matter, for obvious reasons, many times. We both have very personal, strongly-held views about the eugenics question and about whether abortion might take place on the ground of disability. The Bill contains an exclusion clause for those cases of disability which are incompatible with life. If a child has anencephaly, or there is Potter's or Edward's syndrome it would be proper, under the terms of the Bill, for a termination to occur, but I disagree with the hon. Gentleman about the legitimacy of taking life on the ground of disability. However, I recognise——

Mr. Barry Field (Isle of Wight) *rose*——

Mr. Alton: ——the power of the hon. Gentleman's comments. I also recognise that, given that 92 per cent. of all late abortions involved healthy children, if an exclusion clause were included in the Bill in Committee to deal with the question of disability it would still be a worthwhile measure. The widespread debate which accompanies such an initiative is of equal importance to the Bill. That is where attitudes can be challenged and the climate changed. I refuse to believe that anyone is in favour of abortion, and that is why it is right that, time and again, politicians, public figures and the country must discuss this question.

Before coming to the detail of the Bill and to t question on which we shall vote later, I wish to place t Bill in the context of that national debate. Twenty ye ago, when introducing his Bill, my right hon. Friend t Member for Tweeddale, Ettrick and Lauderdale (M Steel) said that it was his intention to eliminate back-stre abortions. He said that it was not the intention of t promoters of the Bill to leave a wider door open f abortion on request. Yet who can doubt, almost 3 milli abortions later — 600 abortions are undertaken eve working day, some even on the grounds of the gender a child, simply because it is a little girl—that we ha anything other than abortion on demand in most parts Britain?

In a census of 746 gynaecologists, undertaken Gallup and published two days ago, over 400—86 p cent.—stated that, from their experience, abortion demand is now available in the NHS hospitals in whi they work.

Miss Marjorie Mowlam (Redcar): The hon. Gentlema said that to his knowledge, terminations were taking pla in cases where the gender of the child was in question. Th is quite clearly illegal and cannot be supported. If the ho Gentleman knows of such cases, he should present the to the Director of Public Prosecutions for prosecutio Will he give us that assurance?

Mr. Alton: The example highlighted by BBC Radio has already been presented by the right hon. Member fo Castle Point (Sir B. Braine) in a letter to the Attorney General. In the view of many hon. Members, this ough to be challenged as being illegal under the terms of th 1967 Act. The fact that BBC Radio 4 is prepared t substantiate those claims and has provided chapter an verse shows that the matter ought to be a cause fo concern.

In 1967, abortion was presented almost as a panacea o as a universal remedy. In 1967, we were told that abortio would reduce illegitimacy. Today, it stands at 15 per cen and is rising. In 1967, we were told that there would be les child abuse because every child would be wanted However, scarcely a day passed in 1987 when we did no hear of a case of a child being physically or sexuall abused. In 1967, we were told that abortion would give woman new rights. By 1987, many women and men ha been emotionally and psychologically scarred and th demand for post-abortion counselling has been growing We have learnt much in 20 years, and even more since th passage of the 1929 Act.

It was only in 1969—two years after the passage o my right hon. Friend's Bill — that the science o foetoscopy really took off. In 1967, let alone in 1929 medics could not take an electrocardiogram of the baby which shows its heartbeat and reaction to painful stimul as its heartbeat increases. Twenty years ago, it would have been impossible accurately to date the exact time o gestational development or the characteristics of the developing child. Clearly, ultrasound scanning, chorionic villus sampling and amniocentesis have changed all that. Since 1967 we have revolutionised our awareness of the humanity of the developing child. Since then, we have learned a lot also about the consequences of abortion, both for the mother and child, and for the medics as well. I am amazed that those who counsel in favour of abortion, especially so late in pregnancy, would really warn a

woman of the potential physical and psychological consequences. Abortion was recently described by an opponent of my Bill as being

"as safe as having an injection of penicillin".

We must challenge the assumption that abortion is either prudent or desirable.

Not only are there the physical effects of invasive surgery on perfectly healthy women but there are the psychological consequences of post-abortion trauma. In 1976 the Department of Health and Social Security started to fund the Manchester unit of the Royal College of General Practitioners which is studying the psychiatric morbidity experienced by women after an abortion. The report will be published shortly. But today *The Independent* shows that of those surveyed 79 per cent. admitted that, if they knew that a child had quickened in the womb, they would experience a great sense of guilt if they were to carry out an abortion after that time. That is how people tick. A late abortion—when a woman has felt her child quicken, when its humanity can be in no doubt—is inevitably the most traumatic abortion of all.

Kathleen McDonnell, in her book "Not an Easy Choice —A Feminist Re-examines Abortion"—I do not believe that abortion is ever an easy choice — quotes approvingly a young abortion councillor who says:

"Yes, this is killing, there is no way around it. But I am willing to accept that."

McDonnell says:

"there is no escaping the fact that we have, with full consciousness, terminated life. This is most emphatically not the same as blaming ourselves or burdening ourselves with an unnecessary load of guilt."

But it is simple casuistry to say, "Yes, it is killing, but, no, I will not feel any sense of guilt."

Mr. Jimmy Hood (Clydesdale): Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Alton: I shall give way to the hon. Gentleman, who has been trying to intervene.

Mr. Hood: Does the hon. Gentleman remember that I wrote to him on 15 October in response to a circular which was sent to hon. Members and asked him about a particular point? I ask the hon. Gentleman the same question now: does he believe in abortion at 18 weeks? It is important for that question to be answered. Some of the people who have been canvassing and lobbying hon. Members look at the present proposals as a step to follow the abolition of abortion in all circumstances. The hon. Gentleman should tell the House whether he believes in abortion at 18 weeks.

Mr. Alton: The hon. Gentleman is perfectly entitled to ask that question. I have never made any secret about my views. In 1981, when I attempted to reduce the upper time limit, I made exactly the same point that, for me, abortion, whether late or early, whether legal or illegal, is the taking of life. That is not the Bill before the House at the moment. This is a legitimate review of public policy. That is what is contained in the Bill.

Given the psychological and physical consequences to which a woman may be subject, having had an abortion, why do counsellors advise her to have an abortion, especially so late in a pregnancy? One reason is revealed in a figure which has been provided to me by the Department of Health and Social Security. The Department confirms that 32 individuals are directors or trustees of a company or a charity providing abortion counselling and are simultaneously involved in private clinics undertaking abortions. About £12 million is estimated to have passed hands in this business last year. According to the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists survey into late abortions, in one year alone 60 per cent. of the late abortions undertaken in private clinics were performed by just 11 practitioners. They and the clinics in which they work netted £2 million in this business.

Dame Elaine Kellett-Bowman (Lancaster): I point out the sad case of one of my constituents. She says:

"I have had two abortions. The private clinic that I attended on both occasions made it relatively easy for me to obtain an abortion. The plausible reasons that I gave for seeking the terminations were readily accepted.

I received no counselling but I now realise that this is due to the fact that private clinics run a profitable industry in human weakness.

In all probability both babies would have been born perfectly healthy and even though I considered, at that time, I could not bring them up myself, I was not reminded of the fact that there are only too many childless couples anxious to adopt.

However, private clinics are not in the business of giving support and pointing out the available options.

Sadly, I only considered my own situation at the time."

Mr. Alton: I am grateful to the hon. Lady for that important intervention. Some 88 per cent. of all late abortions take place not in the National Health Service but in private clinics. Half of the late abortions are on women from overseas, who are then duly despatched on an aeroplane back to the countries from which they came, without any care or compassion shown for them. How do we know what physical or psychological condition a woman will be in when she returns to her country? That is why there is a case to be answered. We must show compassion for the woman and the child. If there are consequences in a late abortion for a woman, there are consequences for the child as well. Every country and every age will be judged by the simple test: how did they treat their people?

By 18 weeks, a foetus is not just a clump of tissues, not just a blob of jelly. The child has sentience and can feel pain. If a light is shone at its mother's womb, the child will react and turn away. The child has a complete skeleton and reflexes. It pumps 50 pints of blood a day. A report "Human Procreation — Ethical Aspects of the New Techniques", published by the Council for Science and Society — certainly not a body supporting my view — states that pain is experienced

"after the foetus has developed a nervous system, six weeks after pregnancy being the earliest."

In November, Dr. Peter McCullagh, an eminent immunologist, stated that research on foetal nervous systems showed that pain could be felt at eight or nine weeks, and perhaps earlier. He said that babies could be in agony during abortions.

What, under a late abortion, do we allow to happen to a child? Two principal methods are used in a late abortion. Of the 12 per cent. of late abortions undertaken in the NHS, the method known as prostaglandins is the most commonly used. By this method, labour is induced by drugs. The labour will be more painful than in a birth and can last for 20 hours or more. There is a chance that when prostaglandins is used the child will be born alive. To avoid this a child is usually poisoned before the abortion. Because this is a long-drawn-out business, the method of late abortion used in private clinics is primarily dilatation

[Mr. Alton]

and evacuation. By this method, the cervix is dilated and the baby's body removed piece by piece. To facilitate its extraction from the womb, the skull is crushed, the spine snapped and the body removed piece by piece. An attendant nurse then has the job of reassembling the body to ensure that nothing has been left behind that might cause infection. Throughout this procedure no anaesthetic is used on the child.

Mrs. Alice Mahon (Halifax): Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Alton: In a moment.

A nurse involved in these late abortions wrote to me in these terms:

"Although the doctor commences the infusion, it's the nurses who have the job of looking after the patient—and some of these are so advanced it's like a normal delivery. Sometimes the foetus lives for a few minutes though the harsh contractions caused by the drugs have usually battered it to death. I don't know which is worse, those done in theatre, where you see the uterine contents being sucked into a bottle, or seeing the bruised bodies of these always perfectly formed foetuses in a receiver on the wall."

This is a corrupting and degrading business for the medical staff who become the destroyer instead of defender of life.

Mr. Hugh Dykes (Harrow East): The hon. Gentleman started on a premise that we all share: no one is in favour of abortion. However, does he agree that the photographic material sent out by the anti-abortion lobby is deplorable in that it is difficult for laymen to handle as they are beset with the horrors of life and death in all medical aspects and not just in birth?

Mr. Alton: No. It is time that people saw the reality. It is also an extraordinary paradox.

Mrs. Mahon: Does the hon. Gentleman share my concern about what happened before the 1967 Act, when the foetus was stabbed by a knitting needle or a screwdriver? I had direct experience of that, as I was a nurse in the wards which received the victims of back-street abortionists and women who had had self-induced abortions. It was horrific. At least now abortions take place in clean, clinically controlled environments. There was more suffering, pain and anguish for women then than there is now.

Mr. Alton: I agree with the hon. Lady that a return to the back streets would not be progress. If it were possible to have introduced a Abortion (Utopia) Bill, I would have introduced it. No one would wish for a return to the back streets, but the nature of the operation that I described can be undertaken only by a doctor and a nurse if it is undertaken so late in pregnancy.

In other countries in western Europe that have a rational time limit such as that I have suggested, there is no problem with back-street abortions. In confirmation of that, my right hon. Friend the Member for Tweeddale, Ettrick and Lauderdale (Mr. Steel) said:

"it true . . . that the bulk of the illegal abortions, the back-street abortions, which go on today occur not at the stage where the foetus is fairly advanced . . . but at an early stage."—[*Official Report*, 13 July 1967; Vol. 750, c. 1347.]

It is a paradox that we spend some £13 million a year on abortions in Britain, when doctors and nurses should be using their skills to care for and cradle life, not to extinguish it and snuff it out. Care and kill can never be used as synonyms.

The nurse's observation that aborted babies ar is invariably true. Of the 8,276 late abortions un last year, 92 per cent. were on perfectly healthy The Bill, by imposing an upper time limit, sets ou that. Hard cases are used to try to rubbish the hard cases make bad law. However, those hard c be brought up during the debate and should be e in detail.

Mrs. Teresa Gorman (Billericay): Will t Gentleman give way?

Mr. Alton: No. I have given way already.

Some hon. Members do not share my vie disability. I have already said something about answer to the hon. Member for Caernarfon (Mr. About 8 per cent. of late abortions occur amniocentesis or another test that shows that a c have a disability. As Professor Ron Taylor, a supp the Bill and the professor of obstetrics and gynaec London university stated in last week's *Sunday T*

"With new techniques such as chorionic villus and ultrasound, discovery of such abnormalities a diagnosed are found much earlier than 18 weeks."

It is true that not all conditions diagno amniocentesis will be discovered by CVS—and not yet available everywhere. I recognise that so Members will wish to include an exclusion clause post-18-week abortion on the ground of disabili is a perfectly proper issue for the Committee to c Although I personally do not support aborti eugenic grounds, I have made it clear that even if exemption were placed in the Bill it would sti enormous worth.

For six years before coming to the House I work children with special needs. It would have been man or woman who would have told them that the have been better dead. At the outset, when I ann my intention to introduce the Bill, a young woma Ellen Wilkie contacted me. She was born with m dystrophy. The doctors had told her parents t would not live beyond her teens. Ellen is now 29, a classics degree and writes poetry and plays. She her letter, more eloquently than I could say:

"No one can say what a disabled person will be of. Who are we to play God?"

Disability should not be a disqualification for life

Interestingly, Wednesday's Gallup surv gynaecologists revealed several significant things. all gynaecologists questioned sought a later limit fo handicaps, such as anencephaly or Potter's sy where the baby cannot survive. My Bill contains a exemption for such circumstances. However, two or 68 per cent., believed that an upper limit of 1 was right in the case of minor handicaps such as h club foot, or impaired hearing or sight. Almost hal per cent., said that there should be no abortions f minor handicaps. The president of the Royal Co Obstetricians and Gynaecologists called for an upp of 24 weeks to allow late abortion for handicap, b suggestion had the support of 31 per cent., or le one-third, of practising gynaecologists in Britian.

There are radical alternatives to utility, ba uninhibited, unqualified, unconditional love, and up by practical support, care and resources. That f bedrock in authentic human values. Abortion

defeatism — albeit a defeatism that is often born of desperation and fear. The answer can never be to kill one of the two patients who confront the doctor.

Let me turn to some of the other cases which have been cited by those who oppose the Bill. Contrary to what has been said in newspaper articles and speeches that oppose the Bill, after 18 weeks, abortions are not often performed on young girls. Only 4·7 per cent. of late abortions are performed on girls under 16. Late abortions are not often performed on women with many previous children who cannot face the prospect of another baby. Only 0·8 per cent. of abortions after 18 weeks are on women with more than four children. Late abortions are not often performed on middle-aged women who may have mistaken pregnancy for the menopause. Only 2 per cent. of late abortions are performed on women over 41. Late abortions are not often performed in cases of pregnancy arising out of rape or when pregnancy threatens the life of the mother. During five years, only 13 late abortions, out of 40,000, were performed for one of those two reasons. The Bill specifically allows for a termination of pregnancy when the mother's life is at risk.

We are told that 20 per cent. of late abortions result from delays in the NHS. No doubt the Minister will want to say something about that. However, given that 88 per cent. of late abortions are not even performed in the NHS, that seems a curious claim. The 1984 report of the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists stated that 95 per cent. of women presenting for late abortions were operated on within 14 days of first seeking advice.

Opponents of the Bill claim that women will be forced into the back streets. The dilatation and evacuation operation that I mentioned earlier clearly could not be performed by a back-street abortionist. In other EC countries, where time limits are much lower than in the United Kingdom—the average time limit in the EEC is about 14 weeks—that argument has been shown to be scare mongering of the worst kind. Let me re-emphasise that 88 per cent. of late abortions, or 7,270 out of 8,276, were performed under the Act, which allows for social abortions.

Men must, of course, approach the debate with humility and sensitivity. We rarely have to suffer the practical day-to-day experience of an unwanted child. We rarely hear about unmarried fathers, only about unmarried mothers. We do not hear about men having illegitimate children, only women, and how often men smugly talk about fallen women. We never hear about fallen men.

Women are frequently pressurised into abortions by men. Men too often leave a woman in the lurch, having used their sexuality without responsibility. Those who maintain that abortion is purely a woman's issue do women no service; it allows men to evade their responsibilities, and without changes in men's attitudes women will not be truly liberated. Men and women are involved in abortion, and all that is required to come to this debate is humanity.

I believe that I have made out a case for this Bill being allowed a Committee stage. These arguments must then be sifted through and honed.

Speaking on "Woman's Hour", Dame Josephine Barnes, not a supporter of my Bill, but a leading gynaecologist, said:

"We have far too many late abortions in this country. It is deplorable."

Many would share that view.

I have attempted to bring forward a modest Bill, which deals with only 4·8 per cent. of all abortions, but undoubtedly those which carry the gravest consequences for the mother, for the child and for the medic alike. In framing this one-clause Bill, I have demonstrated a willingness to be reasonable. I have made it clear that I will not be intransigent in trying to steer through a much-needed and long overdue reform. It is in that spirit that I commend the Bill to the House.

Mr. Speaker: Before I call the first of the Back Benchers to contribute, I remind the House that a great many hon. Members wish to take part in the debate. Well over 30 Members have indicated their wish by letter and there may well be others. I make a special plea for contributions to be brief so that others may be called.

10.10 am

Mr. Andrew MacKay (Berkshire, East): I believe that the Bill is phoney. It does not stand up to close examination. It is perfectly acceptable intellectually and morally to be opposed to abortion, to believe that it should be illegal and to take the view, which I do not share, that it is murder. I have a very close working relationship with the members of the Pro-Life group in my constituency. I understand and respect their views, but I do not go along with them, and they are aware of that.

I cannot understand how the hon. Member for Liverpool, Mossley Hill (Mr. Alton) can have just plucked out of the air the time of 18 weeks. If he believes that abortion is murder, surely it is murder at 16 weeks, 14 weeks or 12 weeks. What is worse is that the limit of 18 weeks will do grave damage to those parents who have conceived a grossly disabled child in the past, wish to have further children, and know that there is a one in four chance that that child might also be grossly disabled.

The House will be aware that tests can only just be carried out at 18 weeks. Those tests take many weeks before conclusion can be drawn and then, if need be, a traumatic and difficult decision must be made by the parents to arrange an abortion. Under the Bill, many decent, reasonable, caring people will find that they are unable to have an abortion. I am privileged to have in my constituency the headquarters of the epidermolysis bullosa support group, known as DEBRA, under the inspirational directorship of Mrs. Mary Freeman. Some hon. Members came to the DEBRA rally in the Grand Committee Room on Tuesday. Whatever one's view of the Bill, one would have been deeply moved by the people one met there. They were not zealots or fundamentalists; they were Christian, caring people who had experienced the trauma of having a grossly disabled child and did not want to repeat that tragedy. Not unreasonably, they wished to have further children, which their gynaecologist told them had about a three in four chance of being disabled. They would be denied the opportunity to have an abortion if the Bill is passed.

Mr. David Ashby (Leicestershire, North-West): Will my hon. Friend give way?

Mr. MacKay: I will not give way, because Mr. Speaker has indicated that many hon. Members wish to speak. I will give way to my hon. Friend later if he will let me pursue my point.

All hon. Members must have had constituents come to their advice bureaux or surgeries with disabled children.

[Mr. MacKay]

They, like me, will have noted how much those parents have aged. Somebody who looks 65 tells one that he or she is only 40. They perhaps bring with them other normal children, and those normal children are not being properly cared for because, quite rightly and naturally, the parents have to devote every waking hour to that grossly disabled child. The parents fear what will happen to the child if they die early, in their 50s. This becomes a trauma for them, a nightmare, which they get out of perspective, but I can understand that.

Dame Elaine Kellett-Bowman: A lady came to my advice bureau with a seriously handicapped child and I saw the look of love on that mother's face. She said that she would not have done without that child; all she wanted was the support services.

Mr. MacKay: My hon. Friend makes a perfectly valid point.

Mr. Ashby: Will my hon. Friend give way?

Mr. MacKay: No, I will not give way; I want to answer the point.

As my hon. Friend the Member for Lancaster (Dame E. Kellett-Bowman) points out, many people have disabled children and they love them and treat them well. They are given excellent services by the local authority and the state.

Like the hon. Member for Mossley Hill, I am not in favour of abortion. All I am in favour of, as a Conservative, is freedom of choice for people to be able to decide. It is a traumatic decision for the parents to have an abortion—not just for the mother, but for the father as well. It does not help if politicians interfere and tell those parents whether they should go ahead with that abortion. It is up to the parents to decide whether they wish to have a grossly disabled child. I could never dream of advising them one way or the other. My wife and I are not sufficiently capable as parents to have a disabled child. To be totally honest, I could not cope with it. I have terrific admiration, as does my hon. Friend the Member for Lancaster, for those people who are able to cope—but the decision must be theirs, not ours.

Another element of the Bill worries me. If passed, the Bill would be the worst piece of class legislation that the House has put on the statute book for many a long day. My affluent, middle-class, and, I hope, by and large intelligent, constituents would have no difficulty in arranging an abortion, either privately or elsewhere. Most of those abortions, except in the case of the disabled, would be well before the 18-week limit, so they could take a very relaxed view.

All hon. Members have had come to their surgeries 15 or 16-year-old girls with a low IQ. They are not aware of what contraception is; they are pregnant, lost and confused. Often the girl does not realise for several months that she is pregnant. She is scared, frightened to speak to her parents and frightened to go to her doctor, so it is many weeks before she faces the crisis. That will be the little girl who will suffer from the Bill, not my affluent constituents. We will then go back to the bad old days, briefly mentioned by the hon. Member for Halifax (Mrs. Mahon), of back-street abortions.

It is only 21 years since the Abortion Act was introduced, but I am sure that everybody can recall the horror of back-street abortions. We are all reali to know that abortions will still take place, wh or illegal, so it is important that they are done clinics where there is good hygiene, good services and a sensitive attitude. A return to abortions will mean a return to deaths and traum people who will suffer are those whom the Ho most want to protect. The vulnerable, the intelligent and the inadequate will be driven to street abortionists, who will be laughing all the bank. That would be a bad example to set.

Like me, many of my hon. Friends would be the limit to be reduced to 24 weeks. Medical advanced immeasurably during the past 20 ye today it is perfectly possible for a child to be weeks. I also believe that abortions on g disability need not be performed after 24 week for disability can be carried out earlier. What sh of us who hold that view do? I suggest that they support the Bill, as my right hon. Friend Minister suggested at the Dispatch Box yester tell the House why. In the past few days, some Friends have said to me, "I am totally against I accept all the arguments on disability. Howeve like the limit to be reduced to 24 weeks. Cannot the Bill in Committee?" My hon. Friend the M Dorset, West (Sir J. Spicer) raised that point e

I will tell the House what will happen if hon. who advocate a limit of 24 weeks vote for the It will get a substantial majority on Second which will mean—I do not object to this—tha Member for Mossley Hill will have a considera the constitution of the Standing Committee. I I would do the same in his position—that he the Committee with anti-abortionists who wou see abortion made illegal.

Mr. Alton: Will the hon. Gentleman give wa

Mr. MacKay: Just one moment. Of course, I way to the hon. Gentleman, because I should lik from him on this point.

An amendment tabled in Committee sugg weeks will be resisted by the anti-abortionists, result that it cannot be referred back to the H Report. My hon. Friends will then be left in th position of having to vote against the Bill Reading, as my hon. Friend the Member for Birm Edgbaston (Dame J. Knight) says. To leave it un Reading is to leave it very late, and some constituents would be very confused if we voted fo on Second Reading and against is on Third Read would be most unfortunate.

Finally — [HON. MEMBERS: "Give way."] prepared to give way, but the hon. Member for Hill not longer seems to wish to intervene.

Mr. Alton: I think that the hon. Gentleman ha dealt with the point. I had intended to say th Members will have opportunities at various stag Bill in this House and in another place, what Committee decides. I have already made it clear th no intention of being intransigent if I can get measure on to the statute book. Surely th Gentleman would accept that, if I do not keep m he and other hon. Members will have the chance against the Bill on Report and Third Reading.

Mr. MacKay: I am prepared to accept that the hon. Gentleman will not be intransigent, but not that those whom he places on the Committee will be at all reasonable. I have been in the House far too long to fall for that one.

In fairness, the hon. Member for Mossley Hill has made it clear that he resists the idea of medical exemptions. An amendment to allow such exemptions would appeal to many of my hon. Friends. Again, let me issue a warning. It would be very difficult to insert a suitable clause specifying the medical conditions that would lead to exemptions. The medical authorities tell us that there could be more than 2,000. That would be a nightmare, and it would be quite unacceptable. Therefore, I share the view of the hon. Member for Mossley Hill on that point, although for very different reasons.

Finally, I urge hon. Members to reject this most unfortunate Bill.

10.24 am

Mr. David Steel (Tweeddale, Ettrick and Lauderdale): As I was the promoter of the Abortion Act that went through the House in 1967 and as this Bill seeks to amend that Act, it is only right that I should speak on it, albeit briefly.

I appreciate the manner in which my hon. Friend the Member for Liverpool, Mossley Hill (Mr. Alton) introduced his Bill. He is not only my hon. Friend but a friend of mine, which is not always exactly the same thing in this place. Having said that, I cannot support the Bill, and I wish to tell the House why.

In the past few weeks, we have all been bombarded with postcards carrying enlarged photographs — me more than most, perhaps. One that I received from a constituent said:

"Mr. Steel, how do you think the human race managed to keep a balance for nearly 20 centuries without abortion?"

It is one of the great myths peddled by the supporters of this Bill that abortion came into being with the 1967 Act. The truth is that it did not. The House was motivated to change the law in 1967—mine was the seventh attempt in 15 years to use private Members' legislation to secure reform—by the appalling record of illegal abortions in Britain. No one knows the precise figures for illegal abortions, but the medical authorities vary in their estimates from 40,000 to 200,000 a year. They fell into two categories. Some people could get safe and comfortable abortions—the law for the rich—because if one had money and the intelligence to find one's way through all the medical specialists, one could get a quasi-legal abortion in a hospital. However, people who were not rich and intelligent went through the various back-street methods.

In the 1960s the House was faced with the knowledge that between 30 and 50 women died each year as a result of criminal abortion. That was only the tip of the iceberg. Many more were maimed or injured for life as a result of operations carried out in the back streets. The idea that abortion started with the 1967 Act is one of the myths that we must explode.

The other myth is that Britain has become the abortion capital of the world and that we have a high abortion rate. I am not in favour of a high abortion rate, but the House should be aware of the facts. According to the figures for 1984—the latest that I have—our abortion rate is 12·2 per thousand women of child-bearing age. That compares with 15·2 per thousand in France, 18·4 per thousand in Denmark, 19·1 per thousand in Italy and 27·4 per thousand in the United States. That is not taking into account those countries that unfortunately use abortion as a method of population control. In Romania, the rate is 90·9 per thousand and in the Soviet Union it is 181 per thousand. We need to keep a sense of perspective and recognise that, deplorable though the increase in abortions may be, our rate is by no means the highest in the world, as the opponents claim.

I have never come across anyone who is pro-abortion. Most of us who support the present legislation have always operated on the basis that abortion is the lesser of two evils in some circumstances. I hope that the Church of England will reprint its detailed and objective report, "Abortion — an Athical Discussion" published in 1965, which traces the ethics of abortion over the centuries. It said:

"This discussion will proceed . . . on the supposition that there may be cases in which, granted this general right of the foetus to live and develop, this right may be offset by other conflicting rights; and that the proper function of the criminal law is, in a restricted area, to regulate the adjustment of those rights when they cannot be, or are unlikely to be, adjusted by other means."

Mr. Cyril Smith (Rochdale): Will my right hon. Friend give way?

Mr. Steel: In a moment. It was on that ethical foundation that the Abortion Act 1967 was framed.

Mr. Smith: As my right hon. Friend chooses to quote the attitude expressed by the Church of England in 1965, will he tell us what is the attitude of the Synod of the Church of England to the Bill?

Mr. Steel: I was about to come to that point, because at that time most of the churches supported the reform of the law. Since then, various churches have monitored the operation of the Act and have expressed their views, which are all different. My church, the Church of Scotland, made it clear in a letter sent this week to all Scottish Members that it is a matter for individual Christian consciences. The letter says:

"You will no doubt be aware from debates at the General Assembly that there is division of opinion within the Church of Scotland on the issue of abortion as clearly there is throughout the country. In all of this, the church should urge that those engaged in political decisions should recognise that freedom should be given to all to act according to their conscience."

I think that that approach has been broadly adopted by the Church of England. Different committees in the churches—and hon. Members can speak for their own church—have produced different recommendations to the House.

It is our task to lay down the boundary of the criminal law. It is not our task to say in what precise circumstances any individual should or should not have an abortion. The House decided in 1967, despite the fact that some hon. Members argued then, as some hon. Members will argue today, that we should legislate for abortion at the request of the woman, that that was not to be the basis of the 1967 Act; nor is it. We did not legislate for abortion on demand.

My hon. Friend the Member for Mossley Hill complains that people are running profit-making clinics and using those clinics for making money mainly from patients imported from overseas. That was not intended in the spirit of the 1967 legislation. The answer to that complaint lies in the capacity of the Ministers in charge of the Health Departments to make regulations under the

[Mr. Steel]

Act and to say to such clinics that their licence will be withdrawn. There is no need to change the law in order to achieve the objective.

I now turn to the question of late abortions. I have read again the speeches made in 1967. I said at the time that if we were to have abortion at all, it was desirable that it should be done as early as possible. I very much regret that we still have a high rate of late abortions. They happen for two reasons. One is that administrative snarl-ups in the National Health Service very often delay the abortion operation. That is a matter to be argued on another day. The other reason is that, sadly, many women present very late for consideration of termination of pregnancy. That is especially so in the case of those who fear or have been tested for foetal abnormality — covered by a specific clause in the 1967 Act.

Ms. Clare Short (Birmingham, Ladywood): It is broadly agreed that a late abortion is a post-24 week abortion. The numbers of such abortions have come down massively, and last year there were only 29. Two thirds of those were because of severe foetal abnormality and the others concerned young girls and menopausal women. The adjustment is taking place and late abortion is being reduced, but I agree that we should do more about that.

Mr. Steel: The hon. Lady is talking about late abortion in a very precise sense after 24 weeks. I am talking about late abortions generally. In passing the 1967 Act I think that the whole House intended, and still wishes, that abortion should take place as early as possible.

The case of the handicapped is extremely emotive. I hope that the House will recognise that charities such as Mencap, which spends its whole existence caring for the handicapped, is among those organisations that oppose the provisions of my hon. Friend's Bill and support the present legislation. It is not true to suggest that those who believe that this is a proper provision in the law do not care for the disabled in our midst, who deserve the full consideration that we all give them.

We have had many letters from medical bodies urging us not to support the Bill. More impressive than those is a short letter that I received from a constituent who said:

"Having had a late termination (about 19-20 weeks) because it was discovered my baby had severe abnormalities I know what I am talking about. It was a disturbing event for me but not as bad as giving birth after 9 months to a baby the doctors said would not have lived anyway. Parents must have the choice to make their own decision in cases like this.

I know I personally could not have coped with a full term baby being born like this. I have had a healthy daughter since this tragic event but I am sure I would never have had the courage to become pregnant again if I knew that I would have to go 9 months and not be offered a late termination had the baby had the same abnormalities."

That letter is the answer to those who say that it is uncaring or unheeding to consider the termination of pregnancy in such circumstances. Nobody is forced to require this if that person does not believe that it is right. It is simply that the criminal law allows it to happen if the doctors, the mother, the father, think that these are the right circumstances.

Mr. Nicholas Bennett (Pembroke): Will the right hon. Gentleman tell us his view on the 92 per cent. of late abortions that are carried out on healthy children?

Mr. Steel: I am coming to the ques
limits, if that is what the hon. Gentleman
My hon. Friend the Member for Mossl
and I have seen it in much of the liter
support of his Bill, that other European
much more restricted cut-off point in thei
we have. My hon. Friend is misinforme
because that is not so. The laws of most
neighbours are different from ours becau
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stage.

I have a list which illustrates that.
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abortion is on request up to 12 weeks, but
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woman's health or for foetal abnormality

Therefore, one sees that other
approached their law in a different way
points mentioned by the promoters of the
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abortion on demand and other categories
come later. Because we have not approac
that way, we do not have a cut-off point
to make comparisons with the cut-off
legislation.

The committee of inquiry, under Mrs
into the working of abortion recommen
should be a restriction of abortion to 24 w
been endorsed by the Royal College of Ob
Gynaecologists. In 1967 we did not estab
limit but simply took the existing law,
(Preservation) Act 1929 as the basis for th
There is no cut-off limit in the 1967 Act
England and Wales is established as in 19
in Scotland. I think that it is fairly comm
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foetuses born as early as 24 weeks to survi
I support, as do the Prime Minister and th
Opposition — although that may not be
that commends it to the House—the 24-w

My hon. Friend's Bill seeks to do s
different from that. It does not seek t
18-week limit. That is because, every time
set down, the actual medical practice allows
safety. In medical practice, the present 28-
26-week limit. If the House establishes a sta
limit, in medical practice it would be a 22-w
Bill does not seek to establish an 18-week l
talks about the beginning of the 18th we
17-week limit and in medical practice will n
15 weeks.

I do not have the slightest doubt that, i
to pass into legislation, it would make a m
to the operation of the abortion law and
thousands of women of the opportunity
medical practitioner and consider the case f
of pregnancy. As I have said, I do not thin
us to tell women in particular circumsta

doctors, that they should or should not have an abortion. The Bill would cause deprivation and for that reason it should be opposed.

I agree with the point, perhaps not made very judiciously, by the hon. Member for Berkshire, East (Mr. MacKay) that the promoter of the Bill is entitled to choose the members of his Committee. There is no doubt that the Bill would not be substantially altered in Committee. But it will have to come back to us and we could alter it on Report. I have a bigger objection than that to voting for the Bill. The Second Reading should be a vote on the principle of the Bill. The principle of the Bill is not about tinkering with the upper medical limit as recommended by Mrs. Justice Lane or the royal college. It is a fundamental change to the Abortion Act 1967, and that is why I oppose it.

Finally, we are meeting at a time when, whether we are for or against the Bill, we are all concerned that, if at all possible, there should be a lower level of abortions. It is tragic that this year the family planning services, funded by the National Health Service, are facing cuts. I am told that this very day the Central Birmingham district health authority is negotiating with the Brook Advisory Centre for further cuts for the next three years, which will result in a 40 per cent. reduction in that centre's activities in the city of Birmingham. If we want, as I do, fewer unwanted abortions, let us have few unwanted pregnancies.

10.40 am

Sir Bernard Braine (Castle Point): Whatever view any of us take about this great issue, we are all profoundly grateful to the hon. Member for Liverpool, Mossley Hill (Mr. Alton) for opening the debate with a speech that was a model of lucidity and compassion.

It is a sad commentary on the way in which we conduct our affairs in this place that on every occasion since 1975 when a similar Bill has secured a Second Reading and has done so on the basis of principle, all have foundered because of procedural devices at one stage or another and because of lack of time. That is sad, because we know that there was and is now a substantial majority in the country in favour of abortion reform.

For over 20 years, I have been concerned at the way in which a civilised country such as ours has permitted, and indeed encouraged, the deliberate destruction every year of 150,000 unborn babies, most of whom, if born, would have been perfectly normal, healthy children. That was the point on which my hon. Friend the Member for Pembroke (Mr. Bennett) sought to gain a response from the right hon. Member for Tweeddale, Ettrick and Lauderdale (Mr. Steel), but the right hon. Gentleman misunderstood it. That point remains unanswered, but perhaps I shall be able to develop it a little later.

Abortion presents a dreadful dilemma for all of us, whatever view we take of the Bill. In cases where the mother's life is in danger or where there are indications of grave and permanent damage to the child if born, the majority accept that termination is justified. However, such tragic circumstances account for only a minute proportion of the total number of abortions carried out under the 1967 Act. Of the 2·6 million unborn babies destroyed up to the end of 1986, only 123 had to be sacrificed to save the mother's life. The overwhelming majority were authorised on social grounds—and many of us know precisely what that means: abortion on demand.

The Bill will not change that situation greatly. The Member for Mossley Hill is not proposing something will tear up the 1967 Act or change the position in material way. However, I readily concede that it change the climate and affect our attitudes to abo generally in important ways.

It follows then that the overwhelming proportio late abortions are performed on babies which if b would have been normal healthy children. There is one word for that in my book, and that is murder.

I agree that there is no magic about 18 weeks. The stages of human life are part of a continuum as, ind are our own lives after birth. Well before 18 weeks, foetus is recognisably human. The hon. Member Mossley Hill touched on that, and it should be basic to understanding of what the Bill is about.

An article in the *British Medical Journal* of 26 Jan 1980 put the facts very clearly. I read the article at the and have kept it. It states:

"Nine weeks after conception, the baby is well en formed to bend his fingers round an object in the palm o hand, in response to a touch on the sole of his foot he will his toes or bend his hips and knees to move away from touching object. At 12 weeks he can close his fingers thumb and he will open his mouth in response to pres applied at the base of the thumb. At first when his h touch his mouth the foetus turns his head away thoug mouth opens. Later the foetus may turn his head toward hands and even put a finger into his open mouth and such

Ms. Joan Ruddock (Lewisham, Deptford): Will right hon. Gentleman give way?

Sir Bernard Braine: No, I shall not give way. I mea discourtesy to the hon. Lady, but a great many Members wish to speak and I shall obey the injunctio the Chair. I would rather not give way because there be plenty of opportunity for hon. Members to speak, only if we restrain ourselves on interventions.

The facts are that at 12 to 14 weeks the auditory sy of the foetus is complete. At 18 weeks it can certa recognise its mother's voice and reacts to light as we to sound. It has learnt to put its hands before its eye shield them from moving light or over its ears to pro them against loud noise.

Yet, although the miracle of human life has develo to that point at 18 weeks, the human foetus has no ri at that stage. Our abortion law, unlike those of o civilised countries, permits thousands of perfectly no healthy children of that gestation to be destroyed, not I consider gestational age to be of great importance w considering the moral implications of abortion, or eve viability.

There is precious little sense on this subject where existing law is concerned. As has been said, procurin abortion at 28 weeks has been recognised since 1929 a crime of "child destruction". However, we now know at 23 or 24 weeks babies born prematurely are capabl surviving, and do so survive. The only difference betw babies born at 24 weeks, or for that matter after 28 we and those born at 18 weeks, is that the latter are ama Almost everything else is the same.

Therefore, the question that the Bill's opponents m face is surely, "Why should it not also be a crime to des an unborn baby at the gestational age of 18 weeks?" T question must be answered, because late abortions, outlawing of which is the purpose of the Bill, cle involve the destruction of sentient human beings, who

[Sir Bernard Braine]

only react to outside stimuli and can feel pain, but who have none of the protection that they would have only a few weeks later. Where is the logic and the morality of that? The question must be answered by those who oppose the Bill.

Mrs. Audrey Wise (Preston) *rose*——

Miss Mowlam *rose*——

Sir Bernard Braine: It is a lottery—*[Interruption.]* No, as I said a little earlier, I must set an example. I am not going to give way.

Mrs. Wise *rose*——

Sir Bernard Braine: I would love to debate this endlessly because I feel deeply about it, but if I give way I shall be setting a bad example and will deprive those hon. Members who in some cases have a great deal of experience of the opportunity to express their view.

It is a lottery as to whether or not, because of the late stage of its development, the baby of 18 weeks or more will be aborted in the most cruel way with its limbs torn from its body and its head crushed, as many doctors and nurses have testified. That revolting procedure — the House must face up to what late abortion really means — is described in detail by Dr. Margaret White, a general practitioner, magistrate and very distinguished member of the General Medical Council, in her book entitled "Two Million Silent Killings". She explains that with late abortions, the baby is already of a size and its bones have hardened to such an extent that:

> "With the pliers the baby is torn limb from limb and pulled out in pieces. The skull is crushed, as it is much too large and too firm to be pulled out intact. It is the unpleasant duty of the nurse to assemble the broken parts of the body, to be sure that no pieces are left behind in the womb."

At that stage, too, the mother is not unaffected. Some of the most poignant letters I have received over the years have been from women pressurised into abortions. Long afterwards, they suffer both physical and emotional damage. Only last week I received a letter from one of my constituents, whom I do not know. She had previously had an abortion and then had another, this time at 19 weeks. She wrote:

> "I did not do it lightly—nevertheless, I made the choice —the wrong one. It was so easy to get an abortion. If I had known the true facts of what happens to the baby being aborted, I would definitely never have had it done. Also if the Abortion Bill limited it to 18 weeks then my child would be alive today. It has left a scar forever."

May I now deal with what is probably the most emotive argument about the Bill and one that is often misrepresented. The hon. Member for Mossley Hill has made it clear that the Bill will not affect termination of pregnancies where severe disability incompatible with sustaining life has been diagnosed, and I am glad that he has done that. Indeed, the Bill will protect those babies whose disability is compatible with life and is treatable. We have to be careful to distinguish between the two.

Some of the most gifted, delightful and lovable people in our society were born handicapped and might have been deprived of the right to live if their abnormality had been detected before birth as it can be nowadays. In our hearts all of us know that to be true. Who among us would not have been moved by the story in *The Times* on 20 January about the award of the Whitbread Book of the Year prize to a young spastic boy who can neith well? He cannot move himself, and attached to his forehead. He used his given for him by his mother, to handicapped and against abortion.

Mr. Wigley *rose*——

Sir Bernard Braine: This young ma one of the most prestigious literary priz offer. He said——

Mr. Wigley *rose*——

Madam Deputy Speaker (Miss Order. The right hon. Member for C Braine) has said that he is not prepare

Sir Bernard Braine: He said:

> "Tonight is the happiest night of my l would have missed if the doctors had not September day long ago. Can freedom handicapped man? Can yessing be so diffic give a baby a chance at life, man treads up silences him before he can draw one bre fresh air?"

Those of us who support the Bill m I believe that I am sensitive—to the vi want to be sure that it will not bar the w in those cases where it can be established is likely to be so severe that the child, incapable of sustaining life in any meani medical technology—some of us have closely in recent years — comes to certainly not stood still since the Abortio 21 years ago.

Many of the disabilities that oppo regularly cite as requiring the test of a now be detected much earlier, indeed as of 10th week of pregnancy, by a variety may have to find—I am ready to join formula that will safeguard the position whom tests have begun before the 18th w some reason are not complete before th matter to which we must address ourselv That is the message I have received from hon. and hon. Friends.

I know that we are being told by the Obstetricians and Gynaecologists, the Association and other learned bodie opposed to the Bill. However, before we f in considering the weight of their opinio for the House to realise that it is not share of gynaecologists. A recent survey gynaecologists, accounting for 40 per c involved in that specialty in Britain, revea supported the recommendation of the R the BMA that the upper limit for aborti weeks, but a substantial majority, nearl 64 per cent. — would like to see the abortion reduced from 28 weeks to 20 w exceptions made when the mother's life is severe foetal abnormality.

There is much more I should like to s many others who wish to speak. Let me again that the Bill does not undermi principles of the 1967 Act. As one who ha of the debates in 1966 and 1967, I must ec by the right hon. Member for Tweedd

Lauderdale that it was never his intention, nor was it the intention of Parliament at the time, to legislate for what we have today, which is virtually abortion on demand.

It is right to consider what should be done about babies likely to be born with severe handicaps, but in our compassion for all who are likely to suffer from some handicap, we should not allow ourselves to forget that the overwhelming majority of babies being aborted at present at 18 weeks or later would, if born and not destroyed because they are momentarily inconvenient, be perfectly normal, healthy children. Those children, too, cry out for our compassion. For that reason alone, the Bill deserves the support of the House.

10.57 pm

Dr. Lewis Moonie (Kirkcaldy): I am not going to quote reams of statistics today. I am aware that the time is limited. Moreover, I am a statistician as a result of part of my medical training and I know that statistics can be manipulated by people who are not experts to say whatever they like, and can be manipulated even more readily by those who are experts. Therefore, it is specious to quote reams of data at each other today.

I should like to go back to the start of my medical career, when I was a student in 1968. That is when I first experienced the workings of the Abortion Act 1967. The first girl I saw was 15 years old. She did not really know what it was all about and she did not understand what happened. She just knew that she wanted to go back to a normal life and that she did not want to bear a child, and she did not. The other woman was in her early 40s with a large number of children. She could not face the reality of bearing another child and she, too, was relieved of that burden. That is what the 1967 Act gave women in this country. It gave them an element of choice.

Having started clinical work in 1968, I have no direct experience of illegal abortions. Illegal abortions in this country effectively ended with the passing of the 1967 Act. I have heard plenty of reports from older doctors and nurses about what went on before, and I do not want to see a return to that.

I believe that the Bill concerns certain basic principles. First, is abortion a moral or an ethical thing to do? If so, who should decide whether an abortion should be carried out? Thirdly, what constraints should society place on that decision—I believe that the sponsor of the Bill would like us to believe that that is the major concern of his Bill.

I believe that abortion is both moral—that is, right for the individual woman to decide upon—and ethical: it is a correct procedure for a doctor to perform at a woman's request. At present, the decision to carry out an abortion is given to the medical profession alone to make, at the request of the woman. I believe that a change in that practice is long overdue. The constraints relate to the reason for the abortion and the age of the foetus at the time the abortion is carried out. Surely those two issues are the nub of the argument today.

We all agree that there should be an upper limit beyond which an abortion, the destruction of a foetus, cannot and should not take place. At present, the law places that limit at 28 weeks and medical practice effectively places it at 26 weeks. The Bill would reduce that limit to 18 weeks, or, as has been clearly illustrated, effectively closer to 16 weeks. I believe that that would be wrong, and my belief is supported by the vast majority of my profession, and, I believe, by society.

I could quote reams of examples about this m conversations I have had with women, women treated or whom I have referred for an abortion du medical career. I could quote letters that I have r from my colleagues in branches of our profes including gynaecologists—pointing out the dama will be done not only to women who are at risk to a handicapped foetus — I accept that they minority — but to many young women if the passed. By young, I do not mean girls under 16. Fo girls under the age of 21 — single, possibly intelligence and in desperate social circumstance possibility of having a child is a serious pros handicapped or not. For many women who have borne children, a further burden may be more th are prepared to bear and more than society should them to bear.

Women have complex reasons for delaying the d that they take to seek an abortion. I believe that should reflect that and should give them the cha come forward at a later stage, post 18 weeks. I do any case for depriving them of their right to unde abortion if they so choose. I believe that their supersede those of the foetus at the developments that we are discussing.

I do not believe that we should be in the busi bringing more and more unwanted children in society. I believe that, ultimately, a woman must h last say on whether she wants to bear a handicappe It is a specious argument to look at handicapped c who exist now and say that it would be wrong to kil Of course it would be wrong, but it is right and pro the woman and her husband to be able to make the "I will not bear a handicapped child." We are in of taking away that right. We are not taking away th of an already born handicapped child to live. children are entitled to all the compassion, underst and help that society can give. So often, society do offer that help because we are not prepared to p money into that care.

I believe that it is high time that we looked workings of the 1967 Act. For what it is worth, m is that women should have open access to abortio if we must use the pejorative term, to "aborti demand". I call it "abortion on request" and it sho carried out up to an agreed stage of about 12 w believe that, on the present grounds, women sho entitled to have an abortion up to roughly 24 wee

The system also needs overhauling. It is a syste lets girls down and does not give them the armame need to make the decisions that would stop a pre in the first place. We need to look at the availabi facilities for abortion, to ensure that women do no to experience the delays that we know occur in many Above all, we need to look at our attitude towards and women's rights.

It is time for a formal review of the system, no ad hoc measure brought before the House in the f a private Member's Bill. We need something alo lines of the Warnock commission report on which have an opportunity to vote later in the session. Tha correct, reasonable and civilised way in which to about a change in the law on abortion, and I belie that is long overdue.

The Bill is not the way to make a reasoned cha the 1967 Act. Frankly, I do not trust the Bill

[Dr. Lewis Moonie]

supporters to accept any amendment. They are not in the business of providing compromises, they are in the business of stopping abortion at 18 weeks. I do not trust them and I hope that others who have listened to this debate will likewise vote against the Bill to defeat it today.

11.5 am

Dame Jill Knight (Birmingham, Edgbaston): The hon. Member for Kirkcaldy (Dr. Moonie) made it clear that he completely agrees with abortion on demand at every stage and the the foetus has no rights — [HON. MEMBERS: "Abortion on request."] — well, if the House prefers, "Abortion on request". I see no difference between the two. The hon. Gentleman is entitled to his opinion and I am entitled to mine. The hon. Gentleman is not entitled to assume that anything in particular will happen in Committee. He cannot predict that now. There will be people on the Committee who are anxious about the principle of late abortion. However, the sponsor of the Bill has said that he is not intransigent and that he will listen to all the arguments. Obviously the hon. Member for Liverpool, Mossley Hill (Mr. Alton) wants his Bill to get through, even if there are amendments at a later stage.

If the hon. Member for Kirkcaldy is so deep in the abortion business, he must know, when he tells the House that he does not want a return to illegal abortions, that such abortions do not happen after 18 weeks because it is too dangerous to carry them out.

Mrs. Mahon: Will the hon. Lady give way?

Dame Jill Knight: I will not give way, because there are so many people who wish to speak.

Almost all the flak against the Bill has been to do with handicapped children.

Mr. Allan Rogers (Rhondda): The hon. Lady should start telling the truth.

Dame Jill Knight: I strongly resent being told that I am not speaking the truth. *[Interruption.]*

Mr. Rogers: On a point of order, Madam Deputy Speaker. I said the hon. Lady was not speaking the truth because she deliberately distorted what was said by my hon. Friend the Member for Kirkcaldy (Dr. Moonie).

Madam Deputy Speaker: In this House we are all responsible for what we say. The hon. Lady is interpreting the speech of the hon. Member for Kirkcaldy as she believes that she heard it.

Dame Jill Knight: Almost all the flak against the Bill has been to do with handicapped children. No one who has not had to cope with a physically handicapped son or daughter can possibly understand the burden that that imposes. I have no doubt that that care often takes a terrible toll on a family. However, the overwhelming number of babies aborted after 18 weeks, about which we are concerned today, are not handicapped. They are perfectly normal children whose only crime is that their mothers do not want them.

Today we are in danger of concentrating on the 7·8 per cent. of handicapped children aborted after 18 weeks and ignoring the 92·2 per cent. of perfectly normal children who are so aborted. The postcards that many supporters of the Bill have sent out have already been mentioned and have been described as an emotional argument. My goodness, there are emotional argu
because all the opposition to the Bill
and advanced about handicapped chi
the major feature of the opposition

It should be understood that m
about perfectly normal children.

Mr. Wigley: Will the hon. Lady

Dame Jill Knight: For the be
Members, I should make it clear that
to allow them to make their speeche

Should we continue to sacrifice
normal children for that 7·8 per cent
abortion if the child is likely to be se
perhaps the figure of 7·8 per cent. sh
per cent., and that is a conservative

What about that 5 per cent.? Sho
a club foot, deafness, blindness or a
mean that the child should be abort
reason to get rid of a child?

New techniques are being introdu
allow a pregnant woman to know
is becoming earlier all the time — v
handicapped. A CVS test is carried
weeks; ultrasound scanning is comin
quite some time, has been giving
information about the unborn c
amniocentesis. We shall shortly be a
there is a blemished child in the womb
give in the Bill. If not, and if there is
may not know until it is too late, I a
point will be considered most careful

We must ask whether we think
child——

Ms. Harriet Harman (Peckham):
accept that the opponents of the Bil
foetuses with severe abnormalities sh
to continue to term? We belie
abnormalities are discovered it shou
right to decide whether to continue
that she should not be forced, on pain
to continue the pregnancy.

Dame Jill Knight: The hon. Lady
because that point is covered by it. I
considered and incorporated by the
Mossley Hill.

If we send out from the House
handicapped people have no right to
serious matter, and that is what peop
talked to handicapped people out
[Interruption.] Clearly, that is the
House sticks to the idea that a handica
destroyed, many handicapped people
concerned.

If we think that it is right for the Ho
terrible message, perhaps we should su
believe that because God, fate or anyt
a child so much, and that we in the Ho
it the right to live, we should support

All help, support and counsell
assistance should be given to pare
handicapped child. I do not believe th
given at the moment. Some doctors
helpful to the parents of handicapped

nts on both sides,
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e should not deny
e Bill.
g and practical
coping with a
sufficient help is
ve been less than
ildren; one could

give many examples of that. We should do our best to help and support women and their husbands with that burden. It is true that blemished children often give great happiness to their parents; they often achieve a very special success; my right hon. Friend the Member for Castle Point (Sir B. Braine) gave such an example.

With regard to the 92 per cent. of perfectly normal children whom the Bill seeks to protect, no one dreamed, when the Abortion Act 1967 was debated in the House, of the huge numbers of children who would be destroyed under its provisions. The figures that the right hon. Member for Tweeddale, Ettrick and Lauderdale (Mr. Steel) gave were extremely suspect, because many of the countries that he purported to give figures from have no way of collecting such statistics.

During the debate in 1966, it was never said that there were as many as 200,000 illegally aborted children in Britain. We considered that point very carefully at that time, but it was virtually impossible to discover how many illegal abortions there were. We could say only that a certain proportion of illegal abortions finished in hospital with remedial treatment. On that basis, the figure was about 10,000 or 20,000. Currently, there are about 170,000 abortions a year. That figure shames me, and it should shame those who introduced that legislation. Children can be saved today who could not have been saved at that time. The caravan has moved on. The law should be reconsidered and changed. The public are undoubtedly concerned about abortions.

Those who support the Bill are not all zealots. We are not all—perish the thought—Roman Catholics. We are concerned, and we care deeply. We believe that contraception, not abortion, is the answer. We care about the children who are presently dying; we care about the women who often suffer after abortion; we care about the implications of a society that thinks that handicapped people should be destroyed — *[Interruption.]* I am worried about the opinion that a handicapped person has a right to live only as long as its mother wants it. The hon. Member for Peckham (Ms. Harman) cannot deny that that is what she is putting forward. A handicapped child has the right to live and that right should not be dependent solely upon whether its mother wants it. [AN HON. MEMBER: "What about Mencap?"] Figures can be bandied about, but the arguments given by all the organisations are balanced for and against.

The argument often used against the Bill is that a woman has the right to choose. We have never been so well informed about contraception as we are today, so woman has the right to choose not to become pregnant. Once she has become pregnant she does not have an automatic right to destroy the child in her womb, the child has rights too. The child has rights in law. There have been cases in which people have sued on behalf of the unborn child and won.

Choice should not be given only to one person. There is no one to speak for the child but us. We have a heavy responsibility in that regard. Because the child's voice cannot be heard by all of us, some of us must speak for him or her. That is what I am doing today and that is why I shall support the Bill.

11.19 am

Rev. Martin Smyth (Belfast, South): I have some sympathy with some of the arguments advanced by the hon. Member for Birmingham, Edgbaston (Dame J. Knight), yet as a woman she may have put another import on the Bill. I welcome the opportunity of spea especially of replying to the hon. Member for East (Mr. MacKay) who first spoke against th He spoke about not trusting those on the Commi Bill were passed today, and he made tremendou the question of choice. Representing peopl Province who have voted in different ways for ch he represents the Northern Ireland Office which listen to the choice of the voters, he had fair gall i that point.

Some of us are aware that some people wou see the 1967 Act extended to Northern Irelan Committee it would not be beyond the capabiliti Members to seek to insert a clause to th Therefore, I take this opportunity to repeat tha large, the bulk of people in Northern Ireland, ir of their religious outlook or political convictions desire to see the 1967 Act extended to Northern

Today we are debating the Alton Bill. The r Member for Tweeddale, Ettrick and Lauderd Steel), the Leader of the Liberal party—I had to make sure that I did not make a mistake, beca change so quickly—pointed out that we were the principle of the Bill. He imported into the motive which is not on the face of the Bill, thus from the principle of the Bill. For that reaso basically arguing against himself. I understoo agreed with a reduction in the upper age abortions. That is the principle of the Bill, and it.

I welcomed several of the quiet arguments a Bill which have put on the record issues which faced. However, we are debating in a moral clim must be understood. We have moved into a mor where it is tempting to call evil good. A decade example, teenagers used a lovely word when enjoying themselves. They said, "That's fab unfortunately, the manipulators of opinion are change a word of approval into an acronym Alton's Bill.

Many people who may have an open mind on are nevertheless convinced that we should ha counselling which gives people a choice. I re constituency where, thanks to the fine work o movement, carers have provided a hostel whe women are given a choice and the back-up to r choice calmly, rather than being drawn into the of what I call this disposable generation.

When we speak of choice we must also reme choice for life of those who have the potential is ludicrous to spend millions of pounds, correc judgment, on helping doctors in perinatal case youngsters a chance of life and at the same time a climate of opinion which has allowed nearly human beings with potential to be denied such

For those reasons, I support the principle of th I leave it to the Committee to work out the contention on which people believe that there movement.

11.25 am

Mr. Peter Thurnham (Bolton, North-East): have liked to start by congratulating the hon. M Liverpool, Mossley Hill (Mr. Alton) on his goo in being chosen third in the ballot, but I am sor has proposed this Bill, which is so strongly op

[Mr. Peter Thurnham]

hon. Members and many people outside the House who are so vulnerable in society. The hon. Gentleman is widely respected for the sincerity of his views and he is on record as saying that he is opposed to all abortions and to discrimination against the disabled. But his Bill does not meet either of those objectives.

The Bill will fail, because the hon. Gentleman has failed to strike a balance. This is a difficult issue, on which we must balance our feelings of compassion against our judgment. He has failed by taking the figure of 18 weeks. As has been pointed out, this is not an 18-week, but a 17-week Bill, which in practice and in medical terms will mean 15 weeks. There does not seem to be any reason for choosing 18 weeks. Perhaps the hon. Gentleman had a coloured photograph which made him decide on 18 weeks. Medical opinion is that the foetus is fully formed at 10 weeks, so the argument about the formation of the foetus would apply equally well at 10 weeks.

The hon. Gentleman said that in his judgment 18 weeks was about right, but he fails to understand that modern medical diagnosis has its greatest capability at that stage. Ultrasound scanning equipment—the United Kingdom is a leading country in the use of this equipment—is at its most effective at 18 to 20 weeks.

Mr. Alton: The hon. Gentleman is well aware that the new developments of chorionic villus sampling, combined with ultrasound scanning and amniocentesis, mean that, increasingly, the thresholds are being pushed back. Although I have already conceded that there is an argument on the crucial question of whether or not a person has the right to decide to terminate where there is a detected disability, will the hon. Gentleman also say a word about the 92 per cent. of late abortions that occur after 18 weeks and which involve perfectly healthy children?

Mr. Thurnham: The hon. Gentleman will know that there are many reasons for late abortions. The Bill does not deal with the 95 per cent. of abortions that occur before 18 weeks, so it fails to meet the hon. Gentleman's principal objective, which arises from the fact that he is wholly against abortion. *[Interruption.]*

There are many reasons for the 5 per cent. of abortions that occur after 18 weeks, but a principal reason is disability. Professor Stuart Campbell of King's college hospital has said that his practice would be destroyed by the application of a Bill such as this. The hon. Gentleman says that he does not want to discriminate against disability, yet the Bill discriminates against many disabled people because they are in danger of giving birth to children who will carry a genetic disorder and babies whom they do not want to bring into this world, and they will be denied that choice.

Mr. Nicholas Bennett: My hon. Friend cannot have it both ways. The people bringing in the Bill do so because they want to tackle a particular social abuse of late abortions, and we have clearly kept to that. Then we are accused of not spreading the Bill wider, when we are trying to obtain maximum support in the House for the issue. It is not true that disability is the main reason. Ninety-two per cent. of all abortions are on healthy children on social grounds, which is the issue that my hon. Friend has not addressed.

Mr. Thurnham: The hon. Member for Mossley Hill said that he thought 18 weeks was about right. Yet that is highly discriminatory against disability. He said that he is against discrimination on the grounds of disability. He said in his briefing note that homes can be found for handicapped children. It is a monstrous lie to suggest that families are queuing up to take handicapped children. Hundreds of severely handicapped children are in residential homes up and down the country, and families cannot be found for them. The hon. Gentleman must be aware that the Catholic St. Margaret's Adoption Society has compromised its own beliefs in this area and come out with an extraordinary reported statement:

> "Because of the extreme difficulty in placing severely handicapped children with families, we are taking the unusual stance of allowing divorcees to adopt only severely handicapped children that no one else wants if they promise never to marry again."

If that is not discrimination, I do not know what is.

The Bill is opposed by many organisations, including Mencap and ASBAH. We were told about a Gallup poll of gynaecologists, but it was a dishonest poll. It did not refer to spina bifida, which is one of the most serious disabilities that can be detected principally by ultrasound scanning after 18 weeks. The Bill lacks compassion. Why should mothers be forced to carry a child with spina bifida, when 70 per cent. of such children die in agony before five, and have to be sedated because of their pain? Must mothers be forced to go on with such pregnancies? Mothers who opt for termination in such cases do so out of love and for the sake of having a future healthy pregnancy. They would never risk another pregnancy again unless they had this choice.

Why does the hon. Gentleman want to make such a private decision into a public criminal act? He seems ignorant of the fact that modern medical practice has made it possible not only to ensure survival for some of the children who can be born at 24 weeks, but to pick up many more of these disorders, of which there are more than 2,000 or 3,000 of a structural kind, and 3,000 genetic and chromosomal. Many families who have the misfortune to have a severely handicapped child find that they cannot cope. It is a mirage to suggest that there are queues of people who want to take such children.

My wife and I chose to adopt a handicapped child who had been shunted from pillar to post for six years. It was only by chance that we saw him advertised in a newspaper. We chose, of our own free will, to take the child. Other hon. Members could choose to adopt a handicapped child, too. Interestingly, the latest figures show that there were 648 abortions after 18 weeks on the grounds of foetal handicap—648 abnormal foetuses that would otherwise have been born if the hon. Gentleman had had his way. That would allow one handicapped child for each hon. Member, excluding Madam Deputy Speaker and myself. If hon. Members would not find it convenient to adopt a handicapped child, why are they imposing that on other people?

Mr. D. N. Campbell-Savours (Workington): Can I explain to the hon. Gentleman something that has not been made clear to the House? These matters will be dealt with in Committee. If, by some freak of circumstance, they are not, despite what has been said by the hon. Gentleman, Mr. Speaker can, at his discretion, allow on Report an amendment to secure precisely the same objective in the

same language as could be effected in Committee. So, at the end of the day, the House will take a decision by majority vote on these matters.

Mr. Thurnham: That is the single point in the Bill to which I take the greatest exception. The hon. Member for Mossley Hill, could have put that clause in his Bill if he had believed it. He has said that he believes that 18 weeks is about right. I point out that the burden of having a handicapped child——

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

Mr. Thurnham: I have already given way several times.

The private financial burden of caring for a severely handicapped child has been estimated by the courts as £500,000. If one takes into account the cost to the state of the statutory provision, the cost could well be another £500,000. The school fees for the school to which, as the hon. Member for Mossley Hill well knows, my child goes, are £15,000 a year—twice those for a school such as Eton. Why should the House consider forcing people to accept such a burden if they do not want it.

The hon. Gentleman seems to regard suffering as a virtue. We have heard various speakers say that there is some great virtue in bringing up a handicapped child. No one should wish a child to be handicapped because, in some strange way, they can gain from that.

We all want fewer abortions, but not at this price. The way to fewer abortions is through education and understanding, not through criminal sanctions on private decisions. The country in Europe with the lowest rate of abortions is Holland, where the laws are most liberal. That is the example the hon. Gentleman should study if he wants fewer abortions. Hon. Members who are unsure how to vote, but in favour of the change to 24 weeks that has been recommended by various bodies, should reject this 17-week Bill as far too extreme, in favour of a private Member's Bill that is now in the House of Lords. It changes the existing law from 28 to 24 weeks. Hon Members should tell their constituents that they are rejecting this extreme 17-week Bill in favour of Lord Houghton's Bill in the House of Lords, which is currently in Committee. I remind my hon. Friends that the Conservative Women's Group came out against this Bill.

Even a 24-week Bill needs careful consideration. Of the 29 abortions carried out after 24 weeks, two were in Bolton. One was for a mother who had previously refused diagnosis and screening, and was found to be carrying a baby with one head and two bodies. The hon. Member for Mossley Hill would force that to go through——

Mr. Alton *rose*——

Mr. Thurnham: I shall not give way.

Hon. Members: Give way.

Mr. Alton: I trust that the hon. Gentleman will withdraw that remark. My Bill makes it absolutely clear that, if a child is incapable of sustaining life, as in the example he just gave, it will be excluded by the terms of the Bill.

Mr. Thurnham: The hon. Gentleman's Bill uses the words,

"life . . . independently sustained".

What does he say about the baby featured on the front page of a newspaper recently which was born with two heads and is living? It is showing it is capable of independent life. Would he force a mother to go through with such a pregnancy because the baby is capable of life?

Mr. Alton: In those circumstances, of course, it would not be the intention of my Bill to force someone to carry a child. If the hon. Gentleman is being sincere in his argument, he will ensure that it is put in Committee. He will now say something, too, about the 92 per cent. of late abortions carried out on perfectly healthy children.

Mr. Thurnham: I cannot accept that from the hon. Gentleman. He had plenty of time, when thinking about the Bill, to put into it the words that should be there. He has used wording that suggests that if the baby is capable of life the pregnancy should go on.

This monstrous Bill has been described by the royal colleges as inhumane. It hits at the most vulnerable people in society. If hon. Members want to vote for change, they should reject the Bill in favour of the 24-week Bill that is on its way through the House.

11.39 am

Mr. Cyril Smith (Rochdale): I compliment my hon. Friend the Member for Liverpool, Mossley Hill (Mr. Alton) on winning a prize in the annual raffle which allowed him to promote a private Member's Bill. I compliment him also on his courage in selecting this subject for a Bill and sympathise with him in the considerable personal abuse, and physical abuse to his home, to which he has been subjected as a consequence of promoting the Bill.

Those who oppose the Bill talk about the right to choose. Parliament has a right to choose, too. I hope that Parliament will be given that right by allowing the Bill to have a Second Reading and then discussing amendments that should be made to it during its passage through the House. There was a rumour that many petitions would be presented this morning, and I am glad that it did not happen.

During the 16 years that I have been a Member of the House, I have supported every attempt to amend the Abortion Act 1967, and it is interesting to note that all of them have been defeated on procedure, not on a straight vote. That is why I say that Parliament has a right to choose. I hope that this time the opponents of the Bill will allow it to be voted on at all its stages so that we may know the will of Parliament.

On "Question Time" last night, in which I appeared, and again this morning, we have heard people say that the Bill is the thin edge of the wedge and that if it is accepted we will attempt to introduce another. Perhaps that is because we have rumbled a few people and have decided that we are as entitled to use procedure as are those hon. Members who have tried to block legislation on the matter. It will be for Parliament to decide whether it wishes to pass another Bill. That is democracy. That is what the law is about.

On the argument about the right to choose, what about the rights of the unborn child? Since it cannot exercise those rights for itself, is it not the job of the elected Parliament to exercise them on its behalf? It is the job of Parliament to protect the rights of the unborn child, and it is the right of Parliament to legislate on the matter.

I have heard all the arguments against the Bill. Some have already been exercised this morning and more will be

[Mr. Cyril Smith]

exercised as the day proceeds. Some are perfectly valid arguments, but some are absolute rubbish, including the suggestion that if the Bill became law we would return to back-street abortions. Before 1967, back-street abortions were usually carried out earlier in the pregnancy, not after 18 weeks. As nearly 50 per cent. of abortions that take place after 18 weeks are carried out on women who are shipped to Britain by air and sea because they cannot obtain abortions in their own countries, Britain has become the country of back-street abortions for the rest of Europe. In 1986, of the 8,276 abortions after 18 weeks, 3,688 were carried out on women who came to Britain from abroad.

The opponents of the Bill tell us that many late abortions are carried out on girls aged under 16 who were scared or did not recognise their pregnancy. That is absolute rubbish. The fact is that, in 1986, only 4·7 per cent. of abortions on residents from 18 weeks onwards were on girls aged under 16.

One thing is certain: 88 per cent. of abortions after 18 weeks are carried out in private clinics for private profit. It is staggering to hear what Labour Members say about the Bill. All these people who are supposed to be ardent Socialists want to propagate a system that allows abortion for private profit—in private clinics not on the NHS—with millions of pounds changing hands. That is the system which these marvellous Socialists, on the Front Bench as well as the Back Benches, want to propagate. What sort of Socialists are they? They talk rubbish.

We are told that 18 weeks was picked out of the air. By 18 weeks, a foetus is fully formed, with all major organs, except its lungs, functioning.

What of the handicapped child? I confess that that is the most difficult area to defend, but first let me deal with a fact which the hon. Member for Bolton, North-East (Mr. Thurnham) refused to acknowledge. In 1986, of 8,276 abortions after 18 weeks, only 7·8 per cent. were performed because the child was likely to be born handicapped. Despite all their pious speeches in defence of the handicapped, hon. Members ignore the 92 per cent. who were denied life because they were aborted after 18 weeks. They refuse to face that fact.

It must be wrong to discriminate against an individual at any stage of life simply because he or she does not meet the standards of physical or mental perfection set by others. We who support the Bill are accused of a lack of compassion. Is it compassionate to take the life of a handicapped child? I repeat that 92 per cent. of abortions after 18 weeks are carried out not because the child was likely to be born handicapped. Of the remaining 7·8 per cent. of abortions some would continue to be allowed under the Bill. Most abnormalities can be detected in fewer than 18 weeks—indeed, in 10 weeks—with the results being made available after a maximum of two weeks. Indeed, I put it to the Minister that a death certificate should be issued after an abortion that is carried out after 18 weeks stating the precise cause of death.

I support the Bill because I believe in human life. As the right hon. Member for Castle Point (Sir B. Braine) said, abortion after 18 weeks is murder in the womb.

My right hon. Friend the Member for Tweeddale, Ettrick and Lauderdale (Mr. Steel) said that he was not sure about the view of the Church of England. He quoted the Church of England when introducing his Bill. Yesterday, I and other hon. Members received a letter saying that the General Synod of the Church of England —I hope that I have the correct figures—voted by 24 to two in favour of the Bill. If it was right for my right hon. Friend to quote the Church of England in 1965, it is right for me to quote it in 1988. Again, 66 per cent. of gynaecologists were in favour. Some hon. Members may shout, "It was phoney. How many were done?" We can all quote those who are in favour. Opponents of the Bill quote the BMA. I do not want to embarrass my right hon. Friend —that has never been part of my function—but, in 1970, he said:

"they"—

that is, doctors—

"cannot dictate to Parliament what should be the provisions of an Abortion Act."—[*Official Report*, 13 February 1970; Vol. 795, c. 1693.]

Of course, that was when they were agin him. Now that they are for him—at least, he thinks that they are for him—he is in favour of quoting the BMA and doctors. But the gynaecologists' opinion poll — it was a representative sample—showed that well over 60 per cent. were in favour of today's Bill.

A child is entitled to have life. A child is entitled to be given the right to breathe, the right to love and the right to live. I am not a Roman Catholic, but I claim to be a Christian. This is a matter of human and Christian concern. That is why I hope that the Bill will be given a Second Reading and why I commend it to the House.

11.50 am

Sir Charles Morrison (Devizes): The hon. Member for Rochdale (Mr. Smith) seemed to imply that abortion was available on demand. If that is so, the existing law is being broken, and action can be taken. Like other hon. Members, I dislike abortion. I am naturally prejudiced against it. Nevertheless, I shall vote against the Bill.

What matters is not so much what I think or whether I am for or against abortion, but in what medical and social circumstances should abortion be allowed. If the law does not appear to be reasonable, there is bound to be a reversion to back-street abortionists, with all the health dangers that that implies. On the one hand, the law should discourage abortion, but, on the other hand, it should accept medical realities and be merciful towards social realities. In short, the law must represent a balance, and the Abortion Act 1967 succeeded in doing that.

On the basis of what information I as a layman have been able to gather since the matter came up for discussion again, I agree with the hon. Member for Kirkcaldy (Dr. Moonie). In a perfect world, there is much to be said for freedom of choice up to 12 weeks, but thereafter abortion should be allowed up to 24 weeks but only for medical reasons. The trouble is that we do not live in a perfect world.

If every young girl were intelligent, decisive, understanding, aware and rich and could effectively communicate with her parents, if every woman over 40 who became pregnant without wishing to do so realised immediately what happened, if every woman at times of stress could be rational, if the National Health Service were perfect, and if doctors were infallible in judgment and opinion, the restrictions to 12 and 24 weeks might be acceptable. But that is not the world in which we live. We live in a world in which some women of all ages are frightened, unwise, indecisive, uncertain, anguished, full of

second thoughts, and impoverished, and in which the National Health Service and, occasionally, doctors are not perfect.

A 12-week limit on freedom of choice would be too restrictive and would be certain to lead to more illegal abortions. A 24-week limit for medical reasons could rule out a small number of the most necessary abortions.

We have been reminded by the right hon. Member for Tweeddale, Ettrick and Lauderdale (Mr. Steel) that, in any case, the 1967 Act operates in conjunction with the Infant Life (Preservation) Act 1929. That Act is the source of the 28-week limit and presumes that a foetus of 28 weeks is capable of being born alive. However, if it can be shown that a foetus of a lower age—27 weeks or even less—is similarly capable and is aborted, an offence would have been committed, because the life of a child capable of being born alive would have been destroyed.

The 1929 Act appears to me to be very strong. I have been reminded by the Library that it draws a firm distinction between

"capable of being born alive"

and

"capable of surviving".

It may be the case that, apart from healthy babies, some handicapped babies are

"capable of being born alive",

but are not capable of surviving for more than a brief period. None the less, if they were

"capable of being born alive",

an offence could be committed if such a foetus were aborted.

The 1929 Act is very strong. It should be a reassurance to those who are worried about apparently late abortions. Furthermore, it should not be forgotten that, under the 1967 Act, the Minister for Health can make regulations. Indeed, the current regulations no longer license private clinics to carry out abortions over 24 weeks, and those carrying out abortions over 20 weeks must be specially approved.

A doctor must, therefore, act with the greatest care in respect of any late abortions—probably those over 20 weeks—for fear of transgressing the law. In addition, if it is judged necessary, it is always possible for the DHSS to introduce still more stringent regulations.

Thus, it seems to me far better to leave well alone. The grounds for abortion set out in the 1967 Act are, in my judgment, much more precise than the grounds in this Bill. The flexibility of the 1967 Act, coupled with the 1929 Act, provides a balance between the interests of the mother and those of the unborn child. I shall, therefore, vote against the Bill.

11.57 am

Ms. Clare Short (Birmingham, Ladywood): This is a most unsatisfactory Bill and a most unsatisfactory debate because the Bill is fundamentally and deeply dishonest. It is put forward by hon. Members who are anti-abortionists and want to remove all rights to abortion in this country, but they do not have the honesty to put forward that position. They know that it is not supported in the House or in public opinion, so they pretend that it is a Bill to prevent late abortion. It is not a Bill to prevent late abortion. The overwhelming bulk of people opposed to the Bill want to do everything possible to prevent late abortion when it is preventable.

Mr. A. J. Beith (Berwick-upon-Tweed): Will the hon. Lady give way?

Ms. Short: I shall give way in a moment.

There are all sorts of things that we could do. These matters are currently being considered in the House of Lords, and I appeal to anyone who thinks that he wants to consider the 24 weeks option not to support this muddle and to wait for that other more rational Bill to come to the House when it has been thoroughly examined in another place.

Mr. Beith: I fail to understand the logic of the hon. Lady's argument. Was not the 1967 Bill, and is not the 1967 Act, supported by people who believe that abortion should be more readily available than the Act states?

Ms. Short: I have no idea. I was not a Member of the House when that Bill was put forward and I have never met anyone who says that there should be an extension beyond 28 weeks. I do not understand the hon. Gentleman's position.

Many people believe, in deep conscience, that abortion is always wrong. I respect that position. Within the existing law, people who hold that view can exercise their conscience. No one is required to have an abortion if she thinks it is wrong. We are not talking about that position. We are talking about people who claim the right to impose their conscience on other people whose conscience says otherwise. There are people who say in conscience that there should be no abortion but who introduce a Bill that says that abortion can be allowed up to 18 weeks. Where are the morality, conscience and ethics of that? It is a fudge and a muddle, and it is leading to a debate that is bringing the House into disrepute

At least some of the truth is coming out in the debate. Hordes of Members of Parliament who are not here yet will come in later to vote for or against the Bill and determine what will happen. The overwhelming bulk of them do not support the Bill but say that they support the 24-weeks proposal. The hon. Member for Liverpool, Mossley Hill (Mr. Alton) has adopted a deeply duplicitous position. He had the right to draft the Bill. He could have proposed a 24-week rule. He could have proposed an exception for foetal abnormality. But he has deliberately put in a provision that says that abortion would be allowed up to 28 weeks only if the child would be born dead. The hon. Gentleman has the cheek—because, as he tells us, he taught disabled children for one year—to say to women and parents who have borne, cared for and loved disabled children who died in deep pain after some years that they should not have the right to make the choice next time. How dare the hon. Gentleman and others say that.

May I say to this House of Commons — this overwhelmingly male House of Commons — that it should have more humility when approaching this issue. When I was 10 I thought that I was against abortion. I came from a large, happy, Catholic family, and that was the teaching. It all seemed simple. Then I started to grow up. I am a woman, and my body changed. Some of my friends became pregnant because men sometimes misused them and walked away. Every man in this House who has ever used a woman's body and walked away and did not know the consequence has no right to vote on the Bill. Women's bodies carry the consequences of such behaviour. If men in the House were honest, most would have to walk away.

Mr. Nicholas Bennett: I am grateful to the hon. Lady because at least she is putting the extreme case on the other side. I ask two questions. First, does she deny the right of men to have moral views on this subject? This is a matter of morality. Secondly, does she recognise the great concern in society in general at the way in which freely available abortion has changed the nature of society? We are entitled to a view on that change.

Ms. Short: Everyone in the world is entitled to a view on every question, but some questions should be approached with more humility than others. I am personally deeply impressed by the arguments of people who have borne and cared for disabled children. I have not had that experience, but I approach with humility the experience of others. I suggest that men should approach this question with humility because the women bear the consequences.

There is all this talk of care and love for disabled children. As has been said, residential homes all over the country are full of disabled children for whom no one cares. The divorce rate of couples who bear disabled children is high — and who is left to care for those children? The women.

Let us be clear about the existing law. There has been a lot of pretence and falsity about it. The law provides that it is an offence to abort a foetus capable of being born alive. As medical technology has changed and it has become possible to preserve the life of babies born very early, naturally the law and practice have changed. The number of post-24-week abortions has diminished massively as it has become possible to preserve the life of 24-week babies.

I wonder whether hon. Members really know about 24-week-old babies. Only 15 per cent. of them survive, and a third of them are brain-damaged. Those babies are on the very brink of life. The units that do such lovely work and care for those precious babies attempt to preserve their lives. The babies are kept in plastic boxes with tubes in their bodies. There is much evidence now that if they do survive they are emotionally hurt and damaged because they are not nurtured and cuddled in the way that babies need. They are on the brink of life, and medical practice already takes account of their survival rate.

Two thirds of post-24-week abortions are for severe foetal abnormalities. The Bill does not provide for that, but we are told that it will be adjusted in Committee. We are told about the other hard cases. Many involve very young girls who have been sexually abused in their families. They do not know that they are pregnant, or do not reveal it until late, and so have abortions after 24 weeks. We are told about menopausal women who have brought up their families and loved them and do not realise that they are pregnant — they think that their periods have stopped because of the menopause. Such women would be forced by hon. Members who claim to know better about their lives, their bodies and their families to bear those children. It is a disgrace. Let me say to hon. Members who believe in a 24-week limit that we already have that limit with exceptions. That is the practice now. I should like to see some changes, as there is no doubt that late abortions take place unnecessarily.

I should like to say something about private clinics. In my region, which is one of the worst in the country, many doctors and nurses in the National Health Service refuse to perform abortions to which women are entitled legally, so women go to charitable clinics to get their legal ri No one makes any profit whatsoever, and the work is with care, in the interests of the lives of those women. cheap, snide remarks about people performing abor for profit are not true. The issue is too important for cheapskate lies to be thrown about the House.

As for foreign women, many come from Nort Ireland, where the law is different, and from th counties of Ireland.

Mr. Seamus Mallon (Newry and Armagh): Is the Lady implying that the constitutional arrangement Northern Ireland have changed? Is Northern Ireland to be regarded as part of the United Kingdom?

Ms. Short: The hon. Member knows my view on I thought that he shared my view that Northern Ire should not be part of the United Kingdom. I look for to the day when there is a united Ireland. I know Northern Ireland is not always treated as part of United Kingdom. The law is different in all sort respects. The law on obortion in Northern Irelan different from that in the rest of the United Kingd Therefore, Northern Ireland women come to Britain t their rights under the existing law.

Mr. Mallon: Will the Lady give way?

Ms. Short: No. The hon. Gentleman should know this is a serious argument and not a cheap debate.

Women travel to Britain for abortions, from Irel Northern Ireland and from other parts of Europe w the law is different from ours. There is nothing wron immoral about those women. If the law in their coun is not right and they come to Britain and go to a cl charitably-organised clinic for an abortion, ther nothing wrong with that. We are extending a freedo those women to which they are entitled. Let us not pre that there is something disreputable in that.

I am puzzled that all the polling evidence shows tha overwhelming majority of hon. Members support existing law, yet the overwhelming bulk of Tory Mem seem to support the Bill, which restricts the righ abortion. I have thought about that carefully and I wo why it is. The hon. Member for Pembroke (Mr. Ben is wrong.

Mr. Irvine Patnick (Sheffield, Hallam): The hon. L is strangling her own argument.

Ms. Short: I am making the point I wish to mak the hon. Gentleman can make his.

I am perplexed by this. The underlying reason is the new Right in America goes around bombing abor clinics, photographing women who go there for aborti and sending the photographs to their neighbours. Tha the kind of crude behaviour that comes from the Right. The growing new Right in Britain is saying women should stay at home and bear children and care elderly and disabled people. They are not in favou public expenditure; they want to push women back i a traditional role and deprive them of the freedom control their lives—*[Interruption.]* Hon. Members laugh. They always laugh and sneer when we talk ab the status of women and their freedom. The behaviou hon. Members is absolutely consistent.

I appeal to anyone who is in favour of preventing abortions not to vote for the Bill. If the sponsor of the wanted a 24-week limit with exceptions and wanted

prevent late abortions beyond that limit, he would have brought in a different Bill. There is much that we can do. We could have, as many other countries have, self-referral up to 12 weeks. Many women have abortions post-12 weeks because of delays in the National Health Service. The Health Service should be required to plan for the number of woman who will come for abortions so that the current delays will be reduced. Such things could be done to prevent late abortions. We have a 24-week limit, with exceptions for very hard cases.

A Bill is to come from the House of Lords which will enable us to have that position. If today's Bill is voted for, we will have an 18-week limit, which really means 16 weeks, with no exception for foetal abnormality unless the child would die. We are told that concessions may be made in Committee, but if the Bill is passed with a large majority the Committee will be dominated by anti-abortionists and the concessions will not be made. The hysterical public campaign will go on and people who think they may switch their votes will be under enormous pressure. This is not a rational way to decide such an important question.

I beg the House to vote the Bill down and to look at the much more considered Bill which will come from the House of Lords.

12.12 pm

Mr. Edward Heath (Old Bexley and Sidcup): I would like to make one simple but important point. This matter is sensitive and controversial. The Abortion Act 1967 was of great importance, and the leader of the Liberal party, the right hon. Member for Tweeddale, Ettrick and Lauderdale (Mr. Steel) deserves full credit for what he did then. The Act removed many social ills which we all hated and has given us 20 years of comparative stability in dealing with the problems and arguments that go on.

Hon. Members can set an example on this matter by moving ahead with consensus. It is apparant that the debate on the Bill is not producing that. It has been said that the various alternatives could be fully discussed in Committee. We all know what happens with the composition of private Member's Bills Committees—without any disrespect to the hon. Member for Liverpool, Mossley Hill (Mr. Alton)—and we know the difficulties of taking up on Report matters which have been fully debated in Committee, but that is part of our constitutional proceedings. If the Bill goes through Second Reading to Committee, it will be extremely difficult to debate any other position in the House.

We have a great opportunity to look at the problem from the point of view of moving ahead with consensus. The hon. Gentleman has not disguised the fact that, because of his religious beliefs, he is entirely opposed to abortion. The position of the Synod of the Church of England has been mentioned. I am a member of the Church of England and I understand that position, but I cannot help noting that there is much picking and choosing as to which view of the Synod of the Church of England one accepts on a particular subject.

However, allowing for that, I am aware of the religious beliefs that are expressed and held most strongly. Crusades do not always lead to the most desirable results, as we know from history. Above all, they lead to considerable intolerance. It is essential that we in this House should be tolerant of those outside whose ethical and religious views do not coincide with our own, and on this subject, there are a considerable number of our fellow citizens whose views do not coincide with our own.

The 1967 Act was based on a combination of provisions from the Infant Life (Preservation) Act 1929 and new provisions. The way ahead on the basis of consensus is now very clear. The 1929 Act could be amended to give a limit of 24 weeks, which would in fact mean 22 weeks. Such a proposal would gain the support of the whole medical profession, as cited in opinion polls and on television. According to all my inquiries, the medical profession accepts that a limit of 24 weeks—in practice 22 weeks—would deal with the advances in medicine over the past 20 years and at the same time with the practical arrangements available for dealing with these problems. If the House had been able to give a lead with a Bill containing that proposal, that Bill would have gained overall agreement and we could then have moved forward to another period.

The particular problems mentioned, such as that of private clinics, need to be dealt with in some other way. They are controversial in themselves and are not affected by the Bill. The problem of private clinics can be dealt with separately, through the Health Service or, if the House so wishes, by legislation. My greatest concern is that, after 20 years of stability, we should now take advantage of the advances in medicine and the practical arrangements that can be made—which in some cases may be lacking—to take a further step forward. I wish that that had been the purpose of the Bill. As it is not, I shall oppose the Bill, although I shall strongly support any Bill from another place that reduces the limit to 24 weeks—in effect 22 weeks. That would gain the overall acceptance of the medical profession, of whose advice the House should take great note.

12.17 pm

The Minister for Health (Mr. Tony Newton): As has been very clear, this is an issue on which there are deeply held and totally conflicting views; it is correspondingly difficult for any Minister to speak in a debate such as this. In his opening speech, the hon. Member for Liverpool, Mossley Hill (Mr. Alton), fairly acknowledged the difficulties of the subject. He also stated clearly, and I thought rightly, that the Bill does not itself set out to challenge the principle of legal abortion. He rightly made it clear that he thinks that abortion should not be legal, but he recognises that it is; indeed, a large part of his case rested on the fact that he did not propose to reverse the basic position. The hon. Gentleman presented the Bill as one that attempts not to return to the pre-1967 position but to modify the working of the law to make it more acceptable to the substantial body of opinion—whatever its exact size, none of us can dispute that it is substantial—that is affronted by the scale of abortion in recent years, and particularly by abortion at a relatively late stage in pregnancy. He argued that the gain from achieving a change in the balance would outweigh the contrary arguments adduced in the debate.

I would say to the hon. Member for Birmingham, Ladywood (Ms. Short) that the hon. Gentleman is at least entitled to seek the judgment of the House on the proposal that he has put before it, rather than on what is in his mind but which he has not brought before the House.

I think that the House already knows that which I must state clearly, that the Government have no collective view

[Mr. Tony Newton]

on the merits of the proposal by the hon. Member for Mossley Hill. The considerations involved are clearly both moral and practical. Some hon. Members will see the moral considerations as overriding, while others will see as paramount the practical considerations. I think it is fair to say that most hon. Members who have spoken will not see the matter in such a clear-cut way, but will want to strike a balance between the two conflicting sets of considerations. At the end of the day, each hon. Member will have to decide for himself or herself what the balance should be and how we should vote on the Bill.

In such a debate, my role as Minister for Health is not to speak for the Government in the ordinary sense, but to set before the House such advice as I can give from the advice available to me, which I think might help hon. Members to make a decision. I must necessarily concentrate on the practical issues, because being Minister for Health gives me no special status to advise others on matters of conscience or morality.

First, I shall comment on the legal position. It has been clearly recognised in the debate that the Bill represents a clear change in principle from the abortion legislation introduced by the right hon. Member for Tweeddale, Ettrick and Lauderdale and passed in 1967. That is because the Abortion Act 1967 contains no upper limit for the gestational age at which an abortion may be performed. It must be accepted as a matter of law that to introduce such a limit is to introduce a distinct and new concept compared with the present position.

As hon. Members have said, the Infant Life (Preservation) Act 1929 applies in England and Wales and protects any foetus capable of being born alive. It also contains a rebuttable presumption, and the fact that it is rebuttable is significant. It is that a foetus of 28 weeks gestation is capable of being born alive. As the House knows, in the light of our capacity to keep very young infants alive, the Government have given their support, and similar support has just been echoed by my right hon. Friend the Member for Old Bexley and Sidcup (Mr. Heath), for a measure currently under discussion in another place. That measure seeks to reduce the gestational age at which this presumption is made from 28 weeks to 24 weeks. However, it is a proposition of a different kind from the one that is now before the House, because the Bill before the House would make illegal all abortions after the 17th completed week of pregnancy, except in cases where it was necessary to save the life of the mother or if the life of the child could not be sustained.

I shall make the point a little clearer. Under the Infant Life (Preservation) Act—this is why I emphasised the word "rebuttable"—it is open to a doctor who has performed an abortion outside the limits thought to be provided by the Infant Life (Preservation) Act to prove that the child was not capable of being born alive. The onus of proof at that point is shifted; the House ought to bear that significant point in mind.

I know that many hon. Members wish to speak and I shall try to keep my speech brief. I had intended to spend a few moments advising the House as clearly as I can on the views about the current capacity of a foetus to be born alive. I shall say only that I am advised that the 22nd gestational week is considered by doctors to be the earliest time at which there is the slighest possibility of being born alive, because before then the lungs mature enough to function, even if ventilated.

The House will be aware that the Royal C Obstetricians and Gynaecologists, as well as th Paediatric Association, the Royal College of Practitioners, the Royal College of Midwives British Medical Association, produced a report i foetal viability and clinical practice. That recommended that the age at which a foetus is c viable should be reduced from 28 weeks to 2 Earlier this year, that recommendation was conf that same group of organisations when they look at their 1985 report.

Alongside the support that I have already Government have extended to the proposition in of a Bill—not a Government Bill—introduce other place, the Department has taken a nu significant steps effectively to implement the recom tion about 24 weeks. We have done that in two w —this has already been referred to, but I should clear—we have made it a condition of appr private sector nursing homes that no abortions ar out after 24 weeks. The position is less clear in t but the Department has arranged for the repo drawn to the attention of the fellows and membe Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologi

As has been said on several occasions, the nu abortions after 24 weeks is now very small. On figures for 1986, there were 29 at the 25th week o Hon. Members will have their own views about a number as small as even 29 is to be dismissed in mind that we are talking about individuals have their own views and circumstances, includ large number of cases the fact that by then they w that their baby is likely to be born handicapped. I think all hon. Members will accept that on thos and with the continuing likelihood of a further d the number of abortions occurring so late, the effect of introducing a 24-week limit into the Abo would be small, according to our current experi

Mr. Steel: Can the Minister tell us how many 29 abortions were carried out under section 2 of — in other words, that were related to abnormalities—and how many were carried ou the main section?

Mr. Newton: I do not have the breakdown of with me. However, I understand from a point mad that the figure is about 70 per cent. I think tha right, but if it is wrong, I shall ask that some me passed to me so that I can correct that later.

Mr. Alton: Before the Minister leaves that po is, of course, right—does he therefore recogn inserting a 24-week rule will not make any diff people are concerned about abortions on eugenic g What does the Minister have to say about lat abortions, 92 per cent. of which after 18 we performed on perfectly healthy children?

Mr. Newton: I shall come to that point in a m

I have already made it clear that it is importan understand that the practical effect on reduc number of abortions of a time limit of 24 weeks w small. Nevertheless, there are some who wo

establishing the principle of a limit as a significant gain. Hon. Members must judge those issues for themselves. I shall not try to give them a steer, as a Minister, on how they decide to vote.

There has been a good deal of reference to the statistics involved. I shall set them out as clearly as I can, although I fear that they do not add much to what has already been said. If such a Bill had been in force in 1986, about 8,000 of the 172,000 abortions that were performed in that year in England and Wales would not have taken place.

The hon. Member for Mossley Hill pointed to the fact that many abortions at 18 weeks and over are performed on foreign women. The exact statistic is that, out of the 8,276 abortions in England and Wales at 18 weeks and over in 1986, 3,638 were to non-residents. For this purpose, non-residents include women from Scotland, Northern Ireland, the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man, as well as women from foreign countries. Abortions performed on women resident in foreign countries amounted to 3,461, which was 42 per cent. of the total. The vast majority of those women came from France, Spain and the Irish Republic.

That reflects—in one case it would be more accurate to say that it reflected—the difficulties that women have in obtaining abortions in those countries. In Eire, abortion is illegal. In France, abortion is available on demand up to 10 weeks gestation, but is severely restricted after that. However, in Spain a law legalising abortion in certain circumstances was passed in 1985. The numbers of women coming to this country from Spain are now dropping rapidly.

Sir Bernard Braine: With regard to foreign women, can my right hon. Friend defend a practice whereby we are effectively breaking the law of other countries? Perhaps more importantly, from the point of view of those women, what guarantee is there that a quick abortion at a London clinic will be followed up by the aftercare that is absolutely essential, psychologically and medically, for women who have had an abortion?

Mr. Newton: As a matter of common sense, all of us would accept that it is less than desirable for women to be crossing international boundaries in order to receive medical treatment of that sort. Undoubtedly, many hon. Members on both sides of the House will take the view that it is wrong for women to come to this country for abortions when they cannot obtain them in their own country, and that view will be held partly for the reasons adumbrated by my right hon. Friend the Member for Castle Point (Sir B. Braine). That is something about which I must leave hon. Members to make up their own minds.

Others will take a somewhat different view of foreign women coming to this country. For women to contemplate visiting another country and experiencing an unfamiliar health system in order to have an operation of this sort is an indication of the great pressure that develops for a woman who has an unwanted pregnancy. Therefore, to some extent it suggests that, if the limits are made too restrictive, the same consequences may follow for some women in our country, whether in terms of seeking to go abroad or returning to back-street abortions.

Mr. Nicholas Bennett: We should also look at that bearing in mind that there are clear financial links. There is a business contract involving foreign women coming to this country. Is it not the case, as shown by the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists, that 60 per cent. of late abortions carried out in private clinics were performed by 11 doctors?

Mr. Newton: I have inquired about that, and I am told that the Department is not aware of any evidence to that precise effect. The Department monitors carefully, on the basis of unannounced visits apart from announced visits, the operation of private sector clinics. If we find evidence of abuse, we act to deal with it.

That cross-boundary international flow raises the question what will happen when women with an unwanted pregnancy find themselves denied an abortion in their locality. That has to be considered by hon. Members.

I am not in a position to do what the House might like me to do, which is to make any sort of estimate as to what the possible effects would be in relation, for example, to illegal abortions if the Bill is passed in its present form. One of the happiest facts—I accept that there are unhappy facts too—of what has happened since 1967 is that the number of deaths from criminal abortions has dropped to nil in recent years. It is equally the case—I want to recognise this clearly—that because the Bill would not affect the vast majority of abortions that take place in this country, and because there would undoubtedly be added difficulties in undertaking illegal late abortions, it is unlikely that the passing of this Bill would lead to the sort of back-street abortions that we saw in the early 1960s and before.

Against the background of the number of women who go to great lengths in order to obtain an abortion, it would be rash to say that there would be no risk of some degree of return to abortions outside the law. That is something the House will have to bear in mind.

Mr. Campbell-Savours: Will the Minister accept that the delay in provision in some parts of the country might be responsible for the demand for late abortions in some areas?

Mr. Newton: It is very difficult for me to assess the various factors that may be involved. I am not in a position to confirm the proposition that the hon. Gentleman has put to me.

The hon. Member for Ladywood has mentioned that one of the difficulties is the variable availability of NHS abortions around the country, for reasons that I, at any rate, would frankly not wish to disturb. Whatever else we may disagree about, we surely agree it would be wrong to compel consultants and nurses, who have a conscientious objection to the performance of abortions, to undertake them.

Mr. Rhodri Morgan (Cardiff, West): Will the Minister give way?

Mr. Newton: I am happy to give way, but I am anxious about the pressure on time.

Mr. Morgan: The Minister has said that consultants should be free not to carry out abortions or late abortions if they find that repugnant. However, he is missing the point that those consultants may also appoint staff within their areas who agree with their views and that that may have a major impact on the availability of early or late abortions on the NHS in such areas.

Mr. Newton: I readily recognise that that is a matter on which there are a number of insoluble problems and many

[Mr. Newton]

dilemmas. I stick to my fundamental proposition, that I would not wish to be a Minister for Health who is in the business of seeking to compel clinicians to undertake procedures of which they conscientiously disapprove.

Some reference has been made to particular cases that have been highlighted by the BMA concerning the possible implications for young girls who do not recognise or who attempt to conceal their pregnancies, and menopausal women who fail to recognise that they are pregnant until it is too late. To help the House to judge those points, and in recognition that they need to be balanced against other views, I can inform the House that, out of a total of 8,276 abortions at 18 weeks and over, 2,865, or over one third, are to women under the age of 20. A further small proportion, about 3 per cent., or 253 abortions at 18 weeks and over, are to women aged 40 and over. Again, hon. Members must make their own judgment about the significance of those figures.

There is one other category that has not been referred to in the House and for which I cannot give any statistics or evaluate in general terms, but which should be mentioned—the possibility of women whose infection with the AIDS virus is not recognised until a late stage of pregnancy. Clearly, under present circumstances, that problem will grow. I emphasise that it is for hon. Members to weigh all of these factors against many other considerations.

The last major point upon which I feel I ought to seek to offer some information and guidance to the House relates to the many references that have been made to handicap and, in particular, the tests and the timing of the tests that can presently or prospectively be available to discover handicap and allow choice to be made.

Mr. Toby Jessel (Twickenham): When my right hon. Friend gave us some figures just now, I thought that he would refer to the approximately 4,800 abortions per year at over 18 weeks that are carried out on women from England. He has not said what proportion of those abortions are carried out by the NHS for which he is responsible. The Minister and his colleagues have made us well aware of the immense pressures due to the increased demand on the NHS and thus the demand on its operating facilities. In view of that, how can it be argued that someone who is waiting for an operation—there are many people, some in pain, waiting for operations of all sorts on the NHS—should have a lower priority than the late abortion of a healthy baby?

Mr. Newton: I note my hon. Friend's views. However, given the views implied by his question, I do not think that I would want, in return, to express an opinion about the particular needs of particular people without knowing rather more about the circumstances in which they find themselves and what has led them to request a particular form of medical attention.

It is important to say something about the handicap issue and the question of tests. Obviously, completely new tests may eventually become available that may alter the position, but, as I am advised, the position on the main tests currently available is as follows. The first test, serum alphafetoprotein, is usually done at 16 weeks. It is a test on the mother's blood to identify women who are more likely than average to have a foetus with an open neural tube defect, particularly a proportion of spina bifida cases. The test usually shows up as abnormal in

Amniocentesis is normally done at 16 week assist in confirming the presence of a foe neural tube defect, or to give cells that can determine whether there is a genetic or abnormality if there is reason to suspect th present.

That cell culture takes two to three week as it sometimes does, the test may need t Abortion stemming from the findings is s much before 20 weeks, and in latter tests it be as late as 24 weeks.

Untra sound scanning is mostly carried weeks. The later it is done, the more ac assessing foetal abnormality. Its main uses determining the gestational age, which ma in interpreting other tests for foetal abn multiple pregnancy and to see abnormal structure.

The test that has perhaps been referred debate, and in which there is most interest is chorionic villus biopsy, which is normally the earlier stage of between 8 and 12 week is a relatively new procedure and can b alternative to later examination of cells in obtained by amniocentesis at between 16 an is used for the detection of genetic or abnormalities if there is reason to suspect be present. I am told that it is not an alte procedures of alphafetoprotein testing scanning.

The House must bear in mind that, as villus biopsy is not universally available, and and accuracy are still being studied. Clinical far shows that, in general, results are accu a small percentage of chromosome abnorm be confirmed later by amniocentesis. The problem regarding safety, in that misc amniocentesis is between 1 and 2 per cent., chorionic villus biopsy it appears to be twi Sometimes, there is the further problem following this procedure.

Mr. Wigley: Interpreting what the Min said, will he confirm that at present—other developed in the future—it is essential to to mothers who may be passing genetic d defects may lead to severe disability. Does th have a view of the implications of the Bill i given the Minister's responsibility in regard

Mr. Newton: I hope that the hon. Gentlem me to proceed with a carefully noted piece. the points that he has raised.

If the indications of accuracy and safety by research, and no other hazards of the ch biopsy emerge in the study, obstetricians ma to want to offer a choice of chorionic vill amniocentesis when women whose previous shows the need for genetic or chromosome st early enough in pregnancy. Women would b told that, although there are occasionally p accuracy and a somewhat higher misc chorionic villus biopsy can provide a good whether the foetus has chromosomol or malities that are otherwise detectab amniocentesis.

It can do so early in pregnancy, thus making possible the option of a safer and less unpleasant termination before 12 weeks for some groups of women. There are indications that a majority of women would choose chorionic villus biopsy, but that a substantial number would opt for amniocentesis at 16 weeks.

Mr. Barry Sheerman (Huddersfield): The figures that the Minister has given are interesting. My wife and I lost our first baby because it suffered from hydrocephalus spina bifida after a full-term pregnancy. For the next four healthy children that we had, we were under a great deal of strain. For the first two there were no tests, but for the last two they were available, and we had the option, which we would have taken if we had had a severely disabled child. What worries me profoundly about the Bill is that parents such as myself and my wife will not have that choice.

Mr. Newton: I am sure that all hon. Members will wish both to extend their sympathy to the hon. Gentleman for his experience — it has been interesting to hear about that experience—and to take it into account in deciding what their view should be.

In considering these tests, there are one or two further points that I must make. First, in dating a pregnancy, the margin of error either way is commonly as much as 10 days. Secondly, if a foetal abnormality is detected by one diagnostic method, a further method may have to be used to confirm the diagnosis, and that can mean some delay, especially if the woman has to be referred to a different hospital. Thirdly, delays in systems can sometimes occur for a variety of reasons, whether staff absences, equipment failure, because the woman is ill, because a relative, perhaps a child, is ill, or because of something as mundane as transport difficulties.

All those matters must be borne in mind, but they lead to the conclusion that, as the Bill stands, with the provision that only a child likely to be born dead or with physical abnormalities so serious that its life cannot be independently sustained, would be excluded from its working, there is likely to be some increase in the numbers of severely handicapped children born, whose mothers might otherwise have decided to have an abortion,

Mr. Alton: Is the Minister saying that, if the 8 per cent. that fall into the category that he has described were to be excluded by an exemption clause in Committee, he would accept the ovewhelming burden of evidence that the 92 per cent. who would be perfectly healthy children, should not be aborted?

Mr. Newton: I hope that I have made it clear that I am seeking to put factors before the House which hon. Members should bear in mind and that I do not attempt to press my judgments upon them. I am sure that it is right for me to stick to that position. In view of the reference to the fact that more than 90 per cent. of abortions at 18 weeks and over are for reasons other than foetal abnormality, which is undoubtedly correct, it is also fair for me to put before the House——

Mr. Thurnham: Is my right hon. Friend aware that Professor Stuart Campbell said on Tuesday that he would stake his professional reputation on the fact that there are far more class 4 terminations than are recorded, because of administrative failures in the system?

Mr. Newton: I note with interest what my hon. Fr said, but that is not a matter on which I shall attemp make a judgment.

The House should also note that the proportio abortions done on grounds of foetal abnormality incre considerably with gestational age. At 18 weeks, proportion is 6 per cent.; that rises to 21 per cent. weeks and to more than 70 per cent. above 24 week least that is something which the whole House will to bear in mind.

I have probably said as much as I can usefully helpfully say to the House as Minister for Healt emphasise again that, neither in that capacity, nor i capacity as a member of a collective Government, advising the House and hon. Members in any way how they should vote on this Bill. The House is per entitled to know, and perhaps it is right for me to say, in my capacity — I emphasise this strongly — a independent Member of Parliament with his own pe personal views, I would be more than ready to suppor introduction of a clear legal time limit for abortions. I do not find myself conscientiously able to support passage of the Bill in the precise form in which it has presented to the House today.

12.49 pm

Ms. Jo Richardson (Barking): I am sure that most hon. and hon. Members who were in the House in 1970s will remember that this is by no means the attempt to restrict the Abortion Act 1967. I well recal if it were yesterday, the first attempt, in March because it was almost a year after I had entered the Ho that was the James White Bill. It was followed somew later by the Bill sponsored by the hon. Member for Mi Keynes (Mr. Benyon), and then later by John Corrie's All those Bills were fought off by the strength of pu opinion and by the common sense and sense of justi I use the words advisedly—of the House of Commo

Now, in 1988, it is 20 years since the 1967 Act, du which back-street abortions, as the Minister said, completely disappeared and a new generaton of yo women and men has grown up with a law that has allo women — often with difficulty even under the pre Act and often with unnecessary delays — to obta termination safely and legally.

Let me dispel two myths that have been referred to and in the press during the past few weeks. The first is that the present Act gives women the right to choos does not. Two doctors must agree, and the need to ob an abortion must comply with one of the provisions i Act. Abortion is not another method of contracep That is another thing that is widely said, and quite unt Anyone who believes that can have no idea of the ag of mind that all women undergo before making momentous decision to have an abortion.

The second myth is that women opt for an abortio trivial grounds, such as that it would restrict their so activities or affect their figures. They are much m serious people than their critics give them credit Certainly an unintended pregnancy, often as a resul contraceptive failure, will give many women much to t about. The hon. Member for Birmingham, Edgba (Dame J. Knight) referred to the choice that women h of being able to take contraceptive pills or contraceptive devices. I am sure I do not have to rem

[Ms. Jo Richardson]

her that there is such a thing as contraceptive failure, and that quite a number of women have had to resort to an abortion in the end because of it.

Dame Jill Knight: I said that contraception has never been so widely disseminated, that there has never been so much education about it, and that it has never been so good.

Ms. Richardson: I can recall a number of studies done in the past two or three years which have put much fear into the minds of women about the effectiveness of the contraceptive devices they are using — of the pill, for example. What about the cuts in family planning services that are being made? I was in Stevenage about 10 days ago and visited its family planning clinic, which is faced with a 50 per cent. cut in resources over the next 12 months. That will mean an increase in the number of women who may become pregnant as a result of not having proper treatment.

Whatever the reason for an unintended pregnancy, it affects the mental and physical health of a woman in terms of her children or other family responsibilities, adding further strains to an already over-strained household income. Damp, overcrowded housing conditions or homelessness may well be factors that must also be considered. Social research has proved many times that those factors have a direct impact on mental and physical health.

The British system of support for pregnant women is not all that good. Indeed, it is about the worst in western Europe. We have cut the maternity grant for all but the most needy and deprived — those on supplementary benefit — and even that is insufficient to provide the required diet for a pregnant woman. Girls aged under 16 are not given even that meagre benefit.

One of my constituents is a simple parent with a violent husband. She has three children, the oldest of whom is aged 14½. They live in a freezing, hard-to-let house. The house is so cold that they live effectively in one room. Last December, the 14-year-old daughter gave birth to a premature baby. The baby is ailing. The local hospital cannot keep it in, although its health demands that it returns to hospital frequently. That baby has been born and is physically perfect, although it is weak. Some people have tremendous stresses and strains on their lives. They might have forgiven that 14-year-old girl, and her mother, for having an abortion in those circumstances. I certainly would, and I hope that hon. Members who do not always agree with me would. That baby is loved, and I hope that it will survive.

I do not like the suggestion that those of us who opposed the Bill do not care about disabled people. Our record of care and concern for disabled people is as good as that of anyone else. I hope that no one will run away with the idea that there is any difference.

Many hon. Members have mentioned amendments that might be tabled to the Bill in Committee. It is said that a limit of 24 weeks might be acceptable. The hon. Member for Liverpool, Mossley Hill (Mr. Alton) has hinted that amendments might be accepted in Committee. But he drafted his Bill with remarkable precision. Had he been thinking about extending the time limit, he would not have tried to define the limit almost to the d
to consider the words of the Bill. It is
but a 17-week Bill. It says:

"A woman's pregnancy may be termi
with section 1 of the Abortion Act 1967
beginning of the 18th week of gestation.
That is the seventh day of the 17th we
how anyone could be so precise ab
gestation. If the hon. Gentleman now
limit may be acceptable, or that he co
should have introduced an entirely
introduced none at all.

Mr. Alton: I fully understand the ho
this may not be the exact moment to
have said that that will be a legitimat
Committee. But every other country
fixes an exact date for an upper time li
there, why can we not do it?

Ms. Richardson: I shall tackle the po
hon. Gentleman is dismayed. He realise
be the exact time. That point wo
Committee, we may talk about 22 or 24
will not. Perhaps some hon. Member
forward 12 or 14 weeks. There is no gu
pass the Bill stating 17 weeks precisely,
and come out with the Bill that we wa
offer.

Mr. Campbell-Savours: We have Re

Ms. Richardson: We have Report st
have not been properly discussed. Nor
will not accept the repeat of a mat
properly discussed in Committee.

Let me consider the remainder of th
in which it is worded. Clause 1(2) allow
to the end of 28 weeks. Thank goodn
However, it is restrictive in the extreme.
to save the life of a mother. It allows
is likely to be born dead or with abnorm
serious that life cannot be independentl
briefing that he circulated to all hon. M
Gentleman listed 11 types of handica
demonstrate how his exemption claus
group. I am informed by Professor
Mothercare professor of paediatric ge
university, that over 2,000 different con
detected during pregnancy. Who w
conditions will be exempted?

Hon. Members who attended Pr
presentation in the House a few week
shaken by the examples of severe
multiple handicap that the professor a
outside the exemption as it is phrased in
say, 16 or 20 hon. Members sit in Com
We are not doctors. We have some doc
but they are not necessarily specialists. H
people, decide between different kinds
names of which we probably cannot ev
alone understand? I would much rather
to informed medical opinion. That is w
left.

The hon. Gentleman has done o
Practically everyone in the country no
amniocentesis test is, that it cannot ta
16th week and that results are not availa

Perhaps, as a result of the debate that has gone on in the country, many more women will want to have an amniocentesis test because they have now heard of it, particularly if they are in any doubt about their pregnancies. We have the amniocentesis test, and the ultrasound screening to which the Minister referred, but it does not provide certain results until the 18th to 20th week, or even later.

There are known cases in which abnormalities or lack of development appear to be indicated by early ultrasound screening. If the pregnancy is continued with careful screening and back-up, further tests can reveal and have revealed that such abnormality has disappeared. If the Bill is passed with a much earlier upper time limit, it is entirely possible that, because they are cautious and worried, doctors will unnecessarily abort and that women will unnecessarily lose children whom they want. That is another reason why 18 weeks is a ridiculous time to put into the Bill.

I am sorry that those hon. Members who take a restrictive view of abortion were not present on Tuesday last in the Grand Committee Room to hear the moving and humbling testimony of mothers who have had abortions because they decided not to continue with their pregnancies after foetal abnormalities were detected. Some hon. Members were there. We heard from mothers who have since had or are going to have perfect babies. They said that if, because of the law, they had been forced to carry on with their earlier pregnancies and were now, against their will, trying to cope with handicapped children, they would never have risked having another child. They still grieve over the loss of their first baby, but they are all glad that the back-up of screening and our present humane and compassionate laws gave them the opportunity to make their individual choice and to go on with confidence to have more children. Who will sit in judgment on the first such woman to seek an illegal abortion, if the Bill is passed?

Nothing has been said this morning about mental handicap. It is specifically excluded from the Bill, because the hon. Member for Mossley Hill has excluded the reference to mental health which is in the original Act. There are approximately 160,000 severely mentally handicapped people in this country and almost 1 million mildly mentally handicapped people in England and Wales. As a society, we try to support their desire to live an ordinary life within the community, and that is right. That includes allowing them and helping them to develop relationships with the opposite sex and, for some, at some stage, marriage. Sadly, it also means being at risk or being exploited by others in the community.

The diagnosis of pregnancy in mentally handicapped women is often very delayed because of their unawareness of their condition and because they fail to seek medical advice. A child born to a mentally handicapped mother runs a high risk of being mentally handicapped and of having other congenital defects of varying severity. Pregnancy, delivery and fostering or adoption can have devastating effects on a mentally handicapped woman and her partner and, more commonly, on her aging parents who have devoted all their young lives to the care of their child. Any reduction in the upper time limit for therapeutic abortion would have a traumatic effect on this small but important group of people.

I wish to refer briefly to another group of p
received a letter, dated 4 January, from Dr. Linda
senior lecturer in paediatric cardiology at Guy's
She says that, since 1980, her unit has specialise
"detection of congenital heart disease in early foetal
present technology, the optimum time for foeta
examination is about 18-20 weeks gestation. Ma
disease can be accurately detected from this time on
25% of children born with heart defects will die in
10 years of their life, often after a restricted
chequered with repeated hospital investigation a
heart surgery."
Those children would certainly be excluded u
exclusion clause of the Bill because they would
alive and, in other respects, able to exist independe
they would die before they were 10 years old.

Dr. Allan goes on to say:

"Faced with the prospect of a very poor l
prognosis for their child, the majority of pare
termination of pregnancy—32 of a possible grou
parents made this choice in 1987."

Mr. Alton *rose*——

Ms. Richardson: I shall not give way to t
Gentleman, but I should have liked him to deal w
involving mental handicap and heart disease wh
not be covered by the clause. Much has been sai
chorionic villus sampling; the Minister has said t
are going on at present. It will be quite a long tim
these will be universally available, however.

We have talked about amending the Bill in Co
I hope very much that we shall not get to that st
that we shall defeat the Bill today. We must keep r
that 18 weeks is on offer—not 20, 22 or 24
Several permutations have been offered around, b
not want to go down that road.

All informed opinion is against the Bill. I have
organisations, as I am sure do others, that have a
to the House to vote against it. There are lists
colleges and organisations for the handicapped.
somewhat sharp practice for those hon. Membe
of whom is not listening—who referred to the
gynaecologists to talk about 62 per cent. of gynaec
being in favour of a much lower time limit. Let us b
there are more than 3,000 gynaecologists, only 40
of whom replied. That is a small sample of i
opinion.

Mr. Nicholas Bennett: Will the hon. Lady give

Ms. Richardson: I am sorry, but I shall not gi
The hon. Gentleman has time to make his own s

In 1975, 9 per cent. of abortions in Tower Hamle
performed at 17 weeks and above. In 1977
Huntingford opened a day-care abortion service
1981, 1·8 per cent. of abortions were carried ou
weeks and above. With proper day care, the numbe
abortions can be reduced, and that is the way to
1981, when I proposed a ten-minute Bill to place
on all health authorities to make such provision a
equally to all women, the hon. Member for Mos
voted against it. He consistently said through
argument before this debate that he favoured
better and more evenly spread provision of N
Health Service facilities. The hon. Gentleman
against my legislation, and so did every other spo
this Bill who was in the House at that time.

Mr. Alton: The hon. Lady is absolutely right
vote against it. I am not in favour of earlier abo

[Mr. Alton]

am in favour of better care, better love and better resources—many of the things about which the hon. Lady has talked. That does not mean to say that we should favour abortion. The most repugnant part of abortion is late abortions, and that is all that my Bill specifically deals with.

Ms. Richardson: It is not any kind of answer to imply that one's concern for better and more even provision of NHS facilities is connected with the Bill and with abortion facilities and now to say that one is just concerned for general resourcing across the board.

We were all pleased that the right hon. Member for Tweeddale, Ettrick and Lauderdale (Mr. Steel), the original sponsor of the 1967 legislation, was able to spare time to speak today. The good, courageous pioneers—there are many in the Strangers Gallery listening, including the Abortion Law Reform Association—who campaigned for the 1967 legislation within the framework of the Infant Life (Preservation) Act 1929 and sought to help women and protect them against the dangers and exploitation of back-street and self-inflicted abortion. I remind hon. Members of the practices that claimed 95 women's lives in the one year alone that preceded the 1967 Act.

The Minister has said that he doubts very much whether, if the Bill is passed, there will be a wholesale return to back-street abortions. There may not be a wholesale return to the back streets—I hope that we will never find out—but there will probably be a return of some sort. I would not wish to see a return to those days.

Mr. Tim Devlin (Stockton, South): Will the hon. Lady give way?

Ms. Richardson: No.

I remember those days. I am of the generation when knitting needles, coat hangers, turpentine and iodine were used, resulting in a number of deaths.

Mrs. Mahon: I nursed one of those statistics. I spent the longest night of my life looking after a young woman who died at the age of 23. That is what a return to those days would mean.

Ms. Richardson: I am grateful to my hon. Friend, who I know has personal experience of such matters.

As the Minister said, there has not been one death from abortion in the past three years. Today, hon. Members will be searching their hearts. I beg them to think very carefully before voting for such a draconian and ill-thought-out Bill, which will do nothing to help deprived women and families, and everything to confuse the law and criminalise women. I hope that the Bill will be defeated.

If another Bill comes from the other place, we shall have to consider it and come to a decision. In the meantime, I prefer to keep the existing Abortion Act with the flexibility of a 28-week upper time limit, so that we do not criminalise women who are in pain, terror and worry, and so that we do not criminalise doctors. I ask

Several Hon. Members *rose*—

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Sir Paul Dean): Order. It will be evident to the House that many hon. Members on both sides of the House still wish to speak, and that varying views are held on both sides of t appeal to any hon. Member who is be extremely brief, in the interests o who wish to speak.

1.16 pm

Miss Ann Widdecombe (Maidsto I am motivated by the fact that it e the 1967 Act lamentably failed to ac where life starts, and the rights of o life of another.

We all accept that if someone is and then, through illness or a maj grossly handicapped, that person st and is classified as a separate huma rights. We all accept that if a child something goes wrong at birth, such child is a human being with fully e and has the right to live, no matter

We do not allow a woman t continue a pregnancy when she is pregnant. We already say that restriction of one individual's right another's right to live. I support th whether we have that right, and, if n should be the correct limit. The Bill various hon. Members who oppo maintain strongly that the 1967 Ac 1967 Act said that what is in the wo a woman has a right of abortion circumstances. It also said that pe perhaps we should protect it, so circumstances in which a woman can they ever so loose. It fudged the is when life is life and must be fully and as hon. Members would respect eac been widely accepted that babies although it would be conceded by n it is a massive struggle and only a they survive.

I find it deeply objectionable pejorative word such as obscene— that permits two babies to leave the 24 weeks; one is cherished while its li all the medical resources in the cou saving it and its parents desperately the other is wilfully destroyed, b mother's womb unnaturally at the impossible to accept as a mark of a

Ms. Diane Abbott (Hackney, Newington): Will the hon. Member

Miss Widdecombe: With respect for Hackney, North and Stoke New we have had four speeches in a row Benches on her side of the argument to have a little say. That is said wi know that she feels very strongly ab

I find it unacceptable that we sh completely separate attitudes toward age. It is even reflected in our langua a woman who lost a baby prematurel foetus; she says she has lost her baby that we will wilfully destroy a 24-w

House. I strongly
led from now on to
ther hon. Members

: I support the Bill.
avours to do what
ve. It tries to define
individual over the

n perfectly healthy
accident, becomes
has the right to live
being with full civil
damaged because
oxygen failure, that
blished civil rights,
w handicapped.
choose whether to
ore than 28 weeks
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determination over
Bill because it asks
why not, and what
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vas a muddle. The
is not life because
nder certain loose
aps it is life, and
e shall define the
ave an abortion, be
. We must decide
solutely respected,
other's lives. It has
rvive at 24 weeks,
hon. Friends, that
nority survive, but

I will not use a
at we have a law
mother's womb at
is fought over, and
y are poured into
nt it to live, while
g taken from its
ne age. I find that
vilised society.

lorth and Stoke
e way?

the hon. Member
gton (Ms. Abbott),
om the Opposition
nd I would like us
respect, because I
t this subject.
ld have those two
child of the same
I have never heard
ay that she lost her
et when we decide
-old baby, we call

it a foetus. That is a dual standard. I am concerned that the Abortion Act 1967 legislated for that standard, and I want to see a revision.

Where do we draw the line? Is it at the presently recorded lowest survival rate of 24 weeks for permanent survival and 23 weeks for temporary survival, or at the point where we think medical science will move in the foreseeable future, or do we recognise as life the time when a child is fully formed, is sentient and can feel pain and react to stimuli? We have all reached different decisions of conscience. The Bill is a valid attempt to set down a line, and I support the line that the Bill has set down.

I recognise fully that other hon. Members have different opinions. For the sake of the 92 per cent. of healthy children who are aborted over the age of 18 weeks, I would not stick doctrinally to a position where the exceptions were so narrow that the Bill would be lost through that. I would rather compromise, even if it goes against what I personally believe, in order to save that 92 per cent. I am sorry that my hon. Friend the Member for Berkshire, East (Mr. MacKay) is not here to hear me say this, because his major concern was that he did not trust the hon. Member for Liverpool, Mossley Hill (Mr. Alton) to put together a Committee that would be capable of absorbing that compromise. As an anti-abortionist, I will face that compromise if by doing so I can save unborn life, and many of my hon. Friends would take that view.

The same goes for the line we draw. To be perfectly honest, I would draw the line below the one that the hon. Member for Mossley Hill has drawn, but if in order to save a certain proportion of unborn life I must accept a slightly higher line, I will, with reluctance but straightforwardly, accept that line. All that I ask is that this important Bill, which fills a gap that the 1967 Act left unaddressed and attempts to define the rights of individuals who cannot speak for themselves, should have a chance to be fully examined and to return to the House for final approval or disapproval. I would say to my hon. Friend the Member for Berkshire, East: let us not shut the door this morning. This matter is too important. We must keep the door open because what finally emerges will be a wise, humane, just and civilised Bill; and the present legislation fulfils none of those criteria.

1.25 pm

Mr. D. N. Campbell-Savours (Workington): The hon. Member for Maidstone (Miss Widdecombe) set out graphically the nature of the compromise that we are required to support if we wish to reduce to some extent the number of abortions that take place annually.

This Bill is not an ideal Bill and was never advocated as such. The hon. Member for Liverpool, Mossley Hill (Mr. Alton)—my hon. Friend for the purposes of this debate—came top of the ballot. If every hon. Member had the right to introduce a private Member's Bill, we should not be faced with the dilemma that confronts my hon. Friend the Member for Mossley Hill. He believes in a principle. He won the place in the ballot; it was not me or any other hon. Member.

My hon. Friend had to say to the organisations outside the House, "If you wish me to place this matter before Parliament, you will have to accept that, in framing the Bill that I propose, I shall not be able to compromise on one matter." That matter was the question of handicap. My hon. Friend was imprisoned in that position because of his experience of teaching handicapped children for six years. My hon. Friends may find that difficult to s they must understand that if one cannot secu route to abortion reform, one has no option b offers from hon. Members who are prepared t private Member's slot for reform that objectives.

Before I speak to the Bill in detail, I shoul something about the Labour party and what h in the past few weeks. We have been told that party has exerted pressure on its members. I w it absolutely clear that that is not the case. I ad to those outside the House who have misrepe debate and this argument in a most grotesqu I say that the letter from the general secretary Whitty, was a fair and reasonable letter set Labour party's policy. He was absolutely right letter, and he said, as the great majority of me party would say, that it is for hon. Members t themselves.

Then we were told that the Labour Chief W out a letter over Christmas issuing instructions true; it never happened. I received the letter, w out that two important private Members' Bill debated at the beginning of January and ex hope that there would be a substantial att those debates. I say again to those misrepresented these matters outside the Hou is the truth, and I say it as a supporter of the that that information will be taken back to gr the country.

Let me deal with the so-called demand for Whip. I have not heard a demand for a thre has never been part of the argument that t a three-line Whip. But I understand why circumstances, there should be a three-line W Labour party takes a position, it is entitled— has not done so to date—to demand a thre on such matters. Hon. Members who want t their conscience have the right to decide wha to do if they find that a three-line Whip has be upon them. That is their right, and my right me to decide whether to vote aye or no. If something, I shall apply what is for me an tradition of the House and cast my vote acco

One of the fiercest opponents of the Bi Friend the Member for Preston (Mrs. W against a three-line Whip, on a very important 1978 — the Finance Bill. She expressed according to her conscience and judgment a penalised for so doing. If the party thinks t matters voting should be whipped, I do not tak to that. I say to people outside the House an in the Strangers' Gallery that this is a matt conscience but that even a three-line Whip al follow one's conscience.

No one will ever drive me into a Lobby in a measure with which I do not agree. Some ho who support the Bill, but particularly some o oppose it, are quick to flex their muscles wh about matters in which they think conscience i

I joined the Labour party for a specific re mid 1960s I built my Socialism on my percep and on the importance that I gave to life issues hanging and was in favour of unilater disarmament. That was one of the things that into the Labour party. I supported life issues fi

[Mr. D. N. Campbell-Savours]

days in the party, and that was one of the crucial building blocks on which I built my Socialism. For many of us, that is an immutable position. As long as we remain in the political process and are able to advocate these matters we shall cast our votes in favour of reform of the law on an issue of this nature. That is because we believe in a principle. However, that does not detract from our right to recognise that some hon. Members, such as the hon. Member for Maidstone (Miss Widdecombe), feel equally fiercely about such issues. She has the right to put a compromise before the House, knowing that it will be heard throughout the House for what it is.

I have outlined my building blocks, but they are also the building blocks for people throughout the Labour movement. Many people in the movement believe in the life tradition and support my position. In the last few weeks they have written to me and said that, although the party has taken a decision that they cannot accept, they are still Socialists. In formulating their case those people have drawn on exactly the same strands in their philosophy as those strands in my philosophy that hold me together politically. They are faced with the same conflicts.

Mr. Brian Sedgemore (Hackney, South and Shoreditch): Will my hon. Friend give way?

Mr. Campbell-Savours: No. My hon. Friend has just arrived in the Chamber. If he had been here throughout the debate, I would have given way to him.

As I have said, those people are confronted by conflicts. On the one hand, we believe in a principle while, on the other, we know that thousands of women simply cannot find the courage to face the social difficulties that arise and have to proceed with an unwanted pregnancy. I strongly blame the Government for that. My hon. Friend the Member for Cynon Valley (Mrs. Clwyd) said at a dinner the other night that she sat through a Bill or some meeting at which reference was made to an amendment moved in a Committee dealing with social security reform. She said that Conservatives had refused to accept the responsibility for funding families in which children were in their earliest years.

That is the contradiction for us in the Labour party who believe in the life tradition. We want reform of the law, but the other side of the argument is that many women come to us asking how we can possibly want reform of the law when the very framework and nature of the society that is developing under the Government does not provide the essential support services to ensure at least some help for families who find themselves in this position. That is the conflict that confronts us. In the letters that I have received in the last few weeks, people, especially Labour people, have repeatedly spoken specifically about these matters.

I have heard references to the photograph which was circulated in the newspaper advertisements that we placed in the national press and which was portrayed on hundreds of thousands of postcards that were sent throughout the United Kingdom. I suggest that my hon. Friends who oppose the Bill were distressed by the photograph because it was so graphic in its detail. It was a beautiful photograph of an 18-week foetus. It was clear, precise in colour and produced by the Swedish photographer Nielsson.

The campaign concentrated on that photograph because we wanted to draw the attention of the British people and, indeed, of hon. Members to the fact that we are not talking in grey abstract terms; we are talking about a child who is fully formed in the womb. There was no other way in which we could express, in any detail, what the debate was about. That is why the photograph was used and why the lobby decided that that was the way in which the campaign should be presented. *[Interruption.]* If there were any words to which my hon. Friends might have taken exception, I do not know what they were. However, during the campaign all sides may have used words that we may later regret. Indeed, one such phrase was "foreign woman." I used it. I regretted that from day one because it denoted disrespect, but I have heard it used again in our arguments today. However, I agree that some language should have been modified or not used in the way in which it was.

My hon. Friend the Member for Barking (Ms. Richardson) referred to a Bill that she brought before the House in 1981. I agonised long and hard over that Bill. I am convinced now that in principle she is right. If we are to bring in legislation that will draw women into earlier abortions, we must set up the arrangements to facilitate that. Every time that a young woman is stopped from having an abortion in a clinic in, say, Birmingham, we cannot see that as a gain for the life movement. It is not a gain—it is cheating around the rules. We must ensure that, in the event that we set in place legislation—I hope that the Bill goes through——

Ms. Abbott: Unamended.

Ms. Short: Unamended—go on say it.

Mr. Campbell-Savours: Yes, I hope that the Bill goes through unamended. But I know that it cannot go through in that form. I believe that the Bill will go through in the way in which the hon. Member for Mossley Hill has suggested if amendments are successful.

In the event that the Bill is accepted, I believe that it should be followed rapidly by legislation, or whatever is necessary, so that throughout the United Kingdom abortion is made available within the law as it exists at the time. Equally, there should be proper counselling services whereby woman are given the opportunity of advice so that they are able to make a balanced judgment. It seems utterly wrong that in one part of the country a woman is able to secure a service, which is her right in law, but that in another area she can be obstructed by the medical profession. That seems totally wrong. Part and parcel of the debate on the Bill must be about that provision.

1.38 pm

Mr. Terry Dicks (Hayes and Harlington): I shall make my position on this issue clear straight away. I am in favour of the Bill because I see it as a first step to no abortions whatsoever. I say that to the hon. Member for Birmingham, Ladywood (Ms. Short), who is now leaving the Chamber, and who asked us to be honest. I am being honest about this, because there is no point in behaving in any other way.

In saying that, I am aware of the implications for ladies who have been raped, and the implications relating to incest and for the handicapped children who might be born as a result. Nobody has felt more strongly about the impact of rape on ladies than I have, and nobody takes a stronger view about child abuse in the home.

We have heard a great deal today about women's rights, but nothing about women's obligations. The

minute a lady takes part in a sexual act, other than by force, she loses the right to control what happens to her body, because at the time of conception there is the beginning of another life inside her. That second life has rights that have to be recognised.

I shall now deal with disabled and handicapped children who may not be born. For children to enjoy life, they do not have to have the speed of an athlete, the body of a bodybuilder or the agility of a gymnast. The book entitled "The Dam-Burst of Dreams" about Christopher Nolan shows that. That young lad has no physical co-ordination and no normal body movement, but he can perceive life through his words and thoughts clearer than many of us sitting in the House now. He, if anybody, represents the right to life no matter what the handicap. He has the right to life, irrespective of what his mother may have thought.

Mr. Wigley *rose*——

Mr. Dicks: I will not give way.

Fortunately for Christopher Nolan, he has a mother who wanted him and who has been a great help to him. He has made a major contribution to our lives in this country and elsewhere. There are many examples of handicapped children who have grown up to make contributions to our society.

I am being quick because there are others who want to speak, but I should say that this debate has caused me a great deal of heart-searching. Fifty years ago, a mother of 40 had a child who was born a spastic. That child was me, the Member of Parliament for Hayes and Harlington. I am concerned because I believe that, if the technology that is available now had been available 50 years ago, a doctor may well have said to my mother, "You are 40 years old and you are carrying a disabled child. There is brain damage. Please have it aborted." Opposition Members may wish that had happened; I do not know. I am saying that my right to life came about because the technology was not available to help a doctor advise my mother about whether to allow me to live.

I am a spastic. Of course I am nowhere near as bad as Christopher Nolan, but I have to cope with the stresses and strains of minor disability. However, there was loving care from my mother in my home. By the age of nine, she had taught me how to do up my shoelaces because I could not use my hands properly. She told me that I could take part in sport and lead a normal life. She told me that, if she had her way, which she did, I would make some sort of success of my life. I suppose that having arrived here as a spastic with cerebral palsy is a measure of success.

I have dealt mainly with handicap because people have said that mothers should have the right to decide whether to have a handicapped child. We are talking about a life inside a woman. The doctors advising that women could be wrong. That child could be born, survive and understand what is going on. Christopher Nolan represents the reason why we should not have any abortions at all. However, I understand and am concerned about incest and rape and the implication of a child being born as a result. I do not know the answer, but I do know that life is important from the minute that conception takes place. Of course ladies have rights and we must consider them, but they also have obligations and responsibilities that they have to face up to.

The hon. Member for Barking (Ms Richardson) raised the issue of the mentally handicapped having children. Perhaps in this enlightened society we should be thinking about telling such people that they should not have children and helping them to enjoy a full life. We cannot say that they have the right to have children and then say that they can have an abortion. That is inconsistent.

By its very nature, abortion is wrong. Abortion at any time is wrong. I support the Alton Bill, if I can call it that, because he is making a move in the right direction. Please let us not use handicapped or potentially handicapped children inside a woman's womb as a reason for taking a particular point of view. They have a right to life. In many ways, they lead a more fulfilled life than we do. I am convinced that that applies to Christopher Nolan, in his own way.

Mr. Wigley: *rose*——

Mr. Dicks: I beg people to support the Alton Bill, perhaps as a first stage.

1.44 pm

Ms. Mildred Gordon (Bow and Poplar): Sadly, in the twisted society in which we live, it is often impossible for a woman to say, "yes to life", to the life of the embryo growing within her, without damaging her own life and the life of her existing family.

The whole question of abortion is closely linked to other campaigns that women have been fighting for many years. Indeed, it has already been said that not only did we have to campaign for legal abortion, but we have had to campaign continually against repeated attacks on our abortion rights. The Bill represents the thin edge of the wedge; if it is passed, it will lead to further attacks on women's right to legal abortion.

If we were to win those other campaigns for which we are fighting, we would have a more civilised society, there would be few abortions, and late terminations would all but disappear. To achieve that end, we need improved sex education. We need contraceptives of all kinds, freely available and free. We need better housing and employment and training opportunities. We need safer childbirth — our record is not among the best in the advanced world. We must do away with some of the more recent "conveyor belt practices" connected with childbirth in hospitals, which have a traumatic effect on the baby during birth. We want nursery provision for young children. We want money for medical research into foetal abnormalities to discover them at an earlier stage. We need money for disabled people and money to provide facilities for them. We need money from the Government, as of right, for women who are carers of children, the disabled, the sick and the old.

If we win those campaigns, women will be able to have their children and we shall have a civilised society in which the rearing of children will be the joy that it should be. Nowadays, all too often the birth of an unwanted child leads to child abuse, and that is something we should not forget.

Last week, I sent the hon. Member for Liverpool, Mossley Hill (Mr. Alton) a copy of a letter that I had received. I received many sad letters, but I was especially struck by this one, perhaps because it came from an old man. Perhaps it was naive of me to send a copy of that letter to the hon. Member for Mossley Hill, or perhaps it was a reflex action after 40 years of teaching, to try to make people face up to the consequences of their activities.

[Ms. Mildred Gordon]

That old man told me that he had for many years been looking after his handicapped son of 35, who is mentally disabled. The father was bitter and told how his wife had died in her fifties; he put that down to the strain of looking after their handicapped child. He was sad, he was tired, he was despairing, and above all he was haunted by the fear of what would happen to his handicapped son when he died. I have met many people with handicapped children who are haunted by that fear. It is another factor that has not been considered in this debate.

But the central issue, the most important question to consider, is whether women should have control over their bodies—the right to decide what happens within their bodies—or whether they should be controlled by others. Earlier in the debate, a Conservative Member raised the question of class. Money gives one a lot of rights. Those women, who have a lot of money and education, have the right to get round the restrictions of any kind of Bill. If this Bill is passed, such women will be able to find abortionists and will find a way to have their damaged foetuses aborted even at a late stage. However, poorer women would lose their rights. I am concerned for the rights of poorer women not only to have abortions, but to have children. Those two things are connected.

Some years ago, I was in a women's hospital for a check-up. I was shocked to see the number of women there for sterilisation operations. An unduly large proportion of them were black or Asian women. I went all round the ward asking the women why they were having this operation, and most of them had been advised by their doctor to have it as a form of contraception. It is because of my experiences as a young woman, long before 1967, that I am in favour of abortion on request in an adequate Health Sevice. It would solve almost all the problems of late terminations.

I do not know whether some hon. Members understand that no woman approaches abortion lightly. For the first few days after a woman has had a baby, her body trembles when she hears the baby cry. That is nature's way of tying the mother to the baby. This bonding starts from conception, so it is physically impossible for any woman to approach abortion lightly. They approach it after giving serious consideration to the factors involved.

We have all heard about the pre-1967 period and the gin, hot baths, quinine pills, knitting needles and soap suds. We know that the best doctors—those who were caring and kind—were often criminalised and struck off the register.

However hon. Members may not appreciate the constant shadow that was cast over the lives of women, both married and unmarried, by the fear of unwanted pregnancy. Every month, my generation and my mother's generation worried about becoming pregnant, especially if their period was late. They felt caged, trapped and frightened. They wondered what to do and where they would find someone who would give them an abortion if they could not cope with, or afford to have, another child.

The Bill will lead to the criminalisation of women and doctors once again. Hon. Members who are wavering about how to vote should think about their wives, girlfriends, daughters and granddaughters. They should vote for their choice to have control over their bodies; they should vote against this Bill.

1.52 pm

Rev. Ian Paisley (Antrim, North): One fact has emer from the debate about which there has been controversy—92 per cent. of all late abortions are healthy babies. There is common ground on that fact, it has been accepted and confirmed by the Minister.

People have rightly raised their convictions ab womenfolk, handicapped children and other matt They are entitled to do so, but surely we are entitled speak for voiceless, defenceless, inarticulate heal babies. The House must concern itself with that matt

The hon. Member for Liverpool, Mossley Hill (M Alton) has made his personal convictions clear. The h Member for Rochdale (Mr. Smith) said that he was nc Roman Catholic. I need not tell the House my relig *[Laughter.]* We all have personal convictions.

The hon. Member for Maidstone (Miss Widdecom made it clear that our prime interest is healthy babies w should not be aborted. A strong voice should be raised the House for those who cannot speak for themselves

For more than 40 years, I have been a pastoral minis in a working-class district of east Belfast, and I know anguish. I speak as one who has had the experience sitting with young women faced with this problem. I h tried to counsel them and tell them that everything will be over when they have an abortion. I have in my ha a poem which one of them sent to me, and it is the sadd communication that I have ever received. A you unmarried women who became pregnant decided that abortion was the best way out for her and two mon later she wrote:

"There is no more happiness any more
Those days belong now behind a closed door
Darkness and despair now take its place
I hate being a member of the human race"

That young woman's heart was completely broken.

Therefore, there is another side to having abortio there is an aftermath and a harvest. I emphasis that th who adopt the same position as I do feel deeply a understand with compassion the heart-rending decisio that are being made by those people, but there is a mo excellent way.

The purpose of abortion must be questioned. Is it the convenience of others or for the good of the child? Th is the prime question that must be asked. It is simply n enough to say in reply that children are unwanted, should be destroyed. No one has the right to adopt th attitude. The gruesome act of abortion as it has be delineated here today has been repudiated, and it has be said that those facts should not be brought into the deba But we are talking about a child—a real person—who being destroyed. That a child should be destroyed with the mother's womb in that way is something about whi we must righteously protest.

Those who are ardent campaigners for women's rig indict anti-abortionists as taking from women the right exercise control over their fertility, but that is anoth matter from control over life itself, and that must emphasised. Easy-going tolerance has contributed mu to the current vague estimation of the value of life. It do not occur to many that what they call tolerance is in reali a sheer lack of conviction.

It is not particularly significant if a person with no gre convictions says that he or she is tolerant. Tolerance is virtue only if a person believes in something strongly, y respects the rights of another to disagree. True Christi

tolerance does not play footsie with the truth. A good law will not make good people—and we all know that—but evil law not only legalises evil but prevents the development of good and tears down the nation's morality.

The old saying that one cannot make men love by law is true. But Christian realism is not content with that, because it knows that love in social terms is expressed in justice for all, and that "all" includes the unborn child. The Bill calls for an immediate and definite response. The three avenues along which we make our decisions are intellect, conscience and emotion. I contend that in each of those three areas, support for the Bill is the most responsible line that we can take for our society.

1.59 pm

Mr. Seamus Mallon (Newry and Armagh): I want to pay tribute to the promoter of the Bill, the hon. Member for Liverpool, Mossley Hill (Mr. Alton), for the time and effort that he has spent on it and for the amount of abuse that he has had to take because of it. We all know that he exercised a self-denying ordinance by refusing himself the right to be Liberal Chief Whip during these exciting times of trial. For that also he should be praised.

I have two points to make, one of them in response to the question asked by the hon. Member for Birmingham, Ladywood (Ms. Short), who implied that those of us who oppose abortion are somehow being hypocritical by supporting the Bill. That is a valid and understandable criticism, which must be answered. Anyone who believes, as I do, that abortion is wrong must surely take every opportunity to reduce its incidence, even if the step taken will save only one, four, ten or a hundred lives. The decision to compromise with one's own conscience will thus have been rewarded in the most practical way possible.

One thing that has been clear throughout the debate and that will always be clear in such debates is that the issue is not to do with the peripheral matters that have been raised, or with the emotions and anger that have been shown. The subject of our discussion has been variously called a child, a baby, a foetus, a person and a thing. Perhaps if we settled for a proper name, a proper terminology, that might help many of us to make up our minds. I suggest that we substitute the term human being. If we do, there remains one fundamental question to ask and answer as we vote today. What precept of morality, legality or civics can justify the death of 7,000 human beings in this country under a piece of legislation that was sanctioned on the Floor of the House? That is the only serious question for the legislator. We shall answer it today. I repeat it because it is stark, harsh and real, and we shall choose our answer to it when we choose which Lobby to enter. How can we justify in political, legal or civil terms the taking away of life from 7,000 people if we accept the name human being?

2.3 pm

Mrs. Teresa Gorman (Billericay): I have listened with great interest to all the arguments deployed in the debate. One aspect that has been neglected is the consideration of whether we should dignify the Bill that the hon. Member for Liverpool, Mossley Hill (Mr. Alton) has brought before the House by making it law. The hon. Gentleman seeks to introduce the heavy hand of regulation into human behaviour. Human conduct is largely defined by habit and arises spontaneously to be tested and refined in our courts of law. Whenever this issue has been tested in a court of law, the court has come down on the side of the woman. It has not accepted the precedence of an unborn child over the mother. In the latest case in which this was tested, when a young man brought a case against his girl friend who was some 20 weeks pregnant, the court ruled in favour of the young woman, so we are not a society that has no organisation or laws apart from those decided in this House.

The campaign that has been conducted by the hon. Member for Mossley Hill is largely based on emotion and on some very unpleasant, aesthetically revolting suggestions which have been made by hon. Members on both sides of the House. If those conditions apply to abortions, I am sure that we all deplore them, but they are no reason for denying a woman the right to have a termination if, after consulting her family, her doctors and, where appropriate, her religious advisers, she decides to have an abortion. It ill behoves the House to remove that right from her.

I appeal to my fellow Conservative Members, who are prevaricating on an issue of personal rights. The Conservative party takes great pride in having reduced the role of the state in people's lives during the past decade. We are rolling back the state, yet the Bill would push us back decades into the darker realms of human conduct to the time when the most common cause of female mortality was badly conducted abortions.

British women are solidly against the Bill——

Dame Elaine Kellett-Bowman (Lancaster): Rubbish.

Mrs. Gorman: All the polls and surveys that have been sent to us show that the majority of the population is against the Bill——

Dame Elaine Kellett-Bowman: They do not.

Mrs. Gorman: If hon. Members can mention the biased poll conducted by gynaecologists, we can also mention the show of hands on a television programme yesterday, which showed that 90 per cent. of a balanced audience was in favour of a woman's right to choose. It should be noted that every responsible medical society opposes the Bill, including the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists, the Royal College of Midwives, the Royal College of General Practitioners, the British Medical Association, the British Paediatric Association and the Clinical Genetics Society. They are not back-street abortionists making money out of foreign women, with whose plight I sympathise; they are some of the most responsible bodies in the land and they oppose the Bill.

Many other people oppose the Bill. With some of my colleagues—far too few—I attended a moving meeting conducted by parents of handicapped children who have had to live with the problem. I shall not repeat the arguments about physically and mentally handicapped children. Suffice it to say that some of those parents consider it a mercy that children born with appalling difficulties, who live their lives in pain and sorrow and who die young, are now capable of not being born. That is not just my view; it is the view of the parents who attended that meeting.

Many times, the hon. Member for Mossley Hill has trotted out examples of handicapped people who have lived and who are pleased to have lived. I am sure that we

[Mrs. Gorman]

all take pleasure in that. But we heard from a young woman with a genetic disorder whose blood must be changed several times a month, who has a pump under her skin to keep her going, who develops extremely painful lumps in her stomach and who is constantly in pain. She told us that she would rather not be alive. For every case that the hon. Gentleman raised, there is another case. I agree that it is only part of the argument, but it is an extremely potent and important point.

It is a matter of civil rights. It is a matter of a woman's right to decide her own future and her own fertility. This Chamber should not lightly take that right from her. Those who consider that abortion is wrong should test their prejudices in a court of law. Abortion matters should be decided in a court of law, not in the House, where our prejudices and religious attitudes are being used in a variety of ways in an attempt to influence the Bill.

The hon. Member for Mossley Hill poses as a caring progressive. His Bill will bring misery and suffering to thousands of families. Those who really care, those who work with the situation, those who have lived with the situation, and even those who were born in the situation oppose him. I beg the House to oppose the Bill.

2.10 pm

Mrs. Audrey Wise (Preston): I waited for the hon. Member for Liverpool, Mossley Hill (Mr. Alton) to deal with the detail of his Bill. In particular, I waited for him to define what he meant when he said that a woman's pregnancy may be terminated up to the beginning of the 18th week of gestation. I waited for him to tell us what the 18th week of gestation is and how he would go about proving it. There is no legal definition of pregnancy. As a legal matter, the 18th week of gestation does not exist. How would the hon. Gentleman define it? The hon. Gentleman may ask how we define 28 weeks. In practice, we do not; it is not necessary.

The present state of the law is not that abortion is legal up to 28 weeks. Section 1(1) of the Infant Life (Preservation) Act 1929 states:

"any person who, with intent to destroy the life of a child capable of being born alive, by any wilful act causes a child to die before it has an existence independent of its mother, shall be guilty of felony".

The term is:

"a child capable of being born alive".

The law in such cases is applied case by case. A doctor who performs an abortion after 24 weeks must be ready to justify in the courts that the child was not capable of being born alive. This Bill would not allow a case-by-case analysis. It is a general assertion that there is a particular day on which an abortion will become criminal. The hon. Gentleman does not tell us which day.

Which day represents the 18th week of gestation? Supporters of the Bill do not know. Doctors do not know. The woman concerned does not really know. In any case, the woman is in the best position to say, and she is the one to be criminalised, so she cannot be expected to be co-operative.

At the moment, the law is flexible. It puts a medical matter in the proper position to be argued medically, even if it has to be done in the courts. The Bill destroys that. If hon. Members pass the Bill, we will criminalise thousands of women and their doctors and be car the capacity to prove what was being asserted. That be irresponsible.

We have been told a great deal about the possib amending the Bill in Committee. I listened carefully hon. Member for Mossley Hill, and I shall tel Members what he is offering. He said that it wo "proper to examine" how to "rationalise the law". "examine", not "agree with you". He said that if it result in a "useful measure", he would not be intran but he also made clear that his view of a useful m is not likely to be that of the House or of the outside.

In the past, when we have sought to use the proc of the House to examine in detail proposals for ch the abortion laws, we have been accused of proc abuse. I have served on Committees of the House have dealt with abortion. I have been guilty procedural abuse, but of trying to examine the natu detail of the Bill. I do not believe that the House w a Second Reading to the Bill, but, if it does, and w to consider the matter in detail, we shall be abuse

My hon. Friend the Member for Workingto Campbell-Savours) says that the matter will be cons in Committee and that it is a matter of compromi give and take. The quality of his intervention in this can be judged by his comment earlier today that, fr beginning, he regretted the introduction of the sub foreign women. I have a letter from my hon. Friend 17 October 1987, which states:

"The reasons we have chosen 18 weeks are as foll

The concluding sentence of his first paragraph stat

"Over half of these abortions are on foreign wom

He did not regret the matter sufficiently.

The offers to amend the Bill, being made so gene in the House today, arise for only one reason sponsors have calculated that they cannot win with t as it stands at present, so they are trying to make us that the Bill, which was not published until 18 Dec 1987, will suddenly, by 22 January 1988, be subj wholesale change.

Ms. Short: This issue is crucial to many hon. Me The hon. Member for Liverpool, Mossley Hill (Mr. said that if it were amended and still useful, he continue to support it. He did not say that he support any amendment to allow abortion for abnormalities.

Mrs. Wise: The hon. Member for Mossley Hill said that he is against abortion per se, whether ea late. That is why he voted against the attempt of m Friend the Member for Barking (Ms. Richardson) years ago to make better provision for early abortio are being offered merely procedural gambles. I procedural ploy to persuade us to give way becau supporters cannot push through the Bill they have ac presented to the House.

This is a most important matter. We are dealing the lives and happiness of many people and we shou subject them to a mere procedural gamble in the H It is also very difficult to get matters which have considered in Committee back on to the Floor House. We do so by all sorts of ploys, such as s changing the words. How can we change the word weeks"? They do not lend themselves to that sort of

The supporters of the Bill say that they are pro-life. I want to protest on behalf of everybody who will vote against the Bill. We are pro-life, but we do not neglect the fact that people also have a right to happiness. Unlike the sponsors of the Bill, on Tuesday, in the Grand Committee Room, we listened to the parents of handicapped children. They said that they had their abortions out of love and described watching their children die. The hon. Member for Birmingham, Edgbaston (Dame J. Knight) says that those women have a choice—to remain childless. That will happen if the Bill is passed. We say that women should have the choice of termination of pregnancy and then to go on to bear a healthy child if possible.

I am not ducking the issue of those terminations that are not the result of foetal handicap. Women can be driven to desperation for reasons other than foetal handicap. In addition to the list of those who have said that the legislation is wrong, the Faculty of Community Medicine tells us—if hon. Members have read the brief—what happens to babies who are unwanted.

The remarkable consensus on this issue stretches from every woman Labour Member right across to the Conservative Women's National Committee. That consensus arises not because we have suddenly all become the same sort of people, but because as women we share some life experiences. Hon. Members must be careful in riding against this broad, strong view of women who, day after day, act out of love.

2.21 pm

Mrs. Elizabeth Peacock (Batley and Spen): We have had a debate lasting more than four hours which at times has been heated and emotional, as is right when we discuss such a subject. Some 23 right hon. and hon. Members have spoken. I trust that, because of the limited time left to me, the House will forgive my not referring directly to every contribution.

Not all the Bill's supporters are religious zealots, as has been suggested by the media. In fact, I have not been able to spot one. My hon. Friend the Member for Billericay (Mrs. Gorman) suggested that we are all religious zealots. Many who supported the Bill would not support the abolition of abortion, so may we please have that on the record. We are told that we are all anti-abortionists. That is not true. There is much support for the Bill in the House and throughout the country by people who would not wish to see the return of back-street abortions. The hon. Member for Liverpool, Mossley Hill (Mr. Alton) is, as he said, a Liberal and a Catholic, yet we have seen during today's debate and previously that the Bill attracts support, and opposition, on both sides of the House and among people of all religious and Christian backgrounds.

In 1966 the right hon. Member for Tweeddale, Ettrick and Lauderdale (Mr. Steel) said:

"We want to stamp out the back-street abortions, but it is not the intention of the promoters of the Bill to leave a wide open door for abortion on request."

I wonder whether that is still the case today. Later, the right hon. Gentleman said:

"there is a clear statement in the Bill that nothing in the Bill affects the protection afforded by the law to the viable foetus." — [*Official Report*, 22 July 1966; Vol. 732, c. 1075-77.]

Can we honestly say that that is the fact today? Perhaps not.

Britain's current limit of 28 weeks is the single reason, as we have heard repeatedly, why so many women from foreign countries come here for abortions. Some 43 per cent. of those seeking abortion in recent years have come from other countries. In short, we are becoming the foetal dustbin of Europe. The House should not let that continue.

It has been mentioned that this week the Irish writer Christopher Nolan was awarded a literary prize. That is a grand example of how disability can mask a great talent. Hon. Members realise that that young man lacked oxygen during birth, causing his disabilities. We are not suggesting that he was a disabled foetus. However, we can learn a lot from what Christopher Nolan has to say — *[Interruption.]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: This has been a very quiet and serious debate. I hope that it will end in that way.

Mrs. Peacock: Perhaps the House will give me a moment to refer to a very short passage from Christopher Nolan's book in which he talks about his own life and says that the future for babies like him never looked more promising, but now society frowned upon giving spastic babies a right to life. Now they have threatened to abort babies like him, to detect in advance their handicapped state, to burrow through the womb and label them for death, to batter their mothers with fear for their coming, and yet the spastic baby would ever be the soul which would never kill, maim or hate brotherhood. Why, then, did society fear the crippled child? That is a timely lesson to us all.

I know that time is not on my side and I cannot say many of the things I would have wished to say. The House is now undecided about whether it should be allowed to legislate on issues that affect women, but that has been happening for centuries. There has always been a male-dominated House of Commons legislating for women. Why should that change today? Now, in 1988, there are more women in the House than ever before, so why should we change the rules? Of course, we should like there to be more women in the House, but at present we must put up with the number that is already here.

All too often, abortion is billed as a battle between the rights of the mother and those of her unborn child. The Bill is designed to provide a choice for mother and child. That is why I support it.

We make many claims to be a civilised society. How can such a society allow the dismemberment of human beings without anaesthetic for removal from the womb, followed by the careful rebuilding of the dead child in some hospital sluice room to check that nothing has been left inside the mother? The living unborn deserve better than obscene and macabre games.

It is important that the Bill should be debated more fully in Committee. We have heard many reasons why it should not reach Committee. I ask hon. Members who support the Bill to vote for it today to ensure that it reaches Committee so that many of the objections, worries and concerns that have been expressed today can be examined in much more detail and voted on by the House at a later stage. I commend the Bill to the House.

Mr. Cyril Smith *rose in his place and claimed to move,* That the question be now put.

Question put, That the question be now put—

Hon. Members: No.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. I wish to be quite clear that the House appreciates the Question that I put. The closure has been moved, and I put the Question on the closure. I will put the Question again.

Question, That the Question be now put, *put and agreed to*.

Question put accordingly, That the Bill be now read a Second Time:—

The House divided: Ayes 296, Noes 251.

Division No. 150] **[2.28 pm**

AYES

Aitken, Jonathan
Alison, Rt Hon Michael
Allason, Rupert
Alton, David
Amess, David
Amos, Alan
Arnold, Jacques *(Gravesham)*
Arnold, Tom *(Hazel Grove)*
Ashby, David
Aspinwall, Jack
Atkinson, David
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Baldry, Tony
Batiste, Spencer
Battle, John
Beggs, Roy
Beith, A. J.
Bell, Stuart
Bendall, Vivian
Bennett, Nicholas *(Pembroke)*
Benyon, W.
Bevan, David Gilroy
Bigge-Davison, Sir John
Blackburn, Dr John G.
Blaker, Rt Hon Sir Peter
Boscawen, Hon Robert
Boswell, Tim
Bowden, A *(Brighton K'pto'n)*
Bowden, Gerald *(Dulwich)*
Bowis, John
Boyson, Rt Hon Dr Sir Rhodes
Braine, Rt Hon Sir Bernard
Brandon-Bravo, Martin
Bray, Dr Jeremy
Brazier, Julian
Bright, Graham
Brown, Michael *(Brigg & Cl'ts)*
Budgen, Nicholas
Burns, Simon
Burt, Alistair
Butcher, John
Butler, Chris
Butterfill, John
Campbell, Ron *(Blyth Valley)*
Campbell-Savours, D. N.
Canavan, Dennis
Carlile, Alex *(Mont'g)*
Carlisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Carrington, Matthew
Cash, William
Chalker, Rt Hon Mrs Lynda
Channon, Rt Hon Paul
Chapman, Sydney
Chope, Christopher
Clark, Hon Alan *(Plym'th S'n)*
Clark, Dr Michael *(Rochford)*
Clark, Sir W. *(Croydon S)*
Clarke, Tom *(Monklands W)*
Conway, Derek
Cook, Frank *(Stockton N)*
Coombs, Simon *(Swindon)*
Cope, John
Crowther, Stan
Cummings, J.
Cunliffe, Lawrence
Curry, David
Davis, David *(Boothferry)*
Day, Stephen
Devlin, Tim
Dickens, Geoffrey
Dicks, Terry
Dixon, Don
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James
Dover, Den
Dunn, Bob
Durant, Tony
Eggar, Tim
Emery, Sir Peter
Evennett, David
Ewing, Mrs Margaret *(Moray)*
Fallon, Michael
Favell, Tony
Fearn, Ronald
Fenner, Dame Peggy
Field, Frank *(Birkenhead)*
Finsberg, Sir Geoffrey
Fookes, Miss Janet
Forman, Nigel
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Forsythe, Clifford *(Antrim S)*
Fox, Sir Marcus
Franks, Cecil
Freeman, Roger
French, Douglas
Gale, Roger
Garel-Jones, Tristan
Glyn, Dr Alan
Goodhart, Sir Philip
Gow, Ian
Grant, Sir Anthony *(CambsSW)*
Greenway, Harry *(Ealing N)*
Greenway, John *(Rydale)*
Gregory, Conal
Griffiths, Peter *(Portsmouth N)*
Grocott, Bruce
Hamilton, Hon A. *(Epsom)*
Hamilton, Neil *(Tatton)*
Hanley, Jeremy
Hannam, John
Hardy, Peter
Hargreaves, A. *(B'ham H'll Gr')*
Hargreaves, Ken *(Hyndburn)*
Hawkins, Christopher
Hayes, Jerry
Hayhoe, Rt Hon Sir Barney
Hayward, Robert
Heddle, John
Hicks, Mrs Maureen *(Wolv' NE)*
Hill, James
Hind, Kenneth
Holt, Richard
Hordern, Sir Peter
Howard, Michael
Howell, Rt Hon David *(G'dford)*
Hughes, Robert G. *(Harrow W)*
Hughes, Sean *(Knowsley S)*
Hughes, Simon *(Southwark)*
Hume, John
Hunt, David *(Wirral W)*
Hunter, Andrew
Hurd, Rt Hon Douglas
Irvine, Michael
Irving, Charles
Janman, Timothy
Jones, Gwilym *(Cardiff N)*
Jones, Robert B *(Herts W)*
Kellett-Bowman, Mrs Elaine
Kennedy, Charles
Key, Robert
Kilfedder, James
King, Roger *(B'ham N'thfield)*
Kirkhope, Timothy
Knapman, Roger
Knight, Greg *(Derby North)*
Knight, Dame Jill *(Edgbaston)*
Lambie, David
Lamond, James
Lamont, Rt Hon Norman
Lang, Ian
Latham, Michael
Lawrence, Ivan
Lawson, Rt Hon Nigel
Leigh, Edward *(Gainsbor'gh)*
Lennox-Boyd, Hon Mark
Lester, Jim *(Broxtowe)*
Lightbown, David
Lilley, Peter
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
Lofthouse, Geoffrey
Lord, Michael
Luce, Rt Hon Richard
Lyell, Sir Nicholas
McAvoy, Tom
McCrea, Rev William
McCrindle, Robert
McCusker, Harold
Macdonald, Calum
McFall, John
Macfarlane, Sir Neil
McGrady, E. K.
MacGregor, John
Maclean, David
McLoughlin, Patrick
McNamara, Kevin
Maginnis, Ken
Major, Rt Hon John
Malins, Humfrey
Mallon, Seamus
Mans, Keith
Marlow, Tony
Marshall, John *(Hendon S)*
Martin, Michael *(Springburn)*
Mates, Michael
Maude, Hon Francis
Mawhinney, Dr Brian
Mayhew, Rt Hon Sir Patrick
Mellor, David
Millan, Rt Hon Bruce
Miller, Hal
Moate, Roger
Molyneaux, Rt Hon James
Monro, Sir Hector
Montgomery, Sir Fergus
Moore, Rt Hon John
Morris, Rt Hon A *(W'shawe)*
Morris, M *(N'hampton S)*
Morrison, Hon P *(Chester)*
Moss, Malcolm
Moynihan, Hon C.
Neubert, Michael
Nicholls, Patrick
Nicholson, David *(Taunton)*
Oakes, Rt Hon Gordon
O'Brien, William
Page, Richard
Paice, James
Paisley, Rev Ian
Parkinson, Rt Hon Cecil
Parry, Robert
Patten, Chris *(Bath)*
Patten, John *(Oxford W)*
Pattie, Rt Hon Sir Geoffrey
Pawsey, James
Peacock, Mrs Elizab
Pendry, Tom
Porter, Barry *(Wirra*
Porter, David *(Wave*
Portillo, Michael
Powell, William *(Co*
Price, Sir David
Raison, Rt Hon Tim
Redwood, John
Reid, John
Renton, Tim
Rhys Williams, Sir
Roberts, Wyn *(Conw*
Robertson, George
Robinson, Peter *(Be*
Roe, Mrs Marion
Ross, William *(Lond*
Rossi, Sir Hugh
Rost, Peter
Rowe, Andrew
Rowlands, Ted
Rumbold, Mrs Angel
Sainsbury, Hon Tim
Salmond, Alex
Sayeed, Jonathan
Shaw, David *(Dover)*
Shelton, William *(Str*
Shepherd, Colin *(He*
Shepherd, Richard *(*
Shersby, Michael
Sims, Roger
Skeet, Sir Trevor
Smith, Cyril *(Rochda*
Smith, Sir Dudley *(W*
Smith, Rt Hon J. *(Mo*
Smyth, Rev Martin *(*
Soames, Hon Nichol
Speed, Keith
Speller, Tony
Spicer, Michael *(S W*
Stanbrook, Ivor
Stanley, Rt Hon John
Steen, Anthony
Stern, Michael
Stevens, Lewis
Stewart, Allan *(East*
Stewart, Andrew *(Sh*
Stewart, Ian *(Hertford*
Stokes, John
Sumberg, David
Summerson, Hugo
Taylor, John M *(Solih*
Taylor, Teddy *(S'end*
Tebbit, Rt Hon Norma
Temple-Morris, Peter
Thompson, D. *(Calde*
Thompson, Jack *(Wa*
Thompson, Patrick *(N*
Thorne, Neil
Thornton, Malcolm
Townsend, Cyril D. *(*
Tracey, Richard
Trippier, David
Twinn, Dr Ian
Vaughan, Sir Gerard
Waddington, Rt Hon D
Wakeham, Rt Hon Jo
Waldegrave, Hon Will
Walden, George
Walker, A. Cecil *(Bel*
Walker, Rt Hon P. *(W*
Waller, Gary
Walters, Dennis
Ward, John
Wardle, C. *(Bexhill)*
Watts, John
Welsh, Andrew *(Angu*
Whitney, Ray
Wilkinson, John

Wilshire, David
Wood, Timothy
Worthington, Anthony
Yeo, Tim

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. Toby Jessel and
Miss Ann Widdecombe.

NOES

Abbott, Ms Diane
Adams, Allen *(Paisley N)*
Adley, Robert
Alexander, Richard
Allen, Graham
Anderson, Donald
Arbuthnot, James
Archer, Rt Hon Peter
Armstrong, Ms Hilary
Ashley, Rt Hon Jack
Ashton, Joe
Banks, Tony *(Newham NW)*
Barnes, Harry *(Derbyshire NE)*
Barnes, Mrs Rosie *(Greenwich)*
Barron, Kevin
Beckett, Margaret
Benn, Rt Hon Tony
Bennett, A. F. *(D'nt'n & R'dish)*
Bermingham, Gerald
Bidwell, Sydney
Blair, Tony
Blunkett, David
Boateng, Paul
Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Boyes, Roland
Bradley, Keith
Brown, Gordon *(D'mline E)*
Brown, Nicholas *(Newcastle E)*
Brown, Ron *(Edinburgh Leith)*
Browne, John *(Winchester)*
Bruce, Malcolm *(Gordon)*
Buchan, Norman
Buchanan-Smith, Rt Hon Alick
Buck, Sir Antony
Buckley, George
Caborn, Richard
Callaghan, Jim
Campbell, Menzies *(Fife NE)*
Carlisle, John, *(Luton N)*
Cartwright, John
Clark, Dr David *(S Shields)*
Clay, Bob
Clelland, David
Clwyd, Mrs Ann
Cohen, Harry
Coleman, Donald
Colvin, Michael
Cook, Robin *(Livingston)*
Corbett, Robin
Corbyn, Jeremy
Couchman, James
Cousins, Jim
Cox, Tom
Cran, James
Cryer, Bob
Cunningham, Dr John
Darling, Alastair
Davies, Rt Hon Denzil *(Llanelli)*
Davies, Q. *(Staml'd & Spald'g)*
Davies, Ron *(Caerphilly)*
Davis, Terry *(B'ham Hodge H'l)*
Dobson, Frank
Doran, Frank
Dunnachie, James
Dunwoody, Hon Mrs Gwyneth
Dykes, Hugh
Eadie, Alexander
Eastham, Ken
Evans, David *(Welwyn Hatf'd)*
Evans, John *(St Helens N)*
Ewing, Harry *(Falkirk E)*
Fairbairn, Nicholas
Fatchett, Derek
Faulds, Andrew
Fields, Terry *(L'pool B G'n)*
Fisher, Mark
Flannery, Martin
Flynn, Paul
Foot, Rt Hon Michael
Forth, Eric
Foster, Derek
Foulkes, George
Fraser, John
Fyfe, Mrs Maria
Galbraith, Samuel
Gardiner, George
Garrett, John *(Norwich South)*
Garrett, Ted *(Wallsend)*
George, Bruce
Gilbert, Rt Hon Dr John
Gill, Christopher
Gilmour, Rt Hon Sir Ian
Godman, Dr Norman A.
Golding, Mrs Llin
Goodson-Wickes, Dr Charles
Gordon, Ms Mildred
Gorman, Mrs Teresa
Gould, Bryan
Grant, Bernie *(Tottenham)*
Griffiths, Nigel *(Edinburgh S)*
Griffiths, Win *(Bridgend)*
Ground, Patrick
Harman, Ms Harriet
Haselhurst, Alan
Haynes, Frank
Healey, Rt Hon Denis
Heath, Rt Hon Edward
Heffer, Eric S.
Hicks, Robert *(Cornwall SE)*
Higgins, Rt Hon Terence L.
Hinchliffe, David
Holland, Stuart
Hood, James
Howarth, Alan *(Strat'd-on-A)*
Howarth, George *(Knowsley N)*
Howells, Geraint
Hoyle, Doug
Hughes, John *(Coventry NE)*
Hughes, Robert *(Aberdeen N)*
Hughes, Roy *(Newport E)*
Hunt, John *(Ravensbourne)*
Illsley, Eric
Ingram, Adam
Jack, Michael
Janner, Greville
John, Brynmor
Johnston, Sir Russell
Jones, Martyn *(Clwyd S W)*
Kinnock, Rt Hon Neil
Kirkwood, Archy
Knowles, Michael
Knox, David
Leadbitter, Ted
Leighton, Ron
Lestor, Miss Joan *(Eccles)*
Lewis, Terry
Litherland, Robert
Livingstone, Ken
Livsey, Richard
Lloyd, Tony *(Stretford)*
Loyden, Eddie
McAllion, John
McCartney, Ian
McKelvey, William
McLeish, Henry
Maclennan, Robert
McTaggart, Bob
McWilliam, John
Madden, Max
Madel, David
Mahon, Mrs Alice
Maples, John
Marek, Dr John
Mariand, Paul
Marshall, Jim *(Leicester S)*
Martin, David *(Portsmouth S)*
Martlew, Eric
Maxton, John
Meacher, Michael
Meale, Alan
Michael, Alun
Michie, Bill *(Sheffield Heeley)*
Michie, Mrs Ray *(Arg'l & Bute)*
Miscampbell, Norman
Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)*
Mitchell, Austin *(G't Grimsby)*
Mitchell, David *(Hants NW)*
Moonie, Dr Lewis
Morgan, Rhodri
Morley, Elliott
Morris, Rt Hon J *(Aberavon)*
Morrison, Sir Charles *(Devizes)*
Mowlam, Marjorie
Mullin, Chris
Needham, Richard
Nellist, Dave
Nelson, Anthony
Nicholson, Miss E. *(Devon W)*
O'Neill, Martin
Orme, Rt Hon Stanley
Owen, Rt Hon Dr David
Patchett, Terry
Patnick, Irvine
Pike, Peter
Powell, Ray *(Ogmore)*
Prescott, John
Primarolo, Ms Dawn
Quin, Ms Joyce
Radice, Giles
Raffan, Keith
Randall, Stuart
Rathbone, Tim
Redmond, Martin
Rees, Rt Hon Merlyn
Rhodes James, Robert
Richardson, Ms Jo
Riddick, Graham
Robinson, Geoffrey
Rogers, Allan
Rooker, Jeff
Ross, Ernie *(Dundee W)*
Ruddock, Ms Joan
Ryder, Richard
Sackville, Hon Tom
Scott, Nicholas
Sedgemore, Brian
Shaw, Sir Giles *(Pudsey)*
Sheerman, Barry
Sheldon, Rt Hon Robert
Shephard, Mrs G. *(Norfolk SW)*
Shore, Rt Hon Peter
Skinner, Dennis
Smith, Andrew *(Oxford E)*
Smith, C. *(Isl'ton & F'bury)*
Smith, Tim *(Beaconsfield)*
Snape, Peter
Soley, Clive
Spearing, Nigel
Spicer, Sir Jim *(Dorset W)*
Squire, Robin
Steel, Rt Hon David
Steinberg, Gerald
Stott, Roger
Stradling Thomas, Sir John
Strang, Gavin
Straw, Jack
Taylor, Mrs Ann *(Dewsbury)*
Taylor, Matthew *(Truro)*
Thomas, Dafydd Elis
Thurnham, Peter
Tredinnick, David
Trotter, Neville
Turner, Dennis
Vaz, Keith
Wall, Pat
Walley, Ms Joan
Wardell, Gareth *(Gower)*
Wareing, Robert N.
Warren, Kenneth
Wells, Bowen
Welsh, Michael *(Doncaster N)*
Wheeler, John
Wiggin, Jerry
Wigley, Dafydd
Williams, Rt Hon A. J.
Williams, Alan W. *(Carm'then)*
Wilson, Brian
Winnick, David
Wise, Mrs Audrey
Wolfson, Mark
Young, David *(Bolton SE)*

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. Andrew MacKay and
Ms. Clare Short.

Question accordingly agreed to.

Bill read a Second time, and committed to a Standing Committee pursuant to Standing Order No. 61 (Committal of Bills).

Private Members' Bills

UNBORN CHILDREN (PROTECTION) BILL

Order for Second Reading read.

Hon. Members: Object.

Second Reading deferred till Friday 5 February.

PLANNING PERMISSION (DEMOLITION OF HOUSES) BILL

Order for Second Reading read.

Hon. Members: Object.

Second Reading deferred till Friday 4 March.

MISUSE OF DRUGS BILL

Order for Second Reading read.

Hon. Members: Object.

Second Reading deferred till Friday 13 May.

ABORTION (FINANCIAL BENEFIT) BILL

Order for Second Reading read.

Hon. Members: Object.

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Sir Paul Dean): Second reading what day? No day named.

REGISTRATION OF COMMERCIAL LOBBYING INTERESTS BILL

Order for Second Reading read.

Hon. Members: Object.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Second Reading what day? No day named.

COMMUNITY HEALTH COUNCILS TO INFORMATION) BILL

Bill read a Second time.

Bill committed to a Standing Committe Standing Order No. 61 (Committal of Bills

DATA PROTECTION ACT 1984 (AM BILL

Order for Second Reading read.

Hon. Members: Object.

Second Reading deferred till Friday 26 F

CONCESSIONARY TELEVISION L FOR STATE RETIREMENT PENSIO

Order for Second Reading read.

Hon. Members: Object.

Second Reading deferred till Friday 26 F

SLAUGHTER OF DEER BIL

Order read for resuming adjourned deba Reading [11 December].

Question again proposed, That the Bill b Second time.

Hon. Members: Object.

Debate to be resumed on Friday 5 Februa

NATIONAL HEALTH SERVICE (IM PROVISION OF SERVICES) B

Order for Second Reading read.

Hon. Members: Object.

Second Reading deferred till Friday 26 Fe

Parliamentary Sovereignty

▶ *Motion made, and Question proposed,* That this House do now adjourn.—*[Mr. Lennox-Boyd.]*

2.45 pm

Mr. Teddy Taylor (Southend, East): I apologise to my right hon. Friend the Minister of State for keeping her here at the end of a busy week. However, I welcome the opportunity to draw the House's attention to what I regard as a serious matter—the erosion of parliamentary sovereignty, stemming from recent actions of the institutions of the European Economic Community. Much of it has gone largely unnoticed, but the time has come to look at what has been lost and at what is at risk and to consider whether there is any action that we can take to curb the process, if that is in the national interest.

Much of the recent loss of sovereignty has obliged the Government to take steps against their will and judgment. Quite frankly, some have made the Government look silly and break pledges that they have given to Parliament. Our sovereign Parliament seems to be on the road to achieving county council status.

I shall give a few examples. In December 1984 the Prime Minister came to this House of Commons, about six months after agreeing to a massive increase in the Common Market's cash—an increase of about 25 per cent. in real terms—to announce that agreement had been reached on strict budgetary controls which would ensure that the Common Market's agricultural spending would not increase by more than the increase in the own resources base. That was not just a statement of intent. In the Prime Minister's own words, it was an agreement that was binding on the Council—the supreme authority of the Common Market. My right hon. Friend further explained that although the VAT base had been increased from 1 per cent. to 1·4 per cent., that was the legal limit of expenditure and could be increased to a maximum of 1·6 per cent. only by unanimous agreement in 1988.

While expressing doubts about the advisability of handing over more cash, the House welcomed the clear and unambiguous assurance from the Prime Minister. Nobody doubted her sincerity. However, since then those binding controls have proved to be a sick joke. Spending has rocketed well beyond the ceiling of 1·4 per cent. In fact, it has gone beyond the 1·6 per cent. ceiling which had never been agreed to by anybody.

That has been done by a series of devices operated by the Commission. For example, there has been the introduction of the metric year of 10 months, which was achieved by requiring payment into the Common Market a month early and paying out bills a month late. It has been achieved also by transferring the responsibility for costs, such as that of butter dumping, from the Common Market to member states, although the Court of Auditors has stated that the device was wholly contrary to Common Market law.

Parliament's representatives have lost — it seems completely — their power to control expenditure to a non-elected body, the Common Market Commission, which is simply a group of European civil servants.

Mr. David Curry (Skipton and Ripon): Does my hon. Friend appreciate that all the measures that he has enumerated were agreed to by the Council of Ministers on a proposal by the Commission? Certainly, the Commission is the Executive in carrying out those measures, but Commission did not invent or implement without authority of the Council of Ministers, which is respon to this House.

Mr. Taylor: I respect my hon. Friend's knowledg European matters, but I should point out that a Com Market body, the Court of Auditors, has said that transfer of responsibility for butter dumping was unlaw That clear statement was put in a report to the Counc Ministers. However, it was never discussed by the Co of Ministers which, therefore, did not come to conclusion on it. In effect, something that has condemned as illegal was done without any authority f anybody. My hon. Friend the Member for Skipton Ripon (Mr. Curry) is shaking his head. I wonder whe he would deny the fact that the Court of Auditors has that it was unlawful and deny the fact that it was considered or decided upon by the Council of Minis I suggest that he should check that. I think that he m get an unpleasant surprise. If British civil servants acted in that way, they would no doubt be behind bar now.

We see the same loss of sovereignty over the iniqui common agricultural policy. When we consider the pre debates about the financing of the Health Service whether £1 billion might be provided to solve its probl it is sickening to realise that the EEC is currently spen over £11 billion per year solely on dumping, destro and storing food surpluses, with the Soviet Union Eastern Europe being the main beneficiaries. spending is now wholly beyond the control of democratic body. It has breached wildly the solemn binding undertakings of the European Council. British intervention boards are forced to pay out mas subsidies to enable the Soviets to obtain butter at pound and beef at 11p a pound. Our Prime Mini protests, rightly, about that direct subsidy of the So war machine, but it seems there is nothing that Government or Parliament can do about it.

Previously we considered that we had the ultim power to use the veto on increases in own resources limited fall-back power. However, the devices of Commission have made that worthless.

The one power that Parliament fought to secure that is still regarded as the base of sovereignty is the r to determine our own taxes. It is true that in the Si European Act we agreed to work towards harmonisa of indirect taxation in so far as it was necessary to se the internal market. However, the Prime Minister pointed out that that section in the Act requires unanim In short, we can veto any change we do not like.

During the election the Prime Minister rightly st that we would resist any plan to levy VAT on essent such as food, children's clothing and fuel, including and electricity. Sadly, the European Court of Justice at very moment is considering a complaint from Commission which could force the Chancellor of Exchequer to impose VAT on gas, electricity, water sewerage provided to large and small businesses in Bri and to impose VAT on the construction of factories, sh and offices. At our current rate of 15 per cent., that al would add £350 million to industrial costs apart from w could be raised by VAT on gas, electricity and water.

The Commission has neatly side-stepped the Counci Ministers and the veto in the Single European Act. If

[Mr. Taylor]

lost that case, which seems almost inevitable after the initial opinion of the Advocate General, our Government and Parliament will, for the first time in their long history, be obliged to levy taxes on the instructions of a non-elected body—the European Court of Justice.

Mr. Curry: I am sure that my hon. Friend is aware that the court cases to which he referred flow from the 1977 sixth VAT directive signed by the British Government of the day. If the Government of the day signed that international treaty, they are obliged to observe the consequences that flow from it. Those consequences have not been imposed by a body acting other than under the authority given by the international directive to which the Government of the day agreed.

Mr. Taylor: My hon. Friend is very informed about European issues. However, I think that he will find that he is wrong about Parliament having agreed to the measures that have now been taken. In fact, he is saying that our Prime Minister is an ignoramus and does not know what she is doing. My hon. Friend is aware that during the election campaign the Prime Minister made a specific pledge about not allowing VAT on electricity. My hon. Friend is saying that the Prime Minister was hoodwinking the people because she knew that there was a court case taking place that would oblige Britain, against its wishes, to levy VAT on electricity.

Mr. Hugh Dykes (Harrow, East): When the Government came into power in 1979 they nearly doubled VAT from 8 per cent. to 15 per cent. Did my hon. Friend support that?

Mr. Taylor: Indeed, I did. It was a measure taken by the British Parliament on levying our taxes. At that time I favoured a transfer from direct to indirect taxation. There is nothing strange about that. We were deciding. If I and other hon. Members had voted against that, it would not have happened. The crucial issue is that in this case we will not decide. The decision is made by the European Court of Justice and the result will have to be implemented by the British Parliament and Government, whether we like it or not. After 1992 I fear that, if tax harmonisation has not been agreed, the Commission could use the powers of the Single European Act to take the United Kingdom and other countries to court for not levying VAT on essentials. Time will tell.

Sovereignty has also slipped away on issues that affect the people more directly. Today I saw on the tapes—no doubt my hon. Friend the Member for Skipton and Ripon also noted it—that the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food has made an appeal to the food industry to label its foods correctly and informatively so that consumers know what they are buying. Ever since 1972 we have had a British law on origin marking under which goods covered by the Trade Descriptions Act 1972 have been required to display a mark stating where they were made. The law, which is the basis on which goods are marked "Made in France . . . Japan . . . Germany . . . Italy" and so on, was unanimously agreed by Parliament as a means of giving more information to the consumer. It has helped me and millions of consumers in our purchasing choices.

Some time ago the Commission sent the Government a letter stating that it considered the law to be contrary to the treaty of Rome because it enabled Bri to commit the crime of discriminating produced in other parts of the EEC. The legal advisers said that we could not win Consumer Protection Act 1987 was passe an order to be made in 1988 that will repea The Government made it clear that they make that change and that it was against throw away a consumer safeguard. Howe forced to do so simply because of a lett elected body.

The other day the Parliamentary Und State for Corporate and Consumer Affa there would be a ban on the use of ce furniture because they were a threat to That statement received acclaim from all the Minister then announced that the ba implemented permanently without the a Common Market Commission. So n sovereignty of a free Parliament. No doubt the Member for Skipton and Ripon will and say that we agreed to this.

Mr. Curry: When the Minister said that, instance, incorrect. Community author required to implement the measures. Commission made that clear five days after

Mr. Taylor: I am afraid that my hon. completely wrong. I have a copy of the press statement, and that said that there prevent us making an interim emergency make it permanent would require the per European Commission. Once again my h taken up time in my Adjournment debate a time, my hon. Friend has said something Given his long experience of Common Mar knows that it is untrue, and I am surprised in mind that he is my European Member

In case my right hon. Friend should see such losses of sovereignty were agreed by would ask her to tell me when regulation requires us to seek prior approval for the fo ban, was discussed, debated or approved I believe that she will find that this ma reaching power was never debated. That is I have received from our excellent Library explained that it was one of a whole pil considered by the Select Committee Legislation and for which it could no discussion in the House because there were vital EEC measures to debate.

Once again we are faced with a power t doing something that we believe is in the int children's lives, and that power was not House.

Mr. Dykes: NATO decides our sp deployments collectively without this consulted in detail. Does my hon. Friend o as well?

Mr. Taylor: My hon. Friend the Memb East (Mr. Dykes) knows that, once again, mislead us. Yesterday, for example, we had on a frigate, a common frigate. Britain mad clear that if it did not like the way things w

had the power not to accept that frigate. There is no compulsory power under NATO rules, and the new frigate is a perfect example of that. My hon. Friend, in common with my hon. Friend for Skipton and Ripon, should look at the facts.

The huge losses in our power to decide cannot be justified, but it could be argued that there was a case for surrender if there were compensating benefits. Where are they? Before we joined the Common Market, Britain had always enjoyed a favourable balance of trade in manufactures with that group of European countries. Indeed, that had been the case every year since the time of Napoleon. Ever since we joined the Common Market we have had a deficit, and last year it was £11,000 million. In a nutshell, for every £2 of goods we sent to the Common Market we imported £3 of goods and the net effect was the loss of a million jobs. The basic reason for that is our loss of competitiveness. We have lost our traditional advantage of access to cheap food that a previous Conservative Prime Minister, Sir Robert Peel, fought so hard to achieve.

According to the Common Market's consumer unit, the average British family spends an extra £13 a week on food as a direct result of the CAP. That figure is increasing as the gap between Common Market and world food prices grows.

We have heard much about rebates and refunds, but our contributions are at an all-time high. When the Government completed their first full year in office, our net contribution was £117 million. This year, after all refunds and rebates, the estimate in the public expenditure White Paper that has just been published is £1,400 million, and that all-time record may be an underestimate.

As Conservative Members walked into the Chamber they may have been handed a letter from a Minister giving details of the public expenditure White Paper. There are pages and pages about increases in public spending since 1979—up to 73 per cent. for employment and training—but, sadly, not a word about EEC contributions, in which the increase has been infinitely greater.

Looking to the future, we see a further erosion of sovereignty with the Single European Act, which will provide for laws to be imposed on the United Kingdom by majority vote. Yesterday, we discussed a tightening of the law on firearms. I found that rather sad and funny, as the Common Market is currently considering a directive, which will be decided by a majority vote, that will require Britain to allow Europeans to carry and possess any weapons they choose, as long as they have a certificate from their own countries, whether they be the Republic of Ireland, Greece or Sicily.

What worries me most is the Government's policy, particularly the Foreign Office's policy, of looking at Europe through rose-coloured spectacles. It produces figures to show a massive rise in exports without mentioning that most of it stems from the increase in the size of the Community and ignoring the fact that our share in the Original Six's market for manufactured goods has scarcely changed since we joined the Community; it was 6 per cent., but it is now 7 per cent.

Mr. John Marshall (Hendon, South): Does my hon. Friend agree that there has been a dramatic increase in the percentage of British exports to Germany, for example, which is not because of the size of the European Community but because of the opportunities offered by that market?

Mr. Taylor: I have given my hon. Friend the fi that were given by my right hon. and noble Friend Secretary of State for Trade and Industry. Sadly, our of the market for manufactured goods of the origina including Germany, was 6 per cent. when we joine EEC, but it is now 7 per cent. As my hon. Frie interested in our trade figures with Germany, our d with it is greater than any other country and is more twice our deficit with Japan. When some of my Friends bray their Common Market slogans, I wish would consider some of the facts.

When the Government talk about contributions, refer only to our huge rebates. They do not accept after rebates, according to the Chancellor's statement contributions are at an all-time high.

When we mention the waste, scandals and frauds o CAP, the Government say that reform is round the co In reality, pledges of reform, which never happens simply an excuse to give more money to the Com Market to waste. When stuck for an argument, they that the Common Market has brought peace to Eu without mentioning the fact that defence is the jo NATO or that the one sector in which the EEC ha authority is defence.

There is a rising tide of concern in the United King about the activities of the EEC, its bungling, w bureaucracy and transfer of power from elected to elected bodies. We can do something about it. The tim do so is 10 February, when the European Council wil for another gigantic cash injection. Will we stand firm demand reform instead? Or will we simply pour in the by means of the so-called fourth resource in exchang a package of worthless promises and silly ideas such a so-called set-aside, which has been tried in America disastrous effect and at a huge cost?

On 10 February we shall know whether Government are facing reality or whether we shall si hear more slogans, hopes and tragedies.

3.4 pm

The Minister of State, Foreign and Commonw Office (Mrs. Lynda Chalker): The issues raised by my Friend the Member for Southend, East (Mr. Taylor important. But we have seen in his speech that underl his arguments is another issue which is the issue dominated our discussions before we joined Community. It is the question of sovereignty and extent to which our national freedom of action is curt or enhanced by membership of the Community. We jo the Community and are a part of it for several reaso

Our initial instinct in the 1950s was to stay out share and admire the goals of the Community and to it well, but to believe that we could achieve the same on our own. We were a world power. We looked not to Europe, but across the Atlantic to the United States across the world to the Commonwealth.

We changed that early 1950s view for several reasons. We saw the economic and political success o Six while our standard of living relative to theirs drop and our world role changed. We saw the importance o Community as a vehicle for promoting peace democracy in Europe. I agree with my hon. Friend NATO has responsibility for the defence of Europe, to get on with other nations is part of the peace pro

We saw the United States looking to the Pacific, as as to Europe, in pursuit of her interests, and that w

[Mrs. Lynda Chalker]

Europe the United States' interests, lay in a relationship with the whole of Europe, not just with Britain in particular. We saw, too, the power of the Community to negotiate collectively trade agreements which none of the members could have achieved on their own. We also saw the extent to which the Community was establishing patterns of political, trade, and economic behaviour to which we inevitably had to conform, but in the determination of which we would play no part so long as we remained outside the EC. Those are the reasons why we joined and why we shall continue as a most active member of the EC as it develops further.

Now we can see new technology and less regulation of trade opening up new opportunities for British firms, so helping to bring greater prosperity. But they also make the world even more interdependent. For such a complex world to work peacefully, not everything can still be done at a national level. For individual nations to prosper, we must agree certain rules and standards in common. That is why we joined the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade. For individual citizens to prosper, the goods they buy must be made and distributed in the most economic way, and the companies which employ them must work on the most economic scale.

We must be able to work at the supranational level if we are to promote our national interests within Europe and defend them outside, and we need democratic institutions within which to do so. That is what the Community is for.

Mr. Roger Knapman (Stroud): Why is there such a large trading deficit with EEC countries and a trading surplus with the rest of the world? Is there any particular figure at which my right hon. Friend would start to be worried about the trading pattern with EEC countries? If not £11 billion, would it be £15 billion, £20 billion or £30 billion?

Mrs. Chalker: I was just coming to that point. We have not been able to take up the full opportunities of trading in Europe; that is one area that we have been opening up through our great proposals for the 1992 single European market. Naturally, we do not want a trade deficit with the EC. This morning, I returned from Dusseldorf where I was talking to business men. They are pleading for more opportunities for British interests and companies to be active in Germany, particularly in the financial sector—

Mr. Teddy Taylor: What about buses?

Mrs. Chalker —and British buses. Indeed, I have tried to help my hon. Friend the Member for Southend, East to get British buses going across Germany, and I shall continue to do so.

What marks the Community apart from every other international organisation to which we belong is the significance of everything that is agreed within the Community for our national economic life. Where measures are proposed which affect our national life, the British Government and Members of Parliament should always scrutinise them vigorously. When we disagree, we say so loudly and we lobby effectively against those measures—and shall continue to do so. We must also examine where the overall balance of advantage lies.

My hon. Friend mentioned the recent example of a ban introduced by the Government on polyurethane foam. He mentioned the requirement of Commis directive that requires us to notify the new measures that constitute a techni is one that is useful to us. It prevents indulging in disguised protectionism, deal of work to be done on that score. designed to prevent genuine safety me ban that the Government have annou have already been introduced in so states.

The EC treaty provides for the possi imports on grounds of public security, has acknowledged. Under the Com legislation, the Commission has the ab member states to the existence of a da on the basis of evidence produced by as ourselves. That means that if evidenc for example, France of the existenc material, there is a good prospect of being taken in the United Kingdom or before further avoidable tragedy occur

I understand my hon. Friend's anxie mentioned frequently before. As my Member for Warwickshire, North (M clear to the House, the United Kingdo directive EC 83/189 to notify the Comm measures that might constitute a technic The purpose of that directive, as I s member states from indulging in disgui which is why I said it was useful. I Commission wants that law to be a p legislation in the best sense of the word

Mr. Teddy Taylor: I genuinely appre of my right hon. Friend's reply. Howe consider it significant and worrying that which may be good or bad, was never this House?

Mrs. Chalker: I understand my complaint, but other things go through passing through special Committees, w much like to have debated, but we do to debate every issue. If we have another problem, as we do here, we should perh

As regards budgetary discipline, I ag Friend that spending must be under c not beyond control. I have spent all t about measures to bring it under control hon. Friend that the budgetary discipli that are now in place have not worke wanted. That is why we are insisting o control before there can be any increas resources.

Mr. Ron Leighton (Newham, North-E

Mrs. Chalker: I have little time, and my hon. Friend's points.

There can be no increase unle Governments and national Parliament decisive role of the House in this issue, as safeguarded.

My hon. Friend's concern about the often been expressed before. I am well Council adopted last October the temporary switch from the normal syste

member states for expected FEOGA expenditure to reimbursements of up to two months, but that is helpful in improving budgetary control. We support a switch to reimbursement as a permanent feature of Community finance. It makes much more sense to reimburse member states for what they have spent than to pay them advances for what they think they will be likely to spend. I hope that my hon. Friend will re-examine that issue.

The butter stock disposal grieves us all, but the important thing is to ensure that the food mountains, once disposed of, are not allowed to grow again. We shall work on that as well.

I shall respond to my hon. Friend's other points in a letter, because it is important to set down clearly what is going on.

Community action is opening many opportunities in air services, financial trading services and capital liberalisation, and we want them to continue. They are massive opportunities for Britain.

I applaud my hon. Friend's tireless serv Community legislation. All of it matters far too be allowed to go through on the nod. I app campaign for financial and agricultural reforms, am convinced that we shall win. I applaud his v but I must remind him that the sovereignty of Pa is, above all, the power to act in the best interes nation.

That power would be constrained if we w members of the Community in today's world. O to act is strengthened by our ability to take a common with other like-minded democracies, in w may be unheroic, mundane or even boring, but the less essential for the secure future of Britain. Friend has some things just a little out of propo

Question put and agreed to.

Adjourned accordingly at fifteen minutes pa o'clock.

Written Answers to Questions

Monday 11 January 1988

PRIME MINISTER

USSR

Mr. Rogers: To ask the Prime Minister if, at her meeting with Secretary Gorbachev on 8 December 1987, she discussed Soviet incursions into the United Kingdom air defence region; and if she will make a statement.

The Prime Minister: The subject of Soviet air activity in the United Kingdom air defence region was not raised during my discussions with General Secretary Gorbachev on 7 December.

British Nuclear Fuels plc

Mr. Rooker: To ask the Prime Minister on how many further occasions since her reply of 21 October, *Official Report*, column *734*, members of her staff have been guests of British Nuclear Fuels plc; and if she will list them by title and date.

The Prime Minister: My chief press secretary attended a British Nuclear Fuels plc dinner for the media in November. A member of the policy unit also attended a British Nuclear Fuels plc dinner in that month.

No. 10 Downing Street

Mr. Rooker: To ask the Prime Minister if domestic rates are payable in respect of any part of No. 10 Downing street.

The Prime Minister: Occupations by the Crown are exempt from rating, but contributions in lieu of rates are made by the Treasury (rating of Government property department) on the basis of values determined by the Treasury Valuer. It is normal practice for a single rateable value to be determined for each large complex.

D Notice Committee

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Prime Minister if she will make a statement on Her Majesty's Government's response to the communications from Mr. Michael Ramsden and the future of the D Notice Committee.

The Prime Minister: At the meeting of the Defence Press and Broadcasting Committee on 21 December 1987 the media members called for a statement clarifying the Government's attitude to the D notice system. The Government are considering their response.

Windscale Fire

Dr. Cunningham: To ask the Prime Minister if, pursuant to her reply of 21 October 1987 to the hon. Member for Copeland, all documents, reports and surveys connected with the 1957 Windscale fire have now been published under the 30-year rule; if she will arrange for copies to be placed in the Library; and if she will make a statement.

The Prime Minister: In accordance with normal practice it would not be appropriate for the Public Records Office to copy such a large volume of documents for retention in the House of Commons Library. Government Departments and the Atomic Energy Authority have fulfilled their responsibilities in accordance with the requirements of the Public Records Act, and papers on the Windscale fire have been available for scrutiny in the Public Records Office in Kew since 2 January. All papers due for release in 1988 have been released except for a limited number of papers withheld under the terms of the Act.

OVERSEAS DEVELOPMENT

Ethiopia and Sudan

37. **Mr. Hood:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many irrigation projects the Overseas Development Administration is currently funding or supporting with technical aid in Ethiopia and in the Sudan.

Mr. Chris Patten: In Sudan we are financing an irrigation rehabilitation project in the northern region at a cost of £10·8 million over three years, and also helping to rehabilitate the light railway in the Gezira irrigation scheme. We are not currently financing directly any irrigation projects in Ethiopia, although under the joint funding scheme we are helping the Catholic Fund for Overseas Development with small projects in Tigray.

India

38. **Sir Brandon Rhys Williams:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if, in the light of his recent visit, he has any plans to alter the size or composition of the British aid programme to India.

Mr. Chris Patten: I was most impressed with the quality of the projects I visited in India. The overall size of the programme, which is rightly by far our largest, will continue to be determined by what we can afford and by the proposals put to us by the Government of India.

The balance between our aid to infrastructure, including energy, and to natural resources, health, education and water is about right. I hope to be able over the next few months to announce further projects in the fields of education, urban development and rural water supplies.

Oxfam (Aid White Paper)

39. **Mr. Tom Clarke:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what response he has made to the proposals of the Oxfam white paper on aid, published in October, a copy of which has been sent to him; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Chris Patten: The Government's aid policy is set out in its response (Cm 225), also published in October, to the report of the Foreign Affairs Committee "Bilateral Aid: Country Programmes".

Ethiopia

40. **Mr. Harry Greenway:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what information

he has as to the value of current food aid programmes to Ethiopia, expressed as a percentage of gross national product of *(a)* the United Kingdom and *(b)* the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Chris Patten: According to the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisations, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics pledged 2,500 tonnes of rice to Ethiopia in 1987; the cost is not known. The United Kingdom allocated 54,500 tonnes in wheat equivalent of cereals food aid in 1987 at a cost of £9·4 million. I have just pledged a further 40,000 tonnes of food aid. Comparisons in terms of GNP are not possible, since economic statistics are not prepared for the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on the same basis as those for OECD and IMF members.

41. **Sir Russell Johnston:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how much long-term development aid has been provided to Ethiopia by Her Majesty's Government since 1984.

Mr. Chris Patten: Her Majesty's Government have no present plans to provide long-term financial assistance to Ethiopia from the bilateral aid programme. We will however, continue to respond for humanitarian reasons to emergency needs. In addition, we maintain a programme of technical co-operation and have provided funds for rehabilitation following the 1984-85 famine; expenditure on these activities taken together came to about £2·5 million in 1986.

Under the third Lome Convention, the European Community has allocated about £160 million as Ethiopia's national programme. Britain contributes one sixth of this.

42. **Mr. Chapman:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a further statement on the position relating to famine in Ethiopia.

Mr. Chris Patten: I returned yesterday from a visit to Ethiopia. I believe that our own response to the emergency has been generous, but a sustained effort by the Ethiopian Government, by donors and by voluntary organisations will continue to be needed this year. In the course of my visit, I therefore announced the allocation of an additional 40,000 tonnes of food aid which we will deliver after the end of March. This will be channelled through international and voluntary agencies.

With this allocation, our contribution to the food aid needs of the Ethiopian people totals 94,500 tonnes, and the overall cost of our assistance, including our share of European Community relief programmes, totals some £35 million since the beginning of last year.

We shall continue to monitor the situation closely, and will consider if there is more that we should do.

Syria

Mr. Battle: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what is Her Majesty's Government's policy on the current European Economic Community negotiations with Syria regarding the establishment and funding of water and agricultural projects in Syria, and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Chris Patten: We do not oppose implementation of projects for which EC aid funds were approved before October 1986.

Budget (Underspend)

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for Fo and Commonwealth Affairs, how much is the pro underspend on the overseas development budge 1987-88; and how this is disaggregated to the develo and the emergency funds.

Mr. Chris Patten: On the basis of current plans, w fully spend the overseas aid Vote for 1987-88, includes provision for both development and emer aid.

Aid and Trade Provision

Dr. Godman: To ask the Secretary of State for Fo and Commonwealth Affairs if he will list in the *O Report* the amount of money paid out, in each of the five years, under the provisions of the aid and provision and the projects in the United Kingdom received this financial assistance.

Mr. Chris Patten: I refer the hon. Member t answer I gave the hon. Member for Oxford, East Smith) on 7 July 1987 at columns *73-76*.

Sub-Saharan Africa

Mr. Tony Lloyd: To ask the Secretary of Stat Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what undertal were given by Her Majesty's Government on contribu to the co-financing of structural adjustment progra for sub-Saharan Africa at the meeting of the World in Paris in December.

Mr. Chris Patten: The meeting identified substa aid resources available from western donor countrie co-ordinated support for structural adjust programmes in poor sub-Saharan African countries debt problems. Her Majesty's Government indicated they expect to commit about £250 million of progra aid over the next three years to the target countries.

Total pledges at the World Bank meeting amount $6·4 billion. In addition, the World Bank expect commit $6·2 billion to the special programme of assist from the eighth replenishment of the Internati Development Association.

ATTORNEY-GENERAL

Crown Prosecution Service

31. **Mr. Nicholas Brown:** To ask the Attorney-Ge if he will make a statement on the process of decis making in the Crown Prosecution Service.

The Attorney-General: Papers submitted to the Cr Prosecution Service are subjected to independent re either by lawyers or in a limited range of cases by tra executive officers of the service as soon as possible receipt. Prosecution decisions are taken in accordance the code for Crown prosecutors.

"Spycatcher"

Mr. Livingstone: To ask the Attorney-General (1) w are the total legal costs so far incurred by Her Maje Government as a result of all litigation relating to P Wright's book "Spycatcher"; and if he will mak statement;

(2) if he will itemise all other costs, in addition to legal costs, so far incurred by Her Majesty's Government as a result of all litigation relating to Peter Wright's book, "Spycatcher"; and if he will make a statement.

The Attorney-General: The total amount of costs expended to date by the Government is about £500,000 in legal fees and £78,000 in travelling and subsistence for officials.

London Rent Assessment Panel

Mr. Battle: To ask the Attorney-General, if he will list the current appointees to the London rent assessment panel, giving their professional qualifications in each case.

The Attorney-General: The Lord Chancellor's current appointees to the London rent assessment committee are:

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T. G. Ashmore—Barrister.
D. Bluston—Solicitor.
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Lady Z. Y. Davies—Barrister.
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C. J. Ettinger—Solicitor.
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Mrs. A. C. M. Harman
—Barrister 1945.
—Solicitor 1971.
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Birmingham Pub Bombings

Mr. Mullin: To ask the Attorney-General what was the cost of the trial of the 14 prison officers at Winson Green prison who were found not guilty of assaulting the six men convicted of the Birmingham pub bombings.

The Attorney-General: The cost of this trial amounted, in respect of fees paid to both prosecution and defence lawyers, and witnesses' expenses, to £75,469.

Mr. Mullin: To ask the Attorney-General if he will estimate the cost of the recent appeal hearing of the case against the six men convicted of the Birmingham pub bombings, following the decision to refer the case to Court of Appeal under section 17 of the Criminal Appeal Act 1968.

The Attorney-General: As judgment has not yet been given in this case, no lawyers' bills have been presented or determined, no fees have therefore yet been paid, and therefore no satisfactory estimate of the cost can be made at present.

Mr. Mullin: To ask the Attorney-General if he will estimate *(a)* the cost to the public purse of the original trial of the six men convicted of the Birmingham pub bombings at Lancaster Crown court, *(b)* the cost of their appeal the following year and *(c)* the cost of each stage of the civil action brought by the convicted men against the West Midlands police.

The Attorney-General: The cost of the original trial at the Crown court at Lancaster in 1975 amounted, in respect of fees paid to both prosecution and defence lawyers, and witnesses' expenses, to £237,683. The cost of the appeal in 1976 in respect of fees paid to defence lawyers was £5,327. The cost of the civil action cannot be ascertained without disproportionate expense.

"Inside Intelligence"

Mr. Livingstone: To ask the Attorney-General if he will make a statement on the Government's recent use of an injunction to stop newspaper publication of material from Anthony Cavendish's book, "Inside Intelligence".

The Attorney-General: Injunctions were granted by the High Court on 1 and 2 January against two newspapers to restrain the publication of material in breach of the lifelong duty of confidence owed to the Crown by present and former members of the security and intelligence services.

Rating Reform

Mr. Rooker: To ask the Attorney-General if, in view of the proposal continuously to update the poll tax register he will make use of it for jury service purposes.

The Attorney-General: No. there is no intention of making use of the proposed community charges register for the purposes of summoning jurors. The register of electors, which is updated annually, will continue to be used, in accordance with section 3 of the Juries Act 1974.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Television Licences

Mr. McTaggart: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will investigate the possibility of

amending the rules on television licence refunds, in order to enable people who are forced to leave their homes for extensive periods through unforeseen circumstances, such as hospitalisation, storm damage, property renovation, and so on, to claim full refunds.

Mr. Renton: Refunds are already available when two licences are held of which one was obtained in error; when an unexpired monochrome licence is surrendered for a colour licence; and when a licence is surrendered within 28 days of its issue (or due date of issue in cases of renewal). There are no plans to extend these arrangements.

Electoral Registers (Sale)

Mr. Grocott: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what information he has about the number of local authorities which sell their electoral registers to commercial companies.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: This information is not recorded centrally and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Departmental Responsibilities

Mr. Kirkwood: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list in the *Official Report* those areas of his departmental responsibility which extend to Scotland.

Mr. Hurd: My Department's responsibilities extend to Scotland in the following areas: animal experiments, broadcasting, data protection, immigration and nationality, passports, race relations and sex discrimination. In addition, my Department shares responsibility with the Department of my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Scotland in a number of areas including betting and gaming, drugs and poisons, extradition, air attack warning and monitoring, terrorism and security policy.

Immigration (DNA Tests)

Mr. Tony Lloyd: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will give the number of decisions made by the immigration services in which results of DNA tests have been provided; and if he will indicate the proportion where the claimed family relationship has been proved.

Mr. Renton: This information is not available.

Traffic Violations (TV Cameras)

Dr. Marek: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if there are any plans to introduce in the Metropolitan police area the use of remote-controlled television cameras to record traffic law violations by motorists at traffic lights, and for use as evidence in prosecutions, in the light of the experiment conducted in Nottingham.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: Within the limits set by law, the extent to which technology is used to enforce the law is a matter for individual chief officers of police. The scope for improving road traffic law enforcement through the further use of technology, supported as necessary by legislative change, is being considered by the road traffic law review, being conducted by Dr. Peter North of Jesus college, Oxford. His report is expected so Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis has that he is awaiting the report of the review before decisions on the use of technology such as that re by the hon. Member.

Prisoners (Drugs)

Mr. Butler: To ask the Secretary of State for t Department what were *(a)* the categories and numbers of individual doses of drugs adminis inmates at: (i) Her Majesty's prison, Cardiff and Majesty's prison, Swansea in the latest available

Mr. John Patten: The table provides the info requested in respect of Her Majesty's prison, Ca

Number of doses of medicine administered to inmates (yea March 1987)

Medicines available without prescription in the community	
Prescription only medicines	
(a) Psychotropic drugs (ie antidepressants, sedatives and tranquillisers)	
(b) Hypnotic drugs	
(c) Drugs acting on the central nervous system other than those shown in *(a)* and *(b)*	
(d) Other drugs and medicines	

The larger part of the medical services at Her M prison Swansea is provided by one doctor. It is established policy not to publish information ab prescribing practice of individual doctors.

Mr. Butler: To ask the Secretary of State for th Department what is the total cost of drugs admi to prisoners within Her Majesty's penal establishm the latest available year.

Mr. John Patten: Information in the form requ not available. In the financial year 1986-87 the procuring medicines and other pharmaceutica (including dressings and small items of equipment) for use in prison service establishm England and Wales was £1·9 million.

War Crimes

Mr. Winnick: To ask the Secretary of State Home Department when he will now be ma statement on what the Government intend to do re those living in the United Kingdom who are all have been involved in Nazi war crimes against hu

Mr. John Patten: My right hon. Friend hopes t an announcement in due course.

Amusement Arcades and Gaming Machine

Mr. Barry Field: To ask the Secretary of State Home Department when he expects to publish the of his research unit on amusement arcades and machine addiction; and what response he will be to its findings.

Mr. John Patten: We shall publish the report as we have fully considered the findings, which we a doing. We shall then be able to take a view on what steps might be appropriate.

Crime Statistics

Mr. Bowis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) if he will give the most recent juvenile crime figures for *(a)* England and Wales, *(b)* inner London, *(c)* outer London, *(d)* Birmingham, *(e)* Greater Manchester, *(f)* Sheffield, *(g)* Liverpool, *(h)* Leeds and *(i)* Bradford; and if he will give them as a total for each area, as percentage of total crimes committed in each area and the number of such crimes committed per head of population in each area;

(2) if he will give the most recent figures for violent and non-violent crimes committed by juveniles for *(a)* England and Wales, *(b)* inner London and *(c)* outer London.

Mr. John Patten: The readily available information is given in the following tables:

Table 1
Persons aged 10 and under 17 found guilty at all courts or cautioned for indictable offences in selected police force areas

England and Wales	*Numbers and percentages*		
Police force area	*Number of offenders aged 10-16 found guilty or cautioned*	*Known offenders aged 10-16 as a percentage of all known offenders*	*Known offenders aged 10-16 per 100 population*
Greater Manchester	10,918	31	4·3
Merseyside	4,426	26	3·1
Metropolitan Police	14,187	17	2·3
South Yorkshire	4,791	29	3·9
West Yorkshire	10,885	33	4·2
West Yorkshire	8,475	32	4·2
England and Wales	141,514	27	3·0

Table 2
Persons aged 10 and under 17 found guilty at all courts or cautioned for indictable offences by type of offence

England and Wales 1986	*Number of persons*		
Police force area	*All indictable offences*	*Offences of violence*[1]	*Other indictable offences*
Metropolitan Police	14,187	1,340	12,847
England and Wales	141,514	12,253	129,261

[1] Comprises violence against the person, sexual offences and robbery.

Birmingham Pub Bombings

Mr. Mullin: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will estimate the cost of detaining *(a)* on remand and *(b)* in prison the six men convicted of the Birmingham pub bombings.

Mr. John Patten: It is not possible to distinguish the costs of keeping particular individuals in custody. The table shows the average weekly net operating cost of keeping a person in a dispersal prison — the type of establishment in which these prisoners have mainly been accommodated since their conviction—for 1976-77 and subsequent financial years. Comparable information on costs for earlier years is not available.

Average weekly net operating cost per inmate in dispersal prisons

	£ per week
1976-77	163
1977-78	187
1978-79	232
1979-80	304
1980-81	369
1981-82	412
1982-83	433
1983-84	[1]478
1984-85	482
1985-86	469
1986-87	467

[1] From 1983-84 onwards the figures have been compiled on a slightly different basis.
Source: Annual reports on the work of the Prison Department

Mr. Mullin: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will estimate the cost of the various police investigations into the Birmingham pub bombings of 21 November 1974.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: I understand from the chief constable of the West Midlands police that no separate record of the cost of the public investigations into the Birmingham pub bombings was kept at the time of the investigations, and that it is not now possible to make an estimate of the cost.

Mr. Mullin: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will estimate the cost of the inquiry by the Devon and Cornwall police into allegations made by former PC Tom Clarke regarding the treatment in custody of the six men convicted of the Birmingham pub bombings.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: I understand from the chief constable of Devon and Cornwall that his present estimate of the total cost is £444,000.

Charities

Mr. Battle: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what progress has been made on the recommendations of the report entitled "Efficiency Scrutiny of the Supervision of Charities"; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. John Patten: My right hon. Friend expects to be in a position to announce the Government's response to this report shortly.

Nationality

Mr. Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many applications have been *(a)* accepted and *(b)* rejected for registration under the Nationality Act by month since January 1987.

Mr. Renton: The information is given in the table.

Applications for Registration as a British Citizen

	Granted	*R*
1987		
January	3,316	
February	4,835	
March	5,313	
April	2,529	
May	3,361	
June	4,089	
July	4,030	
August	3,278	
September	3,605	
October	3,642	

	Granted	Refused
November	3,933	226
	41,931	2,696

Mr. Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what income has been received, by month, since January 1987, for fees in respect of the Nationality Act 1982.

Mr. Renton: Fees received, net of refunds to unsuccessful applicants, were as follows:

1987	£
January	246,808
February	508,720
March	487,892
April	463,818
May	629,708
June	755,910
July	741,626
August	705,009
September	878,314
October	945,525
November	1,551,943
December	1,405,056
TOTAL	9,320,329

Mr. Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what provisions he is making for late applications for registration under the Nationality Act, due to Christmas post delays.

Mr. Renton: There is no discretion to extend beyond 31 December 1987 the deadline for receipt of registration applications under section 8 of the 1981 Act. There is discretion to extend the deadline for applications under section 7

"in the special circumstances of any particular case".

Reasons for delay will have to be considered in each case. But in general, for example, my right hon. Friend would expect to be able to exercise discretion in respect of any application under section 7 which was postmarked on or before 31 December 1987, irrespective of when it arrived.

Mr. Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what advice or assistance he is giving those people wishing to register for British citizenship under the Nationality Act 1981, who are either patients in psychiatric hospitals or otherwise disadvantaged, and unable to afford the registration fees, in order that they should not be denied the right of application through lack of money.

Mr. Renton: Section 42(1) of the British Nationality Act precludes registration as a British citizen if the prescribed fee has not been paid. The Government believe that those who wish to become British citizens should pay the cost of processing their applications. Concessions to one group would mean increased costs for others.

Ian Cutler

Mr. Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) if he will call for a report from the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis in respect of the letter he received from soliciters acting for Ian Cutler; and if he will make a statement;

(2) what complaints have been received in case of Mr. Ian Cutler by the Police Authority; and when he expects them to rep

Mr. Douglas Hogg: Allegations made by M being investigated under the procedures set o of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 19 hon. Friend the Secretary of State has no procedures and it would not be right for him in the case. The investigation is being super Police Complaints Authority, but it cannot investigating officer's report will be c understand that the authority has received n about the case. We have, however, passe information copies of correspondence with right hon. and hon. Members who have expre over Mr. Cutler's allegations.

Nottinghamshire Police

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State f Department what decision he has take Nottinghamshire police authority's request f police manpower.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: The police authority been informed that my right hon. Friend will consideration to the application in due cou comes to decide on the allocation of addit officer posts for the financial year 1988-89.

Holloway Prison

Mr. Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State f Department what is the current population prison; how many prisoners there are *(a)* on *(b)* long-term; and what information he ha many children have been taken into care as a r

Mr. John Patten: According to the r centrally, the population of Holloway pr November 1987 was about 470. Of these, 240 40 were convicted unsentenced and about 70 sentences of over three years.

Information on dependent children is n centrally and could be provided only at dispr costs.

Pakistan (Drug Traffic)

Mr. Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State f Department how much aid has been given to eliminate drug trafficking.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: The United King supports the efforts of the Government of combat drug production and trafficking. Dur five years we have pledged a total of £3·4 mi United Nations fund for drug abuse control in their rural development scheme in the Dir di North West Frontier province. In the same per spent about £0·2 million on equipment for enforcement agencies in Pakistan and hav technical assistance in the form of training f officers.

Domestic Fires

Mr. Wareing: To ask the Secretary of St Home Department what information he has

causes of flashover in domestic fires which have caused accidents; what representation he has received from fire authorities about this phenomenon; what steps he is taking to combat it; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: Flashover is a technical term used to describe a very rapid combustion of materials which can occur in domestic and other fires when temperatures reach around 1000°C.

The Home Office has received no particular representations from fire authorities about the phenomenon which is well known. However, it is clearly important to adopt all the usual fire prevention and protection measures to prevent a fire occurring or, if one does break out, to escape from it at the earliest possible stage and call the fire brigade.

Mr. Wareing: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many domestic fires in each of the last five years have involved upholstered furniture containing polyurethane foam; how many deaths and injuries have resulted in each of those years; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: The table shows figures for fires in dwellings, and casualties in those fires, which were attended by local authority fire brigades in the kingdom and where the item mainly responsible development of the fire was upholstered furniture covers (including cushions, but excluding bedd

Fires, and casualties in fires, where material mainly res development of fire was upholstered furniture or

	1982	*1983*	*1984*	*1*
Fires	4,179	4,030	4,552	4,
Deaths	182	166	213	
Non-fatal casualties	1,399	1,335	1,527	1,

Fire and Police Boards

Dr. Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of St Home Department if he will list the original expenditure levels underlying precept limits original and final precept limits set, for each fire joint board in 1986-87, 1987-88 and 1988-89.

Mr. Hurd: The information is set out in the ta asked the authorities to let me know by 1 whether they accept the proposed maximum p 1988-89 notified to them in December.

	1986-87				*1987-88*[1]			*1988-89*	
	EL (£ million)		*Maximum precept (p in £)*		*EL (£ million)*		*Maximum precept (p in £)*	*EL (£ million)*	
	Original	*Final*	*Original*	*Final*	*Original*	*Final*		*Original*	*Final*
Police									
Greater Manchester	80.375	83·687	16·52	16·52	89·121	92·686	17·87	94·052	95·221
Merseyside	56·685	59·808	25·62	25·62	62·047	64·529	23·29	66·916	68·906
Northumbria	41·952	43·431	13·01	13·01	45·542	47·364	14·20	49·926	49·926
South Yorkshire	34·961	35·412	17·12	17·12	36·726	38·195	16·79	40·691	40·691
West Midlands	76·829	80·831	12·67	12·70	81·402	84·658	12·32	92·254	93·423
West Yorkshire	60·616	63·269	20·81	20·81	66·117	68·762	19·47	72·479	72·479
Fire and Civil Defence Authority									
Greater Manchester	37·886	40·139	9·09	9·52	43·312	44·395	9·75	46·799	46·799
Merseyside	26·775	26·884	6·42	7·19	29·284	30·016	6·80	31·617	31·617
South Yorkshire	19·702	20·059	10·84	10·84	20·681	21·198	10·27	22·314	22·514
Tyne and Wear	19·291	19·292	10·98	10·98	20·989	21·514	10·54	22·649	22·649
West Midlands	35·682	36·374	6·17	6·56	39·523	40·511	6·73	42·696	42·696
West Yorkshire	29·032	32·388	11·20	11·20	33·788	34·633	11·59	36·489	37·558
London	140·942	147·383	7·50	7·70	156·348	160·257	8·07	166·775	166·775

[1] The Local Government Finance Act 1987 set the precepts for 1987-88 by formula uprating the orignal police EL's by 4 per cent. fire and civil defence ELs by 2·5 per cent.

Dr. Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list the budgeted and estimated outturn, where available, of total expenditure of each fire and police joint board in 1986-87 and 1988-89.

Mr. Hurd: The information is as follows:

	1986-87 estimated outturn (£ million)
Police Authorities	
Greater Manchester	81.086
Merseyside	57·053
Northumbria	43·057
South Yorkshire	33·401
West Midlands	77·136
West Yorkshire	58·059

	estim
Fire and Civil Defence Authorities	
Greater Manchester	
Merseyside	
South Yorkshire	
Tyne and Wear	
West Midlands	
West Yorkshire	
London	

The figures are given in expenditure le Authorities will need to set their budgets for 198 light of the maximum precept limits which hav finalised.

Electoral Register

Mr. Rooker: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will bring forward proposals to update continuously the electoral register in the same manner as planned for the poll tax register.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: No. The Representation of the People Act 1983 requires local registration officers to compile the electoral register annually after

"house to house or other sufficient enquiry".

They are encouraged to ensure the best practicable coverage of those entitled to vote. There are no plans to alter the statutory arrangements.

Remand Prisoners

Mr. David Nicholson: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many prisoners were held on remand in the Somerset and Avon police authority area on 30 April and 30 September in each year since 1983; and how many of these prisoners had been waiting for trial for *(a)* more than nine months and *(b)* between six and nine months.

Mr. John Patten *[holding answer 17 December 1987]:* Populations of the two establishments are given in the table. Information for all the dates on the time spent in custody by the untried population of the establishments could be provided only at disproportionate cost. However, it is estimated that on 30 June 1987, 19 untried prisoners had been initially remanded into custody between six and nine months earlier and five untried prisoners more than nine months earlier. On 30 June 1983 the figures were six and nine respectively. These periods include any intervening time spent on bail.

Untried and convicted unsentenced populations Pucklechurch remand centre on 30 April and 30

	Un
1983	
30 April	
30 September	
1984	
30 April	
30 September	
1985	
30 April	
30 September	
1986	
30 April	
30 September	
1987	
30 April	
30 September	

Stolen Guns

Mr. David Young: To ask the Secreta Home Department how many guns poli force, were reported stolen in each of t and in each case what was their categor

Mr. John Patten *[holding answer 9* The available information relates to bur in which a firearm was reported stol weapon, and is published for England whole, 1976-86, in table 3.12 of "C England and Wales 1986" (Cm 233) co in the Library. Information is not colle the number of weapons reported stolen i A breakdown of the 1986 figures by po given in the table. Such a breakdown could be provided only at disproportion

Notifiable offences of burglary and theft recorded by the police in which firearms were reported to have been stolen, by po principal weapon.

England and Wales 1986

Number of offences[1]

Police force area	*Total*	*Air Weapon*	*Shotgun*	*Pistol*	*Rifle*	*Starting*
Avon and Somerset	84	37	30	1	4	
Bedfordshire	40	18	11	5	2	
Cambridgeshire	43	14	22	1	5	
Cheshire	53	9	13	8	10	
Cleveland	2	1	1	—	—	
Cumbria	11	8	2	—	—	
Derbyshire	38	15	17	2	1	
Devon and Cornwall	82	35	25	8	3	
Dorset	13	4	5	4	—	
Durham	44	19	18	—	3	
Essex	91	29	34	7	8	
Gloucestershire	14	4	8	2	—	
Greater Manchester	23	12	4	5	—	
Hampshire	104	37	37	10	5	
Hertfordshire	15	7	6	1	—	
Humberside	87	52	17	1	4	
Kent	126	45	50	10	3	
Lancashire	107	50	30	5	1	
Leicestershire	46	24	14	1	—	
Lincolnshire	24	6	13	1	3	
London, City	2	—	1	—	—	
Merseyside	104	70	13	9	1	
Metropolitan	157	62	48	16	2	
Norfolk	76	32	34	2	2	
Northamptonshire	57	27	19	3	4	
Northumbria	135	63	27	3	3	
North Yorkshire	56	20	27	—	6	
Nottinghamshire	32	19	8	1	—	

Bristol prison and
September, 1983-87
Number of prisoners

ed	Convicted unsentenced
77	66
83	57
10	26
90	53
51	32
46	54
02	42
59	51
60	45
39	55

of State for the
force by police
last five years;

ecember 1987]:
aries and thefts
, by principal
nd Wales as a
ninal Statistics
es of which are
ed centrally on
these incidents.
ce force area is
r earlier years
e cost.

e force area and

n	Other
4	8
–	4
–	1
6	7
–	—
–	
–	3
5	6
–	—
2	2
1	12
–	—
–	2
1	14
–	14
3	10
4	14
4	17
2	5
–	1
–	1
3	8
3	21
4	2
1	3
7	32
2	1
–	4

Police force area	Total	Air Weapon	Shotgun	Pistol	Rifle	Starting g
South Yorkshire	99	69	12	7	1	
Staffordshire	28	10	11	3	—	
Suffolk	67	28	16	3	2	
Surrey	53	18	21	7	2	
Sussex	44	19	19	2	1	
Thames Valley	123	38	56	8	5	
Warwickshire	35	19	11	—	1	
West Mercia	74	25	23	5	11	
West Midlands	149	70	31	15	3	
West Yorkshire	117	58	24	17	7	
Wiltshire	12	3	7	1	1	
Dyfed Powys	21	6	12	1	1	
Gwent	15	8	5	1	—	
North Wales	23	9	13	1	—	
South Wales	29	18	9	—	—	
Total	2,555	1,117	804	177	105	1

[1] More than one firearm may have been stolen in each offence.

EMPLOYMENT

Restart

Mr. Worthington: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will make it his policy to count imprisonment as unemployment for the purpose of restart interviews.

Mr. Lee: On release from prison ex-offenders are offered an in-depth interview at a jobcentre without having to wait six months for a restart interview. The interview provides an opportunity to discuss ways back into employment comparable to that offered by a restart interview. Periods of imprisonment count towards the unemployment requirement of current Manpower Services Commission programmes designed to help long-term unemployed people, for example, the community programme and the new job training scheme.

Clothing Industry (Morpeth-Ashington)

Mr. Jack Thompson: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment (1) what has been the total level of employment in the clothing industry in the Morpeth-Ashington employment area from 1975 to date;

(2) what was the proportion of women's employment in the clothing industry as part of the total employment figure in the Morpeth-Ashington employment area from 1975 to date;

(3) what proportion of total employment has been taken up by the clothing industry in the Morpeth-Ashington employment areas from 1975 to date.

Mr. Lee: Information for the clothing industry in Morpeth and Ashington cannot be given without indirectly disclosing information relating to individual firms which was collected in confidence.

New Workers Scheme

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment whether employers who take YTS graduates on under the terms of the new workers scheme before it is terminated at the end of January will receive the full year's subsidy for each employee under this scheme from the time of employment.

Mr. Lee: Payment of new workers sch
respect of applications approved for jobs
and including 31 January 1988 is not
scheme's closure.

Civil Service and NHS (Train

Mr. Clelland: To ask the Secretary
Employment what are the numbers of tra
engaged in YTS placements in *(a)* the Ci
(b) the National Health Service.

Mr. Cope: Estimates made by the Man
Commission and the Office of the Minist
Service show that there are currently more
trainees in Civil Service placements. This
both industrial and non-industrial YTS pl

The recent report by Price Waterhouse
National Health Service identified 32
schemes with over 700 young people trainin

Clothing Industry (Blyth and Cra

Mr. Ronnie Campbell: To ask the Secret
Employment (1) what has been the
employment in the clothing industry in
Cramlinton employment area since 1975;

(2) what has been the proportion
employment in the clothing industry as p
employment figure in the Blyth an
employment area since 1975;

(3) what proportion of total employ
taken up by the clothing industry in
Cramlinton employment area since 1975.

Mr. Lee: Information for the clothing in
and Cramlinton cannot be given with
disclosing information relating to individu
was collected in confidence.

Labour Statistics

Mr. Butler: To ask the Secretary
Employment by how much unemploymen
the Warrington travel-to-work area since N

Mr. Lee: The following information is
On 12 November 1987 the number o
claimants in the Warrington travel-to-w
7,779, a fall of 2,113 since November 1986

Mr. Nicholas Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will provide a similar breakdown of cases of voluntary unemployment for the four quarters ended 30 June 1986 to that given in his answer of 26 November 1987, *Official Report*, columns *263-64*.

Mr. Lee: Details of adjudication disqualifying claims for unemployme section 20(1) of the Social Security Act quarters ended 30 September 1985, 31 D March 1986 and 30 June 1986 are show numbers in brackets represent decision varied on review in each quarter.

	Quarter ending					
	30 September 1985		*31 December 1985*		*31 March 1986*	
Section 20(1)*(a)*	107,718	(1,358)	101,778	(1,507)	94,817	(1,260)
Section 20(1)*(b)*	342	(19)	370	(8)	417	(16)
Section 20(1)*(c)*	198	(15)	263	(8)	304	(5)
Section 20(1)*(d)*	39	(1)	38	(—)	12	(3)
Section 20(1)*(e)*	1,293	(47)	1,547	(83)	1,862	(61)
Total	109,590	(1,440)	103,996	(1,606)	97,412	(1,345)

Average Earnings

Mr. McFall: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what has been the cash increase in average earnings since 1980, with the 1980 sum expressed as 100.

Mr. Lee: The average earnings index for the whole economy at October 1987 relative to January 1980 = 100 was 203·8, seasonally adjusted, representing an increase of 103·8 per cent.

Mr. Barry Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will list those areas where unemployment rose in December 1987; and if he will list employment statistics separately for Sussex, Hampshire and the Isle of Wight.

Mr. Lee: Unemployment figures for 10 December 1987 are not yet available. They will be released on Thursday 14 January. The latest available employee estimates for counties and smaller areas are from the September 1984 census of employment and are as follows:

Employees in employment[1] : September 1984

County[2]	*Figures*
East Sussex	228,100
West Sussex	249,900
Hampshire	567,800
Isle of Wight	41,300

[1] The figures exclude the self-employed and members of Her Majesty's forces.
[2] The counties are defined in terms of ward boundaries as at 1984.

Unfair Dismissal

Mr. Harry Barnes: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how many cases of unfair dismissal were brought, and how many proven, in the area of the Derbyshire, North-East constituency in 1986 and 1987 at the latest available count.

Mr. Nicholls: Industrial tribunals statistics are kept on a regional and not a constituency basis. During the two years ended 31 March 1987, the area of the constituency of Derbyshire, North-East came under the Sheffield region of the industrial tribunals. The relevant statistics for the region are as follows:

	12 mont end 31 March 19
Number of complaints of unfair dismissal which proceeded to a hearing	3
Number of complaints of unfair dismissal which were upheld	1

Tourism

Mr. Cummings: To ask the Secret Employment how much tourists spent in England in the years 1984-85 and 1985-

Mr. Lee: I understand from the Engli that it estimates spending by tourists in tourist board area was: £205 million in 1 in 1985; and £210 million in 1986.

Mr. Cummings: To ask the Secret Employment what measures he is takin tourist industry in the north-east of Engla make a statement.

Mr. Lee: I read with interest the annu of the North East Tourism Co-ordinati was published in December. I have arran be placed in the library. Indeed I met t group in late November and discu initiatives and plans. The group, which Department's regional director, has revie of the industry in the region and has points for the further development o examining these points to see wh Government can give to the developme industry in the north-east. Considerable e being made by the British Tourist Auth and the Northumbria tourist boards to pr east as a tourist destination.

Employees (Subsidised Me

Mr. Steen: To ask the Secretar Employment (1) what is the estima employees in the private sector who r meals at works canteens and staff restau

(2) what is the estimated number of employees in the public sector who are eligible for or obtain meals through subsidised canteens or smaller outlets at their place of work.

Mr. Lee: I regret the information requested is not available.

Industrial Language Training Service

Mrs. Mahon: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment when he expects to complete his review of the management and funding of the industrial language training service; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Cope: I refer the hon. Member to the reply given to her in the *Official Report* of 18 December 1987, at column *831*.

YTS

Mr. Wareing: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how many YTS places have so far been made available on Merseyside; what percentage of unemployed young people in the area have been offered a place on the YTS; and what percentage of those offered a place have accepted it.

Mr. Cope: As at November 1987, 23,536 YTS places were available on Merseyside.

Places are offered by the local authority careers service and by employers, and the percentage of young people in the area that have been offered and accepted a place is not available to the Department.

However, since 1 April 1987, some 13,000 young people on Merseyside have left school and accepted a place on YTS.

Training Schemes

Mr. Meacher: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he intends to designate the community programme and job training scheme as approved training schemes for the purposes of the Social Security Act 1975.

Mr. Cope: The community programme provides employment rather than training and is therefore already covered by section 20 of the Social Security Act 1975. We have no present plans to change the position of the job training scheme.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Street Works

Rev. Martin Smyth: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what proposals there are for amending legislation which precludes the Department of Environment (Northern Ireland) from funding any street works relating to rear entries; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Needham: No such proposals are being considered. Any legislative change may have the undesirable effect of diverting scarce financial resources from essential maintenance and improvement of the existing public road system.

ENERGY

Private Coal Operators

Mr. Cummings: To ask the Secreta Energy what grants have been made ava opencast coal operators and the opera licensed coal mines.

Mr. Michael Spicer: No specific Gover available. Where applicable, operators m be eligible for regional selective ass Operators may also be eligible to apply British Coal Enterprise for new job-creati

Departmental Responsibilit

Mr. Kirkwood: To ask the Secretary of S if he will list in the *Official Report* tho departmental responsibility which extend

Mr. Parkinson: I am responsible for t economic development, supply and use o in Great Britain generally. My right ho Friend the Secretary of State for Scotlan for the Scottish electricity boards. My learned Friend and I consult each other energy matters affecting Scotland.

Sellafield

Mr. Butler: To ask the Secretary of Sta he will give an indication of how far radioa have been reduced at Sellafield over recen

Mr. Michael Spicer: Liquid discharges were reduced by 93 per cent. for alpha emi cent. for beta emitters between 1978 and of BNFL's massive investment in wast plant. The level of discharges will be furthe the current investment programme is co early 1990s.

Sizewell B

Mr. Matthew Taylor: To ask the Secret Energy what progress has been made in imp of the recommendations made in Sir F report on the Sizewell B inquiry.

Mr. Michael Spicer: I refer the hon. answer given to the hon. Member for M Conwy (Dr. Thomas) on 7 December 198

With regard to recommendation 7(a published the pre-construction safety December. A copy has been placed in the House.

With regard to recommendation 13, Friend, the Secretary of State for Energy ga on plutonium production in an answer o 1987 pursuant to the answer given to my Member for Colne Valley (Mr. Riddick)

Hinkley Point

Mr. Matthew Taylor: To ask the Secret Energy what consideration he has given to t of the recommendations in Sir Frank Lay the Sizewell B inquiry for the Cent Generating Board's application to build water reactor at Hinkley Point in Somers

Mr. Michael Spicer: My right hon. Friend will issue, in advance of the public inquiry into the CEGB's application, a statement of the matters which appear to him relevant to his consideration of the application. He will take all relevant factors into account in preparing that statement.

British Coal (Opencast Executive)

Mr. Cummings: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy how many employees are employed in the Opencast Executive operations in the north-east area of British Coal.

Mr. Michael Spicer: This is a matter for the British Coal Corporation, and I have asked the chairman to write to the hon. Member.

WALES

A55 (Conwy)

Mr. John Browne: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what is the design traffic flow for the improvement on the A55 at Conwy; and what are the total estimated costs.

Mr. Wyn Roberts: The design traffic flows through Conwy tunnel based on the 1981 forecast for the 16-hour two-way August peak flows in the design year 2003 were:

High growth 36,590 vehicles/day
Low growth 29,730 vehicles/day

The total estimated cost for the improvement of the A55 at Conwy is £160 million.

Operations

Mr. Morgan: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales when he expects to achieve his publicly stated objective of a maximum 12-month waiting period for operations in the National Health Service in Wales.

Mr. Grist: Following a seminar with the Department last month to discuss their plans for tackling waiting times, health authorities have been asked to submit estimates of when those lists which do not currently meet the waiting times targets will do so. I shall write to the hon. Gentleman when the information is available.

NHS (Staff)

Mr. Butler: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will make it his policy to reduce the number of administrators in the National Health Service in Wales below that pertaining in 1979.

Mr. Grist: The determination of appropriate staffing levels in any particular discipline is an operational matter for individual district health authorities.

Cardiff Bay Barrage

Mr. Andrew F. Bennett: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if the nature Conservancy Council was formally notified under Standing Order No. 19 of Private Bill Standing Orders that clause 52 of the Cardiff Bay Barrage Bill seeks to stop it carrying out its duties under sections 28(5) and 29(3) of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Wyn Roberts: I understand that South Glamorgan county council—which is the promoter of the Cardiff Bay Barrage Bill—has satisfied the Examiner that all Standing Orders have been complied with.

Rates

Dr. Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will list the total of grant-related expenditure, by service and in total, at rate support grant settlement and at estimated outturn in each year from 1981-82 to 1988-89, by class.

Mr. Peter Walker: The Welsh rate support grant formulae do not form a basis for calculating a national allocation of grant-related expenditure for any particular service. Totals of grant-related expenditure for each class of local authority are as follows:

Total grant related expenditure

	Rate support grant settlement £ million	*Outturn £ million*
Districts		
1981-82	188·5	193·7
1982-83	208·6	200·7
1983-84	224·3	215·8
1984-85	215·1	219·4
1985-86	233·2	231·6
1986-87	[1]223·7	[2]247·1
1987-88	250·8	[2]251·1
1988-89	267·0	n/a
Counties		
1981-82	897·0	898·9
1982-83	973·9	969·0
1983-84	1,025·4	1,024·3
1984-85	1,064·9	1,064·7
1985-86	1,116·4	1,111·9
1986-87	[1]1,055·1	[2]1,178·3
1987-88	1,270·1	[2]1,300·3
1988-89	1,402·7	n/a

[1] For the 1986-87 rate support grant settlement only, total grant related expenditure was set at a level equal to 90 per cent. of total expenditure provision to effect certain changes in the distribution of block grant without affecting the amount of grant available. In all other reports, total grant related expenditure is equal to total expenditure provision and comparable figures for the 1987-88 rate support grant settlement are £248·5 million and £1,172·4 million for districts and counties respectively.
[2] Estimates.

Dr. Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will list, on a ranked and class basis, the percentage change in the grant-related expenditure of each local authority between 1987-88 and 1988-89.

Mr. Peter Walker: The information requested is as follows:

Percentage change in Grant Related Expenditure between 1987-88 and 1988-89[1]

	Per cent.
Local Authority Counties	
Dyfed	8·8
Gwynedd	8·7
Mid Glamorgan	8·6
South Glamorgan	8·5
Powys	7·3
Gwent	7·2
West Glamorgan	7·1
Clwyd	6·6

	Per cent.
Districts	
Rhuddlan	14·1
Taff-Ely	11·1
Colwyn	10·6
Rhondda	9·4
Cynon Valley	9·2
Ceredigion	8·9
Brecknock	8·1
Montgomeryshire	8·0
Torfaen	7·7
Dwyfor	7·6
Monmouth	7·6
Meirionnydd	7·4
Vale of Glamorgan	7·4
Aberconwy	7·3
Llanelli	7·2
Blaenau Gwent	7·0
Rhymney Valley	7·0
Radnor	6·9
Merthyr Tydfil	6·9
Arfon	6·9
Lliw Valley	6·8
Cardiff	6·8
Islwyn	6·7
Ynys Mon-Isle of Anglesey	6·5
Glyndwr	6·3
Neath	6·2
Preseli Pembrokeshire	6·2
Ogwr	6·0
Alyn and Deeside	5·2
Dinefwr	4·9
Carmarthen	4·1
Wrexham Maelor	3·4
South Pembrokeshire	3·4
Swansea	3·1
Newport	1·9
Port Talbot	1·3
Delyn	0·2

[1] Data are from the Welsh Rate Support Grant Report 1988-89 and the Supplementary Report 1987-88.

Dr. Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will list the aggregate Exchequer grant, rate support grant, block grant, domestic rate relief grant, relevant expenditure, total expenditure and current expenditure at rate support grant settlement, budget and estimated outturn in each year from 1981-1982 to 1988-1989.

Mr. Peter Walker : The information requested is as follows:

£ million

	1981-82 Settlement	*1981-82 Budget*	*1981-82 Outturn*	*1982-83 Settlement*	*1982-83 Budget*	*1982-83 Outturn*
Aggregate Exchequer Grant	871·0	881·0	873·1	943·0	933·2	926·6
Aggregate Amount of Rate Support Grants	744·6	753·2	745·3	814·7	804·4	797·8
Block Grant	696·7	705·4	697·5	790·0	779·7	773·1
Domestic Rate Relief	47·8	47·8	47·8	24·7	24·7	24·7
Relevant Expenditure	1,187·0	1,246·7	1,233·4	1,300·8	1,318·9	1,327·5
Total Expenditure (for Block Grant purposes)	1,070·5	1,133·1	1,117·1	1,182·5	1,208·9	1,207·2
Current Expenditure (R&G purposes)	1,031·8	1,085·2	1,078·6	1,126·0	1,163·1	1,154·5

£ million

	1983-84 Settlement	*1983-84 Budget*	*1983-84 Outturn*	*1984-85 Settlement*	*1984-85 Budget*	*1984-85 Outturn*
Aggregate Exchequer Grant	975·00	962·4	962·9	996·0	983·0	992·5
Aggregate Amount of Rate Support Grants	827·5	814·9	812·0	824·3	811·3	815·4
Block Grant	802·5	789·9	787·0	799·0	786·0	790·1
Domestic Rate Relief	25·0	25·0	25·0	25·3	25·3	25·3
Relevant Expenditure	1,385·2	1,401·3	1,406·2	1,440·0	1,453·1	1,468·8
Total Expenditure (for Block Grant purposes)	1,249·7	1,272·2	1,267·3	1,280·0	1,299·7	1,304·0
Current Expenditure (R&G purposes)	1,205·0	1,231·0	1,233·5	1,253·0	1,274·2	1,288·2

£ million

	1985-86 settlement	*1985-86 Budget*	*1985-86 outturn*	*1986-87 settlement*	*1986-87 budget*	*1986-87 revised estimate*
Aggregate exchequer grant	1,014·2	1,013·0	1,022·7	1,067·0	1,073·6	1,081·3
Aggregate amount of rate support grants	836·7	831·2	837·0	875·8	877·1	882·1
Block grant	811·2	805·7	811·5	850·0	851·3	856·3
Domestic rate relief	25·5	25·5	25·5	25·8	25·8	25·8
Relevant expenditure	1,514·21	1,521·8	1,529·6	1,597·1	1,634·6	1,640·6
Total expenditure (for Block Grant purposes)	1,349·6	1,363·7	1,352·8	1,420·9	1,453·3	1,466·3
Current expenditure (RSG purposes)	1,309·0	1,323·0	1,336·4	1,368·1	1,427·7	1,437·8

£ million

	1987-88 settlement	1987-88 budget	1988-89 settlement
Aggregate exchequer grant	1,157·0	1,165·1	1,256·0
Aggregate amount of rate support grants	927·9	937·1	1,014·8
Block grant	901·7	910·9	987·8
Domestic rate relief	26·2	26·2	27·0
Relevant expenditure	1,734·0	1,781·1	1,894·0
Total expenditure (for Block Grant purposes)	1,520·9	1,574·6	1,669·7
Current expenditure (RSG purposes)	1,496·5	1,558·1	1,640·0

Dr. Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will list for each local authority, on a ranked and class basis, the total population used in calculating each authority's expected grant entitlement for 1988-89; and if he will show the comparable figures for 1987-88, giving the percentage change between the two years.

Mr. Peter Walker: The information requested is as follows:

Total population used in calculation of expected Grant Entitlement[1]

	1987-88	1988-89	Per cent. change
Local Authority Counties:			
Dyfed	335,900	339,000	0·9
Powys	111,400	112,400	0·9
Gwynedd	233,600	234,600	0·4
Clwyd	397,900	399,600	0·4
Gwent	440,200	441,800	0·4
South Glamorgan	394,800	395,700	0·2
Mid Glamorgan	533,900	534,500	0·1
West Glamorgan	364,100	363,400	−0·2
Districts:			
Ceredigion	81,800	83,700	3·1
Montgomeryshire	48,900	50,000	2·2
Colwyn	50,500	51,600	2·2
South Penbrokeshire	39,000	39,800	2·1
Rhuddlan	54,300	55,200	1·7
Monmouth	76,700	77,800	1·4
Meirionydd	31,400	31,800	1·3
Glyndwr	40,200	40,700	1·2
Ogwr	132,900	134,400	1·1
Radnor	21,500	21,700	0·9
Torfaen	90,200	90,900	0·8
Aberconwy	52,200	52,600	0·8
Lliw Valley	60,400	60,800	0·7
Ynys Mon-Isle of Anglesey	69,700	70,100	0·6
Preseli Pembrokeshire	70,300	70,600	0·4
Taff Ely	94,400	94,800	0·4
Dwyfor	26,300	26,400	0·4
Carmarthen	53,600	53,800	0·4
Dinefwr	37,100	37,200	0·3
Newport	129,500	129,800	0·2
Cardiff	278,900	279,500	0·2
Vale of Glamorgan	115,900	116,100	0·2
Rhymney Valley	104,000	104,100	0·1
Wrexham Maelor	114,600	114,700	0·1
Islwyn	65,700	65,700	0·0
Merthyr Tydfil	58,500	58,500	0·0
Neath	65,200	65,100	−0·2
Swansea	187,400	187,000	−0·2
Delyn	65,400	65,200	−0·3
Llanelli	74,100	73,800	−0·4
Arfon	54,000	53,700	−0·6
Blaenau Gwent	78,100	77,600	−0·8
Brecknock	41,000	40,700	−0·7
Cynon Valley	65,400	64,900	−0·8
Alyn and Deeside	72,900	72,200	−1·0
Port Talbot	51,100	50,600	−1·0
Rhondda	78,700	77,800	−1·1

[1] In Wales, population is used in the calculation of Grant Related Expenditure, but is not used directly in the calculation of grant entitlement.

Dr. Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will list, on a ranked basis, the percentage change in the grant-related expenditure of each non-metropolitan county and each non-metropolitan district between *(a)* 1981-82 and 1988-89 and *(b)* 1985-86 and 1988-89.

Mr. Peter Walker: The information requested is as follows:

(a) Percentage change in grant related expenditure between 1981-82 and 1988-89[1]

	per cent.
Local authority counties	
West Glamorgan	60·5
South Glamorgan	59·9
Dyfed	59·1
Powys	56·2
Gwynedd	55·2
Clwyd	54·4
Mid Glamorgan	53·8
Gwent	51·7
Districts	
Rhuddlan	61·0
Rhondda	60·5
Blaenau Gwent	57·3
South Pembrokeshire	57·1
Dwyfor	56·9
Islwyn	54·4
Meirionnydd	54·0
Swansea	48·8
Merthyr Tydfil	47·5
Cynon Valley	45·7
Delyn	43·2
Carmarthen	41·7
Colwyn	41·6
Ceredigion	40·8
Ogwr	40·2
Brecknock	39·6
Arfon	39·0
Ynys Môn–Isle of Anglesey	38·8
Preseli Pembrokeshire	38·2
Aberconwy	37·7
Montgomeryshire	36·2
Lliw Valley	35·9
Monmouth	33·8
Vale of Glamorgan	33·1
Dinefwr	33·0
Taff-Ely	32·5
Rhymney Valley	32·5
Neath	32·2
Radnor	31·3
Wrexham Maelor	30·1
Newport	29·8
Alyn and Deeside	29·3
Torfaen	28·3
Port Talbot	27·6

	per cent.
Llanelli	27·6
Cardiff	24·8
Glyndwr	23·6

[1] Data are from the Welsh Rate Support Grant Report 1988-89 Supplementary (No. 3) Report 1981-82.

(b) Percentage Change in Grant Related Expenditure between 1985-86 and 1988-89[1]

	Per cent.
Local Authority Counties:	
Dyfed	29·0
Mid Glamorgan	28·2
Gwynedd	26·6
Powys	26·0
South Glamorgan	26·0
West Glamorgan	25·1
Clwyd	24·5
Gwent	23·0
Districts:	
Rhuddlan	34·8
Colwyn	22·3
Vale of Glamorgan	21·9
Brecknock	21·0
Torfaen	20·2
Dwyfor	20·1
Blaenau Gwent	18·9
Ynys Mon-Isle of Anglesey	17·8
Cynon Valley	17·8
Islwyn	17·7
Aberconwy	17·7
Ogwr	17·6
South Pembrokeshire	17·4
Neath	17·2
Ceredigion	17·1
Rhondda	16·7
Monmouth	16·1
Taff Ely	16·0
Rhymney Valley	16·0
Lliw Valley	15·9
Alyn and Deeside	15·1
Preseli Pembrokeshire	15·0
Merthyr Tydfil	14·6
Dinefwr	14·6
Montgomeryshire	13·9
Arfon	13·7
Llanelli	13·3
Cardiff	12·5
Swansea	12·3
Newport	11·6
Glyndwr	11·4
Wrexham Maelor	11·3
Radnor	11·2
Meirionnydd	9·6
Carmarthen	9·1
Delyn	7·6
Port Talbot	7·4

[1] Data are from the Welsh Rate Support Grant Report 1988-89 and the Supplementary (No. 2) Report 1985-86.

Dr. Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will list the rate poundage implied for each authority at taxpayer level by the rate support grant for 1988-89, assuming that each authority meets his Department's spending assumption, with no additions to or withdrawals from funds or balances, and assuming 1987-88 penny rate products; and if he will list, on a class and ranked basis, each authority's 1987-88 rate poundage, showing the difference between the 1987-88 poundage and the implied one for 1988-89 and showing the resulting percentage change.

Mr. Peter Walker: The information requested is as follows:

Local Authority	*1987-88 Rate poundage (pence)*	*Notional poundage 1988-89 (pence)*	*Change in poundage (per cent.)*
Islwyn	230·50	249·54	8·26
Torfaen	237·28	256·68	8·18
Wrexham Maelor	234·99	253·96	8·07
Newport	230·54	247·38	7·31
Port Talbot	264·34	282·50	6·87
Monmouth	230·10	245·87	6·85
Delyn	233·20	249·16	6·84
Glyndwr	229·46	244·74	6·66
Lliw Valley	262·38	279·42	6·49
Neath	253·94	270·38	6·47
Blaenau Gwent	238·28	253·58	6·42
Alyn and Deeside	228·47	243·04	6·38
Swansea	269·54	285·55	5·94
Radnor	213·75	223·17	4·41
Montgomeryshire	210·73	218·90	3·88
Colwyn	246.09	255·44	3·80
Brecknock	225·51	234·06	3·79
Meirionnydd	219·15	224·06	2·24
Ynys Mon	223·02	227·97	2·22
Dinefwr	234·86	239·50	1·98
Aberconwy	228·66	233·16	1·97
Cardiff	210·65	214·68	1·91
Rhuddlan	233·68	237·69	1·72
Dwyfor	228·31	232·20	1·71
Arfon	223·80	226·39	1·16
Merthyr Tydfil	259·45	260·24	·30
Llanelli	255·98	256·61	·25
Vale of Glamorgan	217·92	217·72	−·09
Rhymney Valley	257·13	256·40	−·28
Carmarthen	238.99	236.93	−·86
Ogwr	259·43	254·10	−2·06
Taff Ely	258·70	253·34	−2·07
Preseli	234·65	229·66	−2·13
South Pembroke	238·17	232·86	−2·23
Rhondda	263·49	257·02	−2·46
Ceredigion	235·65	227·61	−3·41
Cynon Valley	252·44	242·36	−3·99

Dr. Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what changes were made to the method of calculating grant-related expenditure in each rate support grant settlement from 1981-82 to 1988-89.

Mr. Peter Walker: Full details of the methodology used in calculating grant related expenditure are set out in each Welsh rate support grant report laid before the House.

AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FOOD

Information Technology Staff

Mr. Michael Marshall: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what proportion of the professional information technology staff in his Department, including programmers, systems analysts and managers, are based in London and the south-east.

Mr. Donald Thompson: Ninety-eight per cent. of staff using ADP functional skills on a full-time basis are based in London and the south-east.

Mr. Michael Marshall: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what proportion of the trainees for professional information technology posts within his Department are *(a)* female and *(b)* more than 30 years of age.

Mr. Donald Thompson: Just under 60 per cent. of trainees for the ADP functional specialism, current and those joining shortly, are women and about 10 per cent. are over 30 years of age.

Mr. Michael Marshall: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what proportion of the professional information technology staff in his Department, including programmers, systems analysts and managers, are *(a)* female and *(b)* more than 30 years of age.

Mr. Donald Thompson: Thirty-one per cent. of staff using ADP functional specialism skills on a full-time basis are women. The figure for staff over 30 years of age is not readily available.

Mr. Michael Marshall: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food how many professional level information technology staff are employed by his Department, including programmers, systems analysts and managers; and how many trainees there are for such posts.

Mr. Donald Thompson: The complement for posts in the administrative class requiring the knowledge and skills of the ADP functional specialism, excluding staff engaged on data processing duties, is 237. In addition, a number of staff in other professional grades exercise these skills as part of their duties. Currently there are four trainees in post and 13 more are to join shortly.

Moulin Winter Wheat

Sir John Farr: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, in the light of the widespread failure of Moulin winter wheat crops in the current year, to what extent public money will be used for compensation payments to growers.

Mr. Donald Thompson: Unless legal liability is established, the Government have no intention of making public money available to compensate growers who may have suffered losses attributable to the performance of Moulin.

Dairy Quotas

Mr. Hume: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will make a statement regarding the hardship among large numbers of dairy farmers in Northern Ireland resulting from the imposition of dairy quotas; and if he will establish an exceptional hardship provision under paragraph 16, schedule 8 to the Dairy Produce Quota Regulations 1986; and if he will make appropriate arrangements for its administration.

Mr. Donald Thompson: As elsewhere in the United Kingdom, the dairy sector in Northern Ireland has successfully come to terms with the difficulties arising from the introduction of milk quotas. I have no plans at present to make a new exceptional hardship provision under regulation 16 of the Dairy Produce Quotas Regulations 1986.

Intervention Stocks

Mr. Cummings: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food how much grain is held in intervention in the county of Durham.

Mr. Donald Thompson: No intervention grai currently stored in the county of Durham.

Pigmeat

Ms. Walley: To ask the Minister of Agricul Fisheries and Food what steps he is taking to ensur continuing prohibition of the importation of unc pigmeat from Europe; and if he will make a stateme

Mr. Donald Thompson: In accordance with Euro Community law, imports of fresh pigmeat Community countries will continue to be prohibited u the meat is derived from pigs reared in officially s fever free parts of the Community.

Agricultural Practice

Dr. David Clark: To ask the Minister of Agricul Fisheries and Food to what extent he has investig changes in agricultural practices caused by the floo and mudslide in Sussex in October; in what parti places; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Donald Thompson *[holding answer 18 Dece 1987]:* Severe surface water run-off and soil erosion experienced on 7 October this year and subsequentl six areas of farmland in an area of the South Downs Brighton during the exceptionally heavy rainfall du the first part of that month. Local advisers in Department's Agricultural Development and Adv Service have visited the sites affected and have prov advice at the request of the principal landowner conce on measures to avoid recurrence of the problem.

ADAS is able to provide advice when requested range of measures that can be taken in response to types of problems, including changes in cultivation or management practices. The specific measures re mended will depend on the individual circumstances o particular farm or location.

Alternative Land Use

Mr. Ron Davies: To ask the Minister of Agricul Fisheries and Food whether farmers, opting to set land for woodlands under his proposed extensifica scheme, are expected to claim the relevant rate of gran their management under that scheme or from the prop farm woodland grant scheme.

Mr. MacGregor *[holding answer 18 December 19* The consultation document issued on 9 Dece suggested a possible link between the extensifica scheme and the farm woodland scheme whereby a fa prepared to accept the requirements of both sch might receive payments for the first five years under extensification scheme and payments under the woodland scheme thereafter. But I shall wish to con the relationship between the two schemes further in light of all views expressed.

Milk

Mr. Nicholas Bennett: To ask the Minister Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will list reductions in *(a)* milk production and *(b)* milk quot each European Community country in each year 1984 as a percentage of (i) national production and European Community production, together with the for each category for all years since 1984.

Mr. Donald Thompson *[holding answer 17 December 1987]:* The information requested is contained in the following tables. There was no change in milk quotas between 1985-86 and 1986-87.

Data on milk production were obtained from Eurostat, and represent quantities within the Eurostat definition of "deliveries to dairies". This differs from the definition of "wholesale deliveries" for quota purposes, and hence the Eurostat milk production figures are not directly comparable with quota. Levels of quota were taken from the appropriate EC regulations, including allocations of quota from the Community reserve.

Change in production between 1983-84 and 1984-85 as percentage of:

	(i) National production 1983-84	*(ii) EC (10) production 1983-84*
Belgium	−5·4	−0·17
Denmark	−6·6	−0·33
France	−2·4	−0·60
Germany	−7·6	−1·85
Greece	−3·9	−0·02
Ireland	+3·0	+0·16
Italy	−0·05	−0·004
Luxembourg	+3·3	+0·01
Netherlands	−5·4	−0·66
United Kingdom	−7·3	−1·18
EC10	—	−4·6

Change in production between 1984-85 and 1985-86 as percentage of:

	(i) National production 1984-85	*(ii) EC (10) production 1984-85*
Belgium	+5·4	+0·17
Denmark	−0·7	−0·03
France	+0·5	0·14
Germany	+0·7	+0·18
Greece	+8·8	+0·04
Ireland	−0·2	−0·01
Italy	+0·9	+0·07
Luxembourg	+0·2	+0·003
Netherlands	+0·2	0·03
United Kingdom	+0·36	+0·06
EC10	—	+0·63

Change in Production between 1985-86 and 1986-87 as percentage of:

	(i) National production 1985-86	*(ii) EC (10) production 1985-86*
Belgium	+1·1	+0·04
Denmark	−0·5	−0·02
France	−0·05	−0·13
Germany	+1·1	+0·26
Greece	+1·5	+0·01
Ireland	−0·9	−0·05
Italy	n/a	n/a
Luxembourg	+1·4	+0·004
Netherlands	−0·7	−0·09
United Kingdom	+0·5	+0·08
EC10	n/a	n/a

Change in Quota between 1984-85 and 1985-86 as percentage of:

	(i) National production 1984-85	*(ii) EC (10) production 1984-85*
Belgium	−0·06	−0·002
Denmark	−1·01	−0·05
France	−0·35	−0·09
Germany	−0·27	−0·06
Greece	−1·22	−0·005
Ireland	No change	No change
Italy	No change	No change
Luxembourg	−1·02	−0·003
Netherlands	−0·59	−0·07
United Kingdom	−1·01	−0·16
EC10	—	0·45

Note: Quota was reduced in all member states except Ireland and Italy by 1 per cent. from 1984-85 levels. However, transfers of quota between wholesale and direct sale partially offset this reduction. There were no reductions in milk quota between 1985-86 and 1986-87.

Change in quota between 1986-87 and 1987-88 as percentage of:

	(i) National production 1986-87	*(ii) EC (10) production 1986-87*
Belgium	−5·8	n/a
Denmark	−6·0	n/a
France	−6·0	n/a
Germany	−5·9	n/a
Greece	−7·1	n/a
Ireland	−5·7	n/a
Italy	n/a	n/a
Luxembourg	−5·5	n/a
Netherlands	−5·9	n/a
United Kingdom	−5·9	n/a
EC10	n/a	n/a

Farm Incomes

Dr. David Clark: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what is his projection of farm incomes over the next five years; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. MacGregor *[holding answer 18 December 1987]:* Future farm incomes will be influenced by many unpredictable factors, including individual farmers' management decisions. Consequently, reliable estimates cannot be made. The Government's determination that proper budgetary discipline should be applied to the CAP offers the best prospect for ensuring its continuance as a viable support policy and is thus in the interests of farmers, as well as taxpayers and consumers.

EC (Food Exports)

Mr. Teddy Taylor: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, pursuant to his reply of 15 December, *Official Report*, column *478*, what was the total amount, expressed in pounds sterling, expended by the EEC in exporting food to the Soviet Union in the period January-May in export rebates and what was the comparable total in respect of the exports in the calendar year 1986.

Mr. MacGregor *[holding answer 18 December 1987]:* Information on the cost of refunds paid on exports to the Soviet Union is not available. No breakdown by country of destination is provided by the Commission.

CIVIL SERVICE

Quangos

Mr. Butler: To ask the Minister for the Civil Service how many quangos in net terms have been either abolished or created since *(a)* 1984 and *(b)* 1985.

Mr. Luce: Up to 1 April 1987, there was a net decrease in the number of non-departmental public bodies ("quangos") of *(a)* 38 since 1 April 1984, and *(b)* 11 since 1 April 1985.

THE ARTS

Northern Arts

Mr. Cummings: To ask the Minister for the Arts what was the level of grant made to Northern Arts for the years 1982-83, 1983-84, 1985-86 and 1986-87.

Mr. Luce: The information is as follows:

	£
1982-83	1,733,236
1983-84	1,819,020
1985-86	2,086,802
1986-87	3,543,845

Museums and Galleries

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Minister for the Arts if he will list each of the functions of the Museums and Galleries Commission; and what proportion each accounts for in the dual budget from his Department.

Mr. Luce: The objects and powers of the Museums and Galleries Commission are set out in its royal charter. The commission's principal functions are:

1. Advising Government and others on museum matters, including security, acceptances in lieu of tax, and the operation of the Government indemnity scheme.
2. The administration of grants to the English Area Museum Councils, the Museums Documentation Association and non-national museums.
3. The promotion and co-ordination of museum-related conservation services and of travelling exhibitions.

It is for the commission to decide the distribution of its resources, including the grant-in-aid, between its various functions, subject to any guidelines or specific requirements which I may indicate as to the application of the grant-in-aid. The commission publishes a statement of expenditure in its annual report. A table analysing provision for the previous and current years is also included in the annual Supply Estimates.

Departmental Expenditure

Mrs. Emma Nicholson: To ask the Minister for the Arts whether he will publish in the *Official Report* the total amount spent by the Office of Arts and Libraries, directly and indirectly, on funding *(a)* orchestral music, *(b)* non-orchestral music and *(c)* all music excluding opera for every year from 1979-80 to 1987-88.

Mr. Luce *[holding answer 16 November 1987]:* The information requested is as follows:

Year	Orchestral music	Non-orchestral music (including opera)
	£	£
1979-80	[1]4,625,033	[1]15,025,013
1980-81	[1]5,327,411	[1]16,702,851
1981-82	[1]6,117,281	[1]18,827,504
1982-83	7,091,157	22,064,401
1983-84	7,290,855	24,173,188
1984-85	7,542,318	25,130,648
1985-86	7,584,718	26,282,454
1986-87	10,290,459	28,920,837
1987-88	[2]	[2]

[1] Two regional arts authorities were unable to break music budgets these years. The totals above do not include the music budgets of these two regional arts authorities.
[2] Firm figures for 1987-88 are not yet available.

Miss Emma Nicholson: To ask the Minister for the Arts how much of the Office of Arts and Libraries expenditure, directly and indirectly, on music, excluding opera, has been set aside for the replacement of Greater London council and metropolitan county council grants; in every year since the Greater London council and the metropolitan county councils were abolished; which institutions have benefited; and by how much.

Mr. Luce *[holding answer 16 November 198* available information is as follows:

1986-87
London Philharmonic Orchestra
London Symphony Orchestra
Philharmonia Orchestra
Royal Philharmonic Orchestra
Halle Concerts Society
Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Society (including the Philharmonic Hall)
Northern Sinfonia
Northern Sinfonia Lunchtime Concerts
City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra
Newcastle City Symphony Concerts Series
Sunderland Empire Lunchtime Concerts
Jazz Central, Birmingham
Asian Music Academy and Resources Centre
Atum Community Music
Black Music Archive
Black Music Association UK Ltd.
Camden Jazz Week
Comhaltas Ceoltoiri Eirann
Cultural Co-operative
Dadakrama
East London African Arts
Endymion Ensemble
Firehouse Population Music Centre
Foundation for African Arts
Dishari Shilipi Gosthi
Grand Union
Lewisham Academy of Music
Linking Music
Live Music Now
London Brotherhood of Steel
Mela Multi-Cultural Festival
National Interest Band
Over Music Group
Pyramid Arts Development Co. Ltd.
Rayman Chinese Orchestra
Sugumugu Sundae
Tower Hamlet Youth Music Workshop
Triangle Music Workshop
Safrica
West London Women's Music Project
Wilf Walker Entertainments Ltd.

1986-87	£
Woolwich Simba Project	8,000
Young Musicians Symphony Orchestra	16,450
Youth and Music	19,400
Zion Music Workshop	32,240
Total	3,165,758

Full outturn figures for 1987-88 are not yet available.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Mr. E. Bernasko

Mr. Malins: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when he will be in a position to reply to the letter of 4 November 1987, from the hon. Member for Croydon, North-West on the subject of Mr. E. Bernasko of Silverleigh road, Thornton Heath.

Mr. Eggar: A reply was sent to my hon. Friend on 15 December 1987.

African National Congress

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, pursuant to the answer of 15 December *Official Report*, column *443*, why the high commission at Dar-es-Salaam did not accept the invitation to the African National Congress conference.

Mrs. Chalker: We have contacts from time to time with the African National Congress. But it is not our policy to attend all its functions. In the case of the Arusha conference, we were invited to attend only the opening session.

Peace Initiatives

Mr. Hinchliffe: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent initiatives Her Majesty's Government have taken to promote peace through non-military initiatives since 1979.

Mr. Eggar: Since 1979 Her Majesty's Government have worked consistently to further the cause of world peace by keeping NATO's defences strong; observing and promoting respect for international law; playing our full part in international fora such as the United Nations and the Commonwealth.

Embassy and Consular Services

Mr. Nigel Griffiths: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will publish in the *Official Report* the overall cost of maintaining Her Majesty's embassy and consular services in *(a)* Italy, *(b)* Japan, *(c)* Saudi Arabia, *(d)* Singapore, *(e)* Burkina Faso, *(f)* Canada and *(g)* New Zealand.

Mr. Eggar: In the financial year 1986-87, the cost excluding FCO support services in the United Kingdom, of Her Majesty's embassies and consular offices in the named countries was as follows:

	£ millions
(a) Italy	6·919
(b) Japan	10·110
(c) Saudi Arabia	3·765
(d) Singapore	2·0
(e) Burkina Faso—(see below)	
(f) Canada	3·8
(g) New Zealand	1·4

The United Kingdom has no direct representation Burkina Faso, relations with that country bei maintained through Her Majesty's embassy in Abidj Ivory Coast.

Istanbul (Immigration Service)

Mr. Nigel Griffiths: To ask the Secretary of State f Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will give t figures for the number of staff working on entry clearan at his Department's Istanbul post for each of the ye 1978 to 1987.

Mr. Eggar: The number of staff working on en clearance at Istanbul was 5·5 each year from 1978 to 19 six in 1986 and seven in 1987.

Mr. Nigel Griffiths: To ask the Secretary of State f Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will give t average time taken to process visa applications at Department's Istanbul post; and if he will give the numb of visa applications currently awaiting a decision.

Mr. Eggar: Applications by foreign visa nationa except Iranians, are normally processed within maximum of three days of receipt. There are 1,0 applications by non-resident Iranians awaiting a perso interview and subsequent decision.

Pakistan

Mr. Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for Forei and Commonwealth Affairs what meetings Her Majest Government's representatives in Pakistan have had w representatives of the Pakistan People's Party and ot opposition parties in the last year.

Mr. Eggar: Her Majesty's ambassador to Pakistan met most of the main opposition leaders. In additi members of staff at the embassy in Islamabad and consulate-general in Karachi have contacts at all lev with a wide range of opposition politicians.

Mr. Sidney Clarke

Mr. Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for Fore and Commonwealth Affairs what contacts with Government of Thailand have been made in respect of Sidney Clarke, a British prisoner; whether a King's parc has been applied for; and if he is satisfied with the medi attention Mr. Clarke is receiving.

Mr. Eggar: Her Majesty's embassy in Bangkok h been in contact with the appropriate Thai authorities connection with both Mr. Clarke's royal parc application and medical attention for him.

Our consular staff visit Mr. Clarke regularly, officials in Britain maintain close touch with his fami

Mr. Clarke's application for a King's pardon submitted in June 1986. The embassy has established t it has reached the royal household.

There is a prison doctor available. Where necessary Thai prison authorities arrange for prisoners to rec treatment in outside hospitals. Mr. Clarke has declined

consult the prison doctor. He recently agreed, however, to see a local British doctor if the embassy can obtain the necessary permission from the Thai prison authorities. The embassy has applied for this.

Yemen

Mr. Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether he will make representations to the President Praesidium of the Supreme People's Council of the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen to seek clemency for the 35 people that have been sentenced to death in connection with the attempted coup.

Mr. Mellor: On behalf of the Twelve, the EC Presidency representative in Aden made a demarche on humanitarian grounds to the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen authorities on behalf of the five people in detention whose death sentences were ratified. However, we now understand that those five were executed soon after that ratification.

Hong Kong

Mr. Adley: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the maintenance of prosperity and stability in Hong Kong in the light of recent developments connected with the Hong Kong stock exchange.

Mr. Eggar: We believe that the prompt action taken by the Hong Kong Government in November to initiate a thorough review of the management and operation of the Hong Kong stock exchange and, more recently, the resolutions passed by the stock exchange enabling certain members of its committee to distance themselves from the management of the exchange while investigations into allegations of corruption in the operation are in progress, will have reinforce confidence in Hong Kong as a leading This will contribute to the maintenance and stability of the territory.

Imperial College, Londo

Dr. Marek: To ask the Secretary of S and Commonwealth Affairs if he will remuneration received by the renew assessment group at Imperial college, Lon undertaken for the Falkland Islands connection with the issue of fishing licenc Falkland Islands conservation zone.

Mr. Eggar: The fees paid to the rene assessment group at Imperial college an Falkland Islands Government's scientific 1987-88 is £265,000. The terms of the contr RRAG provides scientific advice to the F Government are commercially confidenti

French Ambassador

Mr. Wareing: To ask the Secretary of S and Commonwealth Affairs when he last with the French ambassador; if middle eas discussed; and when he next intends ambassador.

Mrs. Chalker: My right hon. and encounters the French ambassador regula no recent discussion of the middle east w no plans for a meeting specifically wi ambassador in the near future.

West Bank (Ministerial Visit)

Mr. Parry: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the recent visit to the West Bank by the Minister of State, the hon. and learned Member for Putney (Mr. Mellor).

Mr. Mellor: During my visit to Israel and the occupied territories I had useful and constructive discussions with a wide range of Israelis and Palestinians. I took every opportunity to register our concern at abuses of human rights and violations of international law in the occupied territories and to reiterate our view that an international conference offers the best way forward to a peaceful settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict.

Mr. Parry: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if the recent statement of the Minister of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs on his official visit to the West Bank represen Majesty's Government policy; and if he will n statement.

Mr. Mellor: Yes.

Visa Control

Mr. Madden: To ask the Secretary of State for F and Commonwealth Affairs what has been the tot of administering visa control in the five countries became subject to such visa control in October 1986 is the estimated cost of administering such visa over the coming year; how many entry control were in post on 1 October 1986 and 1 October 198 many entry control officers will be in post on 1 O 1988; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Eggar [*pursuant to the reply*, 8 December c. *116*]: Following are the figures requested concern present and future costs of administering visa con the five countries, which became subject to visa con October 1986:

Estimated costs of administering visa countrol in the new visa regime countries

Country	*Year to end September 1987*		*Year to end September 1988*	
	Ongoing operating costs	*Start up costs*	*Ongoing operating costs*	*Start up costs*
Bangladesh	2,336	70	2,639	nil
Ghana	309	nil	417	nil
Nigeria	3,840	2,000	5,829	710
India	3,330	286	4,297	5
Pakistan	3,778	287	4,193	140
Total	13,593	2,643	17,375	855

Cruise Missiles

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if, pursuant to the statement by the Minister of State, the hon. and learned Member for Putney (Mr. Mellor) *Official Report*, 10 December, column 630, he will set out the uses to which the nuclear material arising from withdrawn cruise missile warheads, to which he makes reference, may be put; and if any provisions have been made to transfer ownership to civil uses.

Mr. Ian Stewart: I have been asked to reply.

The warheads for ground-launched cruise missiles currently based in the United Kingdom as well as the missiles themselves, are wholly the property of the United States Government. The warheads will, therefore, be returned to the United States, and the use of the nuclear material they contain is entirely a matter for the United States Government.

EDUCATION AND SCIENCE

Examination Statistics

Mr. Nicholas Bennett: To ask the Secretary of St Education and Science (1) if he will list the num children sitting *(a)* CSE exams, *(b)* O-level exams a A-level exams in each local education authority in E as a percentage of the total number in the relevan groups in each authority for the latest available ye

(2) if he will list by each local educational autho England the total number of children achieving *(a* grades 2 to 5, *(b)* O-level grades A to C and CSE 1 and *(c)* A-level grades A to E as a percentage of th number of pupils in the relevant year group i authority, for the latest available year.

Mr. Dunn: The information requested for main schools, expressed as percentages of school leav given in the table.

School leavers 1985-86
Maintained schools only

	Total leavers (000's)	[1]*Percentages* *Attempting CSE*	*Attempting O level*	*A level*	*Achieving [2]Lower grades*	*Achieving [3]Higher grades*	*A lev*
London boroughs							
Barking	2·12	79·4	50·6	10·0	78·7	41·3	

	Total leavers (000's)	[1]Percentages				
		CSE	Attempting O level	A level	[2]Lower grades	Achievi [3]Hi gr
Barnet	3·54	71·6	80·2	37·1	79·2	
Bexley	3·50	68·5	67·6	19·8	78·1	
Brent	2·82	76·0	58·8	15·9	76·3	
Bromley	3·68	73·1	74·4	22·0	81·7	
Croydon	4·26	80·6	65·9	14·1	82·2	
Ealing	3·19	86·3	68·7	12·6	84·1	
Enfield	3·13	76·5	59·3	21·6	81·9	
Haringey	1·96	79·6	69·1	17·0	80·1	
Harrow	2·16	79·4	79·1	33·4	83·1	
Havering	3·79	81·4	69·3	17·8	82·2	
Hillingdon	3·08	87·3	65·5	16·1	88·4	
Hounslow	2·91	79·2	58·5	15·8	80·5	
Kingston-upon-Thames	1·52	60·6	73·6	25·0	74·3	
Merton	2·22	74·7	64·8	15·6	79·2	
Newham	2·94	72·5	48·7	12·3	70·5	
Redbridge	3·10	71·8	68·2	22·6	78·7	
Richmond-upon-Thames	1·39	84·2	81·1	—	82·7	
Sutton	2·03	71·7	61·8	18·8	82·8	
Waltham Forest	2·55	81·5	54·9	10·2	78·7	
ILEA	23·50	75·4	51·0	12·9	74·8	
West Midlands						
Birmingham	16·71	80·6	66·0	12·3	79·5	
Coventry	5·01	88·2	76·5	14·6	85·8	
Dudley	5·03	85·7	76·5	10·2	83·9	
Sandwell	4·13	83·8	65·1	8·0	82·2	
Solihull	3·44	92·7	80·1	18·9	88·5	
Walsall	4·97	79·1	62·2	14·7	77·2	
Wolverhampton	4·44	80·1	61·7	10·6	80·6	
Merseyside						
Knowsley	2·56	76·1	58·0	6·0	72·5	
Liverpool	7·13	72·2	67·2	12·3	70·3	
St. Helens	3·54	84·2	71·2	13·1	79·4	
Sefton	4·39	82·9	83·8	19·8	84·2	
Wirral	5·17	86·6	78·2	15·6	82·3	
Greater Manchester						
Bolton	4·26	86·6	82·1	16·7	82·9	
Bury	2·58	81·6	83·6	20·7	81·1	
Manchester	7·50	71·0	64·7	14·1	71·3	
Oldham	2·95	85·7	73·5	8·8	81·2	
Rochdale	3·27	85·2	80·4	13·8	82·1	
Salford	3·62	85·8	79·1	15·4	79·7	
Stockport	3·81	82·3	86·5	18·6	79·0	
Tameside	3·87	84·1	82·0	13·0	83·7	
Trafford	3·00	80·7	88·1	17·6	81·3	
Wigan	5·63	88·8	82·6	16·1	80·6	
South Yorkshire						
Barnsley	3·46	85·8	77·7	8·1	82·7	
Doncaster	4·38	89·7	79·7	13·9	84·6	
Rotherham	4·51	84·8	70·6	13·0	81·4	
Sheffield	8·84	88·2	78·6	12·5	83·5	
West Yorkshire						
Bradford	7·24	78·8	72·1	12·9	73·1	
Calderdale	2·76	81·7	78·6	15·5	79·7	
Kirklees	6·29	87·9	83·6	18·7	82·4	
Leeds	10·40	85·9	81·3	14·7	81·4	
Wakefield	5·66	86·0	70·7	8·2	81·3	
Tyne and Wear						
Gateshead	2·89	82·0	60·8	12·7	80·5	
Newcastle-upon-Tyne	3·60	77·8	52·9	13·7	77·4	
North Tyneside	2·83	82·6	69·6	12·3	84·9	
South Tyneside	2·33	86·1	55·0	15·0	88·3	
Sunderland	5·11	89·5	75·4	9·5	90·5	
Counties						
Avon	12·08	86·7	62·6	15·7	86·8	
Bedfordshire	7·41	90·6	70·9	18·2	88·0	
Berkshire	9·64	80·6	60·6	21·2	83·6	
Buckinghamshire	8·45	72·8	65·7	23·2	82·8	

er les	A level passes
·4	31·7
·7	17·3
·4	14·3
·5	19·6
·9	13·1
·9	10·5
·2	18·1
·2	13·5
·5	31·2
·7	15·2
·1	13·2
·1	13·1
·3	22·0
·6	13·6
·2	8·8
·2	20·2
·8	—
·0	18·3
·2	8·8
·6	10·6
·7	10·1
·8	11·5
·0	9·0
·8	6·4
·2	17·4
·7	13·1
·5	7·7
·4	6·0
·1	9·8
·0	11·9
·2	16·8
·6	13·0
·0	15·7
·7	20·3
·2	12·2
·1	7·7
·8	10·8
·7	15·1
·9	14·5
·8	11·3
·5	16·6
·1	14·1
·8	7·5
·5	12·0
·2	12·6
·4	10·5
·0	10·6
·0	13·0
·4	15·1
·0	13·3
·8	6·4
·9	9·9
·8	10·8
·6	10·1
·7	11·4
·2	7·5
·2	14·1
·5	16·1
·6	19·4
·6	21·6

	Total leavers (000's)	[1] Percentages: Attempting CSE	Attempting O level	A level	Achieving [2] Lower grades	Achieving [3] Higher grades	A le
Cambridgeshire	7·87	86·2	70·0	11·4	87·5	51·8	
Cheshire	14·67	85·1	82·2	17·7	83·6	54·7	
Cleveland	9·89	84·8	69·2	16·6	83·1	51·3	
Cornwall	6·65	85·2	60·5	16·2	85·2	56·8	
Cumbria	7·36	84·2	69·6	15·4	84·3	54·2	
Derbyshire	14·48	86·0	59·9	12·6	86·6	51·5	
Devon	12·38	84·7	59·7	11·9	85·2	54·4	
Dorset	8·09	82·7	63·0	14·7	86·5	61·0	
Durham	8·73	85·4	61·8	10·7	85·1	50·4	
East Sussex	7·50	80·2	68·2	19·4	85·5	54·0	
Essex	22·35	84·1	72·7	15·8	84·8	56·2	
Gloucestershire	7·67	82·2	61·6	18·7	87·4	56·1	
Hampshire	21·43	87·6	61·7	14·5	88·4	57·4	
Hereford and Worcester	8·88	84·9	76·6	21·0	86·1	55·1	
Hertfordshire	14·28	83·6	74·3	20·1	84·1	60·4	
Humberside	13·73	85·2	68·3	13·5	83·9	46·5	
Isle of Wight	1·65	84·8	50·1	14·4	88·4	48·9	
Kent	21·34	74·0	62·2	18·5	83·5	52·7	
Lancashire	21·28	84·1	78·5	10·8	81·6	55·2	
Leicestershire	12·02	83·4	60·6	17·7	83·2	44·8	
Lincolnshire	8·01	80·4	64·2	16·4	85·5	52·3	
Norfolk	10·44	81·9	62·6	11·8	79·6	49·2	
North Yorkshire	9·83	84·3	82·8	21·3	82·9	58·6	
Northamptonshire	8·69	86·6	64·6	16·3	87·9	52·5	
Northumberland	4·11	81·1	73·2	20·8	81·9	58·3	
Nottinghamshire	15·50	86·7	56·4	12·8	86·0	40·8	
Oxfordshire	7·57	87·9	59·8	16·8	89·8	55·2	
Shropshire	6·29	88·6	73·9	16·2	86·3	57·4	
Somerset	6·12	86·1	57·1	9·8	89·0	51·9	
Staffordshire	16·33	82·8	71·6	13·7	82·1	52·0	
Suffolk	8·96	87·0	71·0	16·5	86·0	50·9	
Surrey	12·80	78·4	74·6	24·5	84·5	62·1	
Warwickshire	7·12	83·3	75·2	17·7	84·9	55·4	
West Sussex	8·77	86·4	64·6	21·7	87·4	61·0	
Wiltshire	6·57	87·3	58·8	12·2	86·8	51·0	
Total England	673·55	82·8	68·3	15·5	83·1	52·0	

Source: School leavers sample survey. Data subject to sampling error.
[1] Excludes examination attainments at tertiary colleges or other FE establishments.
[2] O level grades D, E, CSE grades 2-5.
[3] O level grades A-C, CSE grade 1.

History Curriculum

Mr. Rowlands: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science whose advice he has sought from outside his Department for the preparation of the history curriculum as a foundation subject; and whom he intends to consult on the curriculum.

Mrs. Rumbold: The arrangements for consulting on proposals for attainment targets and programmes of study in relation to any national curriculum foundation subject are set out in clauses 11 and 12 of the Education Reform Bill now before the House. My right hon. Friend has not yet established working groups to prepare such proposals for foundation subjects other than mathematics or science.

Mr. Rowlands: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science whether he specially requested the document in the history curriculum prepared and submitted to him on 2 February by the English Historical Association; and what assessment he has made of the support enjoyed by the document as a basis for the history curriculum amongst historians and teachers of history in Britain.

Mrs. Rumbold: The Historical Association sent a copy of the first version of its "Proposals for a Core Curriculum in History" on its own initiative. In responding document, my right hon. Friend said that the p were interesting, that working towards a curriculum would involve a great deal of consulta debate, and that the subject associations would important contribution to make to the proc consultation procedures now provided for Education Reform Bill will enable support Government's own eventual proposals for histo assessed.

Education Reform

Sir Dudley Smith: To ask the Secretary of Education and Science if he will make it his poli the differential formula for converting students time equivalents contained in schedule 7 to the E Reform Bill as a significant factor in the determi funding for further education.

Mr. Jackson: The determination of funding fo education is a matter for local education authori Government take account of a projection of equivalent student numbers in drawing up their spending on non-advanced further education authorities collectively. They also convert actua

numbers to full-time equivalents in the assessment of grant-related expenditure (GRE) which is one determinant of the distribution of block grant. In both these contexts the Government currently use the same multipliers as are listed in column 3 of the table shown in paragraph 2 of the schedule. But the schedule serves to provide a method of converting part-time enrolments to full-time equivalents for the purposes of clauses 82, 83, 90, 100 and 102 of the Bill. The Government are not committed to the continued use of the same multipliers in expenditure projections or GREs.

Sir Dudley Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what are the reasons for the differential formula for converting students into full-time equivalents contained in schedule 7 to the Education Reform Bill.

Mr. Jackson: The formula provides a method for calculating the full-time equivalent enrolment number of an institution — a concept used in the Bill to decide whether an institution will enter the sector to be funded by the Polytechnics and Colleges Funding Council, or whether the local education authority will be required to delegate to an institution which it will continue to maintain responsibility for managing the institution's budget.

Full-time equivalent weightings are used because students on different levels of course and modes of attendance require different amounts of teaching time and expenditure. The weightings shown in schedule 7 are consistent with the relative teaching hours for different modes of attendance revealed by the Department's annual monitoring survey; and they were developed in consultation with the National Advisory Body and the local education authorities.

Mr. Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what recent representations he has received concerning the Education Reform Bill as it affects Scottish universities.

Mr. Jackson: We have received many representations about the university provisions in the Education Reform Bill, which apply equally to universities in England, Scotland and Wales.

Education Expenditure

Mr. David Marshall: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science how much each education authority in England spends per pupil per year on *(a)* textbooks, *(b)* materials and supplies, *(c)* computers, *(d)* video recorders, *(e)* video cameras, *(f)* television sets and *(g)* paper and reprographics.

Mrs. Rumbold: Information in the form requested is not available. However, the figures in the following table show the overall expenditure on text and library books and education equipment, stationery and materials per primary and secondary pupil by each education authority in England for 1985-86.

Expenditure (£) on books and equipment per pupil primary and secondary schools—England—1985-86

	£
Barking	35·42
Barnet	37·79
Bexley	
Brent	
Bromley	
Croydon	
Ealing	
Enfield	
Haringey	
Harrow	
Havering	
Hillingdon	
Hounslow	
Kingston-upon-Thames	
Merton	
Newham	
Redbridge	
Richmond-upon-Thames	
Sutton	
Waltham Forest	
ILEA	
Birmingham	
Coventry	
Dudley	
Sandwell	
Solihull	
Walsall	
Wolverhampton	
Knowsley	
Liverpool	
St. Helens	
Sefton	
Wirral	
Bolton	
Bury	
Manchester	
Oldham	
Rochdale	
Salford	
Stockport	
Tameside	
Trafford	
Wigan	
Barnsley	
Doncaster	
Rotherham	
Sheffield	
Bradford	
Calderdale	
Kirklees	
Leeds	
Wakefield	
Gateshead	
Newcastle-Upon-Tyne	
North Tyneside	
South Tyneside	
Sunderland	
Isles of Scilly	
Avon	
Bedfordshire	
Berkshire	
Buckinghamshire	
Cambridgeshire	
Cheshire	
Cleveland	
Cornwall	
Cumbria	
Derbyshire	
Devon	
Dorset	
Durham	
East Sussex	
Essex	
Gloucestershire	
Hampshire	
Hereford and Worcester	
Hertfordshire	
Humberside	
Isle of Wight	

£
35·42
46·28
46·02
39·21
41·87
41·43
48·55
41·91
44·42
35·02
32·14
59·39
n/a
n/a
41·96
33·68
35·57
43·20
69·38
22·98
40·29
32·49
31·76
36·62
n/a
36·46
25·34
22·32
23·94
28·46
39·71
38·01
39·66
31·77
35·19
29·57
32·36
38·26
35·60
32·75
29·70
30·65
27·95
22·27
36·67
31·99
28·20
31·12
12·03
27·76
39·67
34·77
40·91
36·57
29·75
39·00
34·00
42·32
35·60
37·54
35·03
33·57
33·93
25·76
36·39
41·70
19·54
34·58
25·83
36·16
32·96
29·77
28·62
38·09
35·63
32·80
37·62

	£
Kent	31·98
Lancashire	31·83
Leicestershire	35·10
Lincolnshire	33·60
Norfolk	33·70
North Yorkshire	35·62
Northamptonshire	32·01
Northumberland	33·83
Nottinghamshire	36·22
Oxfordshire	40·05
Shropshire	26·62
Somerset	37·79
Staffordshire	39·09
Suffolk	35·73
Surrey	28·12
Warwickshire	33·68
West Sussex	37·04
Wiltshire	31·34
England	34·54

Notes:

1. Returns of expenditure for 1985-86 have not been received from Merton or Newham, and information for Walsall is not available in this form.
2. The figures are based on expenditure returns made by local authorities to the Department of the Environment and pupil number returns made to the Department of Education and Science.

Careers Education

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will make a statement on careers education for 11 to 14-year-olds.

Mrs. Rumbold: The foundations of careers education must be laid from primary age onwards. Pupils need to develop over time an understanding of the world of work, its challenges and satisfactions, and the choices and decisions that lie ahead of them in their school careers and beyond.

The Government's thinking on careers education was set out more fully in "Working Together for a Better Future", copies of which are in the Library.

The publication of this document in April 1987 marked the launch by my right hon. Friends the Secretaries of State for Education and Science, for Employment and for Wales of their joint initiative on careers education and guidance, which affirms the key place of careers education in the school curriculum. Our commitment to careers education is reflected also in the eligibility of in-service teacher training under this heading for LEA training grants as a national priority.

Adult Education

Mr. Ron Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science when he next intends meeting representatives of the teaching profession in further education to discuss the Government's proposals for adult education institutions; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Dunn: My right hon. Friend has no plans for such a meeting but is always ready to consider comments or representations from any of the teacher organisations.

Science Teachers

Mr. Thurnham: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will make a statement about the current level of recuitment of teachers of science subjects.

Mrs. Rumbold: I am glad to report that recruits to initial teacher training scien England and Wales in 1987 is above target and within that physics courses, where the need, have recruited to 99 per cent of their n

This is most encouraging and a firm indic positive measures taken by the Governme teacher supply are taking effect. We will co under close review the numbers of recruits subjects.

Scottish Universities

Mr. Kirkwood: To ask the Secretary Education and Science what representa received opposing the proposed reductions central Government finance to be made universities in Scotland; and if he will mak

Mr. Jackson: We have received many r about the funding of the eight universities in application of the University Grants standard criteria has resulted in three of t increases in basic grant for 1987-88 abo Britain average.

Capital Allocations

Mr. Pike: To ask the Secretary of State and Science if he will publish in the *Offic* 1988-89 capital allocations to each loc authority, indicating in each case the bid the allocation as a percentage of the bid in

Mr. Dunn: The allocation in respect expenditure for an individual authority does my right hon. Friend's view of what th capital spending on education should be. A use spending power from capital receip flexibilities in the capital control system to s allocations.

The information sought is given in the t

Local Education Authority	*1988-89*	
	Allocation (£000's)	*LEA's Plans (£000's)*
Barking	1,639	10,457
Barnet	2,000	11,192
Bexley	1,234	1,758
Brent	2,532	6,758
Bromley	403	6,098
Croydon	1,595	7,149
Ealing	1,174	9,053
Enfield	1,318	9,504
Haringey	2,330	11,042
Harrow	1,643	3,862
Havering	692	1,962
Hillingdon	918	6,307
Hounslow	1,242	4,860
Kingston-upon-Thames	1,695	11,731
Merton	1,023	6,965
Newham	3,061	6,316
Redbridge	3,719	5,418
Richmond-upon-Thames	277	2,210
Sutton	627	6,063
Waltham Forest	5,498	7,120
Inner London	17,767	54,545

Local Education Authority	1988-89		
	Allocation (£000's)	LEA's Plans (£000's)	Allocation as percentage of plans
Birmingham	4,407	11,472	38
Coventry	6,155	17,980	34
Dudley	1,555	7,773	20
Sandwell	767	3,710	21
Solihull	700	4,890	14
Walsall	907	2,210	41
Wolverhampton	1,849	7,823	24
Knowsley	1,136	4,815	24
Liverpool	2,323	7,692	30
St. Helens	1,211	5,685	21
Sefton	1,450	2,778	52
Wirral	2,330	6,391	36
Bolton	1,212	3,866	31
Bury	467	1,282	36
Manchester	9,269	34,860	27
Oldham	2,822	5,793	49
Rochdale	1,440	5,654	25
Salford	3,430	5,740	60
Stockport	2,878	3,891	74
Tameside	716	2,781	26
Trafford	471	2,637	18
Wigan	3,508	5,308	66
Barnsley	342	1,198	29
Doncaster	421	644	65
Rotherham	699	2,184	32
Sheffield	7,189	17,815	40
Bradford	10,457	33,604	31
Calderdale	3,619	5,486	66
Kirklees	1,486	9,078	16
Leeds	4,626	14,280	32
Wakefield	3,573	6,397	56
Gateshead	1,933	5,420	36
Newcastle upon Tyne	3,917	12,946	30
North Tyneside	2,129	4,587	46
South Tyneside	2,527	5,939	43
Sunderland	4,583	10,951	42
Isles of Scilly	39	405	10
Avon	4,277	10,993	39
Bedfordshire	1,630	5,660	29
Berkshire	5,567	12,603	44
Buckinghamshire	6,152	9,013	68
Cambridgeshire	4,314	13,719	31
Cheshire	4,829	10,812	45
Cleveland	3,673	7,104	52
Cornwall	6,413	9,744	66
Cumbria	4,858	6,530	74
Derbyshire	10,777	15,025	72
Devon	6,262	10,732	58
Dorset	4,052	8,459	48
Durham	1,415	5,451	26
East Sussex	9,815	25,962	38
Essex	20,317	37,264	55
Gloucestershire	5,302	9,864	54
Hampshire	16,550	38,619	43
Hereford and Worcester	2,892	9,032	32
Hertfordshire	5,525	18,887	29
Humberside	7,077	13,333	53
Isle of Wight	1,663	4,377	38
Kent	7,134	15,217	47
Lancashire	12,809	25,419	50
Leicestershire	7,419	15,643	47
Lincolnshire	3,897	8,891	44
Norfolk	4,021	7,938	51
North Yorkshire	3,937	7,297	54
Northamptonshire	3,190	8,571	37
Northumberland	955	3,554	27
Nottinghamshire	2,461	4,709	52
Oxfordshire	4,673	18,701	25
Salop	4,465	8,474	53
Somerset	2,764	6,501	43
Staffordshire	7,469	15,494	48
Suffolk	7,014	9,448	74
Surrey	4,859	15,468	31
Warwickshire	1,375	4,069	34
West Sussex	3,053	10,851	28
Wiltshire	3,215	6,867	47

Schools

Mr. Pike: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will indicate for each local education authority *(a)* the number of schools built prior to 1914, *(b)* what percentage of schools in each area this represents, and *(c)* what percentage of school places are provided in such schools in each area.

Mr. Dunn: This information is not held centrally.

Truancy

Mr. Bowis: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will give the most recent figures for schooldays lost through truancy for *(a)* England and Wales, *(b)* inner London, *(c)* outer London, *(d)* Birmingham, *(e)* Greater Manchester, *(f)* Sheffield, *(g)* Liverpool, *(h)* Leeds and *(i)* Bradford; and if he will give them as a total and per head of school population.

Mrs. Rumbold: This information is not available centrally. Under the Education Acts, the responsibility for taking action on truancy rests with local education authorities. It is they who should ensure that attendance levels in their schools are monitored and that action is taken to keep them under control.

Higher Education

Mr. Bowis: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will give the most recent figures for the number of young people going on into higher education for *(a)* England and Wales, *(b)* the Inner London education authority, *(c)* Croydon, *(d)* Kingston upon Thames, *(e)* Brent and *(f)* Sheffield; and if he will give each as a total and as a percentage of the total year group for each area.

Mr. Jackson: Information is not available in the form requested. The numbers of new full-value awards to students in the academic year 1984-85, including the rates per thousand of the age group, are as follows. Full-value awards are, in general, made to students on higher education courses.

New full-value awards to students in the academic year 1984-85

Local education authority	At universities		At public sector establishments		All new awards	
	Number	[1]per 1000	Number	[1]per 1000	Number	[1]per 1000
England and Wales	64,573	79	106,262	130	170,835	208
Inner London	2,779	65	6,992	164	9,771	229
Croydon	512	104	457	93	969	197
Kingston upon Thames	245	122	281	140	526	262
Brent	374	92	1,173	290	1,547	382
Sheffield	585	53	1,179	107	1,764	160

[1]Per 1000 of the average of the 18 and 19 year old population in each local authority.

Teachers (Assaults)

Mr. Bowis: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will give the most recent figures for assaults on teaching staff committed by pupils for *(a)* England and Wales, *(b)* inner London and *(c)* outer London.

Mrs. Rumbold: This information is not available centrally. It is for local education authorities and governing bodies, as employers, to decide whether to collect information on assaults on teaching staff and to take appropriate action in response to such incidents.

National Curriculum

Mr. Fatchett: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science when he expects the national curriculum to be in operation in schools; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Rumbold: It is too early to set out a timetable. Decisions on the pace of the introduction of the national curriculum must take account of the advice contained in the report of the task group on assessment and testing, of the recommendations of the working groups for the foundation subjects and of the views of the curriculum councils and of those consulted as part of the statutory process. However, we intend, as a first step, to ask primary schools to ensure from September 1989 that pupils spend a reasonable time studying in the area of each foundation subject; and we expect the rest of the arrangements required by the national curriculum to be introduced incrementally, subject by subject, stage by stage, over a period of years, beginning in September 1989 with the introduction of attainment targets and programmes of study for maths and science for at least the first key stage of five to seven.

Mr. Fatchett: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science when he expects to publish figures indicating the number of teachers required to teach the national curriculum; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Rumbold: My right hon. Friend has already said that the national curriculum will be introduced broadly within the existing level of resources. On overall teacher numbers, we are already planning for the pupil-to-teacher ratio to fall further from its present lowest ever level of 17·3:1 to reach a level of 17:1 by 1989. It is too early to come to precise estimates of numbers of teachers required for each foundation subject. More teaching time will be needed for some subjects, and less for others. Some redirection of teaching effort and measures to boost teacher numbers in particular subjects may be required, but not necessarily an increase in teacher numbers overall.

Maintained Schools

Mr. Butterfill: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what is the funding for maintained schools for each county in England; and what is the allowance made in each case for *(a)* the provision of new schools to meet basic need and *(b)* the replacement of schools that have outlived their useful lives.

Mr. Dunn: I have assumed that my hon. Friend's question refers to capital funding and would refer him to the answer which my right hon. Friend gave my hon. Friend the Member for Skipton and Ripon (Mr. Curry) on 18 December 1987 at column *765*. Allocations in respect of prescribed expenditure are not grants—they represent limits on the capital spending which local authorities may undertake. Authorities may supplement their allocations by using spending power from receipts and other flexibility under the capital control system. Since the allocations are unhypothecated, authorities may use them as they wish. Information on the funding which individual local authorities devote to specific categories of capital expenditure is not, therefore, available centrally.

Capital works at aided and special agreement schools are directly assisted by grant aid from my Department. It is not possible, however, to identify the specific sums devoted to the categories of work mentioned in the question because individual projects often meet a mixture of needs.

Mr. Butterfill: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science how many maintained schools have been replaced after reaching the end of their useful life in Dorset since 1979; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Dunn: This information is not available centrally.

Adult Literacy

Dr. Marek: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he has undertaken, or has had made available to him, any information or research on the effects of price increases for books and periodicals on the level of adult literacy.

Mr. Dunn: I am not aware of any such information.

Inner London Education Authority

Dr. Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what were the original and final expenditure levels underlying the precept limit of the Inner London education authority, showing its original and final precept limit and budgeted expenditure in 1986-87, 1987-88 and 1988-89.

Mrs. Rumbold: The information requested is as follows:

Year	Original expenditure level £ million	Final expenditure level £ million	Proposed precept limit p	Final precept limit p	Final budget estimate £ million
1986-87	902	915	76·5	77·25	[3]971
1987-88	915	[1]—	[1]—	79·73	[3]1,025
1988-89	955	[2]970	80·56	[4]—	[4]—

[1] Not applicable in 1987-88. The precept limit for that year was determined by the formula in the Local Government Finance Act 19
[2] Expenditure level subject to a requirement under section 3*(b)* of the Rates Act concerning the use of £15 million.
[3] Total budget to be financed from balances, reserves and precept, as published in ILEA's capital and revenue estimates 1986-87 and 1987
[4] Not yet determined.

Council for Educational Technology

Mr. Pawsey: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what plans he has to rationalise the operations of the Council for Educational Technology and the Microelectronics Education Support Unit.

Mr. Kenneth Baker: I wrote to the chairman of both bodies on 7 January 1988 proposing that they be amalgamated to form a new National Council for Educational Technology from 1 April 1988. Copies of my letters have been placed in the Library.

Sickle Cell Anaemia

Ms. Walley: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what research and at what cost is currently being undertaken into sickle cell anaemia; and if he will indicate the total cost of this.

Mr. Jackson: The Medical Research Council is the main Government agency for the direct support of biomedical research. In the financial year 1986-87 the council spent £341,000 on projects concentrating directly on sickle cell anaemia and a further £702,000 on projects which may have some relevance to this disease. The council is always willing to consider soundly-based scientific proposals in competition with other applications.

Research into sickle cell anaemia is also carried out in universities and medical schools using funds for teaching and research allocated on advice from the University Grants Committee. In addition, the medical charities may be funding relevant research. The Government are not in a position to influence directly the scale and nature of these research activities.

Teacher-Pupil Ratios

Mrs. Clwyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will list the average teacher-to-pupil ratio in *(a)* nursery schools and classes and *(b)* primary schools in (i) England, (ii) Wales, (iii) Northern Ireland and (iv) by each local authority.

Mr. Dunn *[holding answer 14 December 1987]:* The average pupil-teacher ratio in nursery schools and classes and in primary schools in England, Wales and Northern Ireland in January 1987 was as follows:

	Nursery schools and classes	[1]Primary schools
England	23·4	21·9

[1] Includes nursery classes.

	[2]Nursery schools	[1]Primary schools
Wales	21·0	22·1
Northern Ireland	23·1	23·4

[1] Includes nursery classes.
[2] Information for nursery classes is not available.

Information for each local education authority England, Wales and Northern Ireland is as follows.

In England, some nursery classes are staffed solely nursery assistants. As such assistants are not taken i account when calculating pupil-teacher ratios (PTRs), ratios for some authorities will be relatively high.

Pupil-teacher ratios January 1987

	[1][3]Nursery schools and classes	[2]Prim sch
England		
Barking	22·7	2
Barnet	21·4	2
Bexley	17·6	2
Brent	18·8	1
Bromley	20·3	2
Croydon	25·2	2
Ealing	19·4	1
Enfield	27·6	2
Haringey	17·0	1
Harrow	25·6	2
Havering	28·4	2
Hillingdon	25·2	2
Hounslow	23·7	1
Kingston upon Thames	22·9	2
Merton	24·6	2
Newham	21·9	2
Redbridge	21·0	2
Richmond upon Thames	21·7	2
Sutton	24·4	2
Waltham Forest	17·9	2
Inner London	20·4	1
Birmingham	24·4	2
Coventry	27·6	2
Dudley	36·4	2
Sandwell	25·5	2
Solihull	24·0	2
Walsall	80·2	2
Wolverhampton	24·6	2
Knowsley	25·5	2
Liverpool	24·7	2
St. Helens	23·8	2
Sefton	23·5	2
Wirral	21·6	2
Bolton	27·2	2
Bury	25·4	2
Manchester	23·6	2
Oldham	27·4	2
Rochdale	20·7	2
Salford	24·9	2
Stockport	23·6	2
Tameside	21·8	2
Trafford	25·6	2
Wigan	25·9	2
Barnsley	26·0	2

	[1,3] Nursery schools and classes	[2] Primary schools
Doncaster	27·3	21·5
Rotherham	26·9	21·2
Sheffield	22·1	19·8
Bradford	19·6	20·1
Calderdale	22·9	21·9
Kirklees	23·5	21·2
Leeds	28·9	20·4
Wakefield	26·2	21·2
Gateshead	25·7	19·3
Newcastle-upon-Tyne	20·6	19·6
North Tyneside	22·9	18·5
South Tyneside	21·5	20·5
Sunderland	21·1	21·8
Isles of Scilly[4]	0·0	12·8
Avon	22·0	24·1
Bedfordshire	24·1	22·0
Berkshire	20·3	23·6
Buckinghamshire	28·3	24·4
Cambridgeshire	22·0	23·2
Cheshire	21·4	23·2
Cleveland	26·4	22·1
Cornwall	23·4	23·2
Cumbria	19·9	21·2
Derbyshire	22·7	21·3
Devon	26·4	22·6
Dorset	24·0	22·9
Durham	19·9	22·1
East Sussex	20·2	22·4
Essex	22·7	23·1
Gloucestershire[4]	0·0	22·4
Hampshire	22·3	22·3
Hereford and Worcester	26·5	24·1
Hertfordshire	20·7	21·8
Humberside	24·1	21·4
Isle of Wight	24·3	23·5
Kent	21·1	24·0
Lancashire	20·8	23·6
Leicestershire	26·9	22·9
Lincolnshire	21·9	24·0
Norfolk	24·1	22·4
North Yorkshire	21·6	21·9
Northamptonshire	19·1	22·7
Northumberland	24·4	23·1
Nottinghamshire	27·4	20·7
Oxfordshire	25·5	23·0
Shropshire	21·8	21·3
Somerset	22·3	22·9
Staffordshire	39·8	22·9
Suffolk	23·5	22·5
Surrey	20·1	21·3
Warwickshire	23·0	21·7
West Sussex	25·1	22·8
Wiltshire	22·9	22·8
Wales		
Clwyd	18·6	24·1
Dyfed	22·4	20·6
Gwent	22·8	21·9
Gwynedd[5]	0·0	20·4
Mid Glamorgan	20·4	23·3
Powys[5]	0·0	19·3
South Glamorgan	19·5	22·9
West Glamorgan	23·4	21·2
Northern Ireland		
Belfast	23·2	21·9
Western	23·1	23·7
North-Eastern	22·2	23·3
South-Eastern	23·8	23·7
Southern	23·1	24·0

[1] A number of nursery classes in some local education authorities in England are staffed solely by nursery assistants.
[2] Includes nursery classes.
[3] Information for nursery classes is not available.
[4] These authorities have no nursery schools or classes.
[5] These authorities have no nursery schools.

Reception Classes

Mrs. Clwyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what is the average size of reception classes for rising fives for each local authority in *(a)* England, *(b)* Wales and *(c)* Northern Ireland; and what is the comparable average primary class size.

Mr. Dunn *[holding answer 14 December 1987]:* The information on reception classes for England and Wales is not collected centrally. The average size of reception classes and comparable primary classes for each local education authority in Northern Ireland in January 1987 is as follows.

Average class size[1] for reception classes and primary classes in Northern Ireland—January 1987

Education and Library Board	*Reception classes*	*[2] Primary classes*
Belfast	21·0	26·2
Western	14·0	26·5
North-Eastern	11·4	26·5
South-Eastern	13·5	26·8
Southern	12·5	25·8

[1] Classes as taught.
[2] Excludes nursery and reception classes.

Special Educational Needs

Mr. Ashley: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what is, by local education authority, the number of children, subject to a statement of special educational need under the Education Act 1981, attending mainstream schools, as a percentage of the total number of children with a statement in each local education authority, for each year from October 1984.

Mr. Dunn *[holding answer 11 December 1987]:* The number of pupils with statements of special educational need attending maintained, primary, middle and secondary schools as a percentage of all pupils with statements in each local education authority in England in 1985, 1986 and 1987 is as follows.

Pupils with statements in maintained Primary, Middle and Secondary schools as a percentage of pupils with statements in each LEA[1]

	January of each year		
	1985	*1986*	*1987*
Barking	10·3	15·0	19·5
Barnet	15·0	18·9	21·5
Bexley	20·9	29·1	36·0
Brent	10·1	9·2	9·3
Bromley	26·0	38·2	46·1
Croydon	12·9	21·5	33·8
Ealing	19·4	9·2	11·2
Enfield	6·4	9·2	8·7
Haringey	17·2	21·0	12·3
Harrow	24·1	23·9	30·6
Havering	14·1	13·2	21·3
Hillingdon	9·1	10·4	9·9
Hounslow	0·0	12·7	22·5
Kingston upon Thames	17·5	16·3	18·5
Merton	14·7	7·7	7·3

	January of each year 1985	1986	1987
Newham	9·6	11·8	15·0
Redbridge	6·6	10·3	11·8
Richmond upon Thames	11·0	22·5	28·7
Sutton	9·9	16·6	17·8
Waltham Forest	14·6	12·6	12·7
Inner London	13·8	15·2	16·6
Birmingham	11·2	13·2	16·7
Coventry	7·9	9·6	13·5
Dudley	18·1	16·6	17·7
Sandwell	16·2	13·7	13·0
Solihull	8·7	13·3	18·8
Walsall	12·0	13·2	17·5
Wolverhampton	18·2	29·2	24·6
Knowsley	5·3	10·3	9·3
Liverpool	7·7	4·4	6·7
St. Helens	11·8	12·9	12·9
Sefton	5·2	10·9	18·4
Wirral	16·7	19·1	18·8
Bolton	2·4	6·6	11·2
Bury	18·3	28·4	40·5
Manchester	2·7	1·9	3·5
Oldham	11·5	13·6	13·6
Rochdale	10·8	17·3	19·2
Salford	2·6	3·3	5·1
Stockport	16·0	23·4	27·4
Tameside	27·0	26·2	29·7
Trafford	29·3	35·1	37·0
Wigan	12·3	9·5	8·4
Barnsley	12·3	22·1	30·5
Doncaster	0·2	2·5	5·0
Rotherham	20·3	23·3	21·3
Sheffield	14·5	21·1	26·6
Bradford	8·4	10·5	14·2
Calderdale	6·5	9·6	12·9
Kirklees	16·2	26·6	33·0
Leeds	16·9	23·8	27·7
Wakefield	1·2	2·4	5·1
Gateshead	13·8	18·8	12·8
Newcastle-Upon-Tyne	6·3	10·4	15·3
North Tyneside	9·6	11·9	16·1
South Tyneside	14·5	20·7	20·9
Sunderland	25·9	19·9	20·2
Isles of Scilly	0·0	0·0	0·0
Avon	58·2	56·8	49·7
Bedfordshire	24·2	13·8	11·6
Berkshire	31·1	23·5	18·3
Buckinghamshire	22·8	29·6	31·5
Cambridgeshire	25·3	26·1	29·5
Cheshire	42·7	47·1	49·9
Cleveland	16·6	24·0	23·6
Cornwall	66·3	69·0	74·1
Cumbria	44·6	51·4	59·2
Derbyshire	25·9	35·1	42·8
Devon	18·3	22·9	29·9
Dorset	14·3	20·5	27·1
Durham	14·8	20·4	23·0
East Sussex	7·2	4·8	6·6
Essex	12·6	19·9	27·2
Gloucestershire	10·9	11·8	4·1
Hampshire	10·1	8·0	12·6
Hereford and Worcester	4·8	16·1	18·6
Hertfordshire	20·9	24·2	30·1
Humberside	28·7	30·0	30·7
Isle of Wight	14·8	13·0	16·8
Kent	19·4	17·1	18·7
Lancashire	8·2	8·8	11·3
Leicestershire	26·5	24·3	24·2

	January of each year 1985	1986
Lincolnshire	29·9	28·2
Norfolk	33·2	33·2
North Yorkshire	14·8	17·3
Northamptonshire	21·0	23·3
Northumberland	10·7	18·8
Nottinghamshire	4·8	4·3
Oxfordshire	5·4	1·6
Shropshire	34·6	39·7
Somerset	29·7	34·4
Staffordshire	18·4	18·1
Suffolk	42·3	48·4
Surrey	8·6	12·3
Warwickshire	4·3	6·9
West Sussex	10·3	13·0
Wiltshire	49·3	51·4
England	18·7	20·9

[1] Excludes independent schools and nursery schools. Inclu pupils in hospital special schools.

Mr. Ashley: To ask the Secretary of State for Educ and Science what is, by local authority, the numb children attending mainstream schools who are subj a statement of special educational need under Education Act 1981 for each year from October 19

Mr. Dunn *[holding answer 11 December 1987]*: number of pupils with statements of special educat needs attending maintained primary, middle secondary schools in each local education authori England in January 1985, 1986 and 1987 is as follo

Pupils with statements in maintained primary, middle and secondary schools

	January of each year 1985	1986
Barking	32	43
Barnet	75	102
Bexley	94	152
Brent	60	50
Bromley	187	296
Croydon	91	157
Ealing	141	59
Enfield	34	48
Haringey	88	101
Harrow	100	99
Havering	74	65
Hillingdon	53	58
Hounslow	0	84
Kingston upon Thames	54	52
Merton	54	26
Newham	65	81
Redbridge	33	52
Richmond upon Thames	23	50
Sutton	34	64
Waltham Forest	146	129
Inner London	1,195	1,309
Birmingham	416	482
Coventry	86	101
Dudley	143	128
Sandwell	169	139
Solihull	40	59
Walsall	95	103
Wolverhampton	129	237
Knowsley	35	65
Liverpool	171	90
St. Helens	67	74
Sefton	37	82
Wirral	202	237

	January of each year 1985	1986	1987
Bolton	14	41	71
Bury	71	114	175
Manchester	57	38	71
Oldham	94	107	100
Rochdale	69	123	137
Salford	28	34	48
Stockport	156	239	281
Tameside	152	137	174
Trafford	181	226	249
Wigan	110	82	70
Barnsley	51	94	130
Doncaster	2	25	52
Rotherham	156	191	164
Sheffield	248	368	379
Bradford	118	143	190
Calderdale	23	38	53
Kirklees	131	246	331
Leeds	435	630	700
Wakefield	11	20	42
Gateshead	89	125	75
Newcastle-upon-Tyne	68	111	159
North Tyneside	61	75	106
South Tyneside	56	84	84
Sunderland	272	188	178
Isles of Scilly	0	0	0
Avon	3,289	3,071	2,213
Bedfordshire	370	188	151
Berkshire	859	572	399
Buckinghamshire	534	740	775
Cambridgeshire	494	484	517
Cheshire	1,426	1,599	1,733
Cleveland	385	565	540
Cornwall	575	696	869
Cumbria	509	619	773
Derbyshire	693	992	1,342
Devon	507	673	930
Dorset	211	331	481
Durham	201	287	317
East Sussex	139	92	129
Essex	505	827	1,188
Gloucestershire	169	185	58
Hampshire	472	373	607
Hereford and Worcester	76	292	350
Hertfordshire	750	872	993
Humberside	665	677	654
Isle of Wight	54	45	59
Kent	941	816	913
Lancashire	348	369	476
Leicestershire	509	450	419
Lincolnshire	552	502	482
Norfolk	496	491	768
North Yorkshire	242	289	385
Northamptonshire	428	452	477
Northumberland	76	143	176
Nottinghamshire	129	116	124
Oxfordshire	65	19	10
Shropshire	424	534	577
Somerset	373	447	626
Staffordshire	511	487	421
Suffolk	613	770	910
Surrey	285	414	506
Warwickshire	69	114	148
West Sussex	148	194	198
Wiltshire	819	907	997
England	26,787	30,047	33,277

Mr. Ashley: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what is, by local education authority, the number of children subject to a statement of special educational need under the Education Act 1981, for each year from October 1984.

Mr. Dunn *[holding answer 11 December 1987]:* The number of pupils with statements of special educational need attending maintained primary, middle and secondary schools and special schools in each local education authority in England in 1985, 1986 and 1987 is as follows.

Total pupils with statements in each LEA[1]

	January of each year 1985	1986	1987
Barking	311	286	272
Barnet	501	539	531
Bexley	449	522	525
Brent	597	542	492
Bromley	720	774	761
Croydon	704	730	835
Ealing	725	639	597
Enfield	528	521	503
Haringey	512	482	431
Harrow	415	415	396
Havering	524	493	484
Hillingdon	584	556	558
Hounslow	610	661	721
Kingston upon Thames	309	319	324
Merton	367	336	316
Newham	676	686	680
Redbridge	498	507	499
Richmond upon Thames	209	222	237
Sutton	343	385	394
Waltham Forest	997	1,025	893
Inner London	8,645	8,608	8,386
Birmingham	3,716	3,645	3,673
Coventry	1,089	1,057	1,052
Dudley	788	770	694
Sandwell	1,046	1,015	1,022
Solihull	459	445	410
Walsall	791	778	760
Wolverhampton	710	811	736
Knowsley	657	631	654
Liverpool	2,208	2,041	1,974
St. Helens	569	573	557
Sefton	709	749	803
Wirral	1,213	1,244	1,170
Bolton	594	625	632
Bury	387	401	432
Manchester	2,092	2,050	2,024
Oldham	816	787	735
Rochdale	639	713	713
Salford	1,061	1,022	940
Stockport	973	1,022	1,024
Tameside	562	523	585
Trafford	618	643	673
Wigan	892	862	838
Barnsley	416	425	426
Doncaster	946	1,019	1,035
Rotherham	767	820	770
Sheffield	1,707	1,740	1,427
Bradford	1,405	1,357	1,338
Calderdale	353	394	411
Kirklees	811	924	1,003
Leeds	2,571	2,646	2,526
Wakefield	890	835	816
Gateshead	645	666	588
Newcastle-upon-Tyne	1,084	1,065	1,036
North Tyneside	636	632	659
South Tyneside	387	405	402

	January of each year		
	1985	1986	1987
Sunderland	1,049	947	882
Isles of Scilly	0	0	0
Avon	5,656	5,406	4,450
Bedfordshire	1,531	1,359	1,298
Berkshire	2,765	2,436	2,186
Buckinghamshire	2,337	2,497	2,459
Cambridgeshire	1,954	1,854	1,753
Cheshire	3,339	3,393	3,476
Cleveland	2,319	2,352	2,287
Cornwall	867	1,009	1,173
Cumbria	1,141	1,204	1,306
Derbyshire	2,675	2,824	3,135
Devon	2,765	2,938	3,107
Dorset	1,471	1,614	1,777
Durham	1,355	1,406	1,381
East Sussex	1,930	1,905	1,964
Essex	4,004	4,164	4,371
Gloucestershire	1,549	1,574	1,409
Hampshire	4,676	4,664	4,836
Hereford and Worcester	1,588	1,813	1,880
Hertfordshire	3,584	3,600	3,294
Humberside	2,314	2,257	2,129
Isle of Wight	365	346	352
Kent	4,857	4,763	4,882
Lancashire	4,241	4,188	4,207
Leicestershire	1,924	1,851	1,734
Lincolnshire	1,848	1,778	1,736
Norfolk	1,495	1,481	1,729
North Yorkshire	1,640	1,666	1,726
Northamptonshire	2,035	1,938	1,856
Northumberland	712	760	774
Nottinghamshire	2,705	2,695	2,597
Oxfordshire	1,213	1,158	1,040
Shropshire	1,224	1,345	1,353
Somerset	1,254	1,298	1,398
Staffordshire	2,783	2,684	2,576
Suffolk	1,448	1,591	1,708
Surrey	3,317	3,362	3,361
Warwickshire	1,608	1,646	1,633
West Sussex	1,430	1,489	1,522
Wiltshire	1,661	1,763	1,852
England	143,060	143,601	141,962

[1] Excludes independent schools and nursery schools. Includes all pupils in hospital special schools.

DEFENCE

Trident

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what are the implications for the number of warheads to be permitted on missiles on the Trident D-5 system, to be purchased from the United States, of agreements concluded on missile warhead ceilings, in the recent Washington summit between the United States and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

Mr. Ian Stewart: Only the United States and Soviet Governments are party to the START negotiations. The ceiling of 4,900 warheads, announced in the United States-Soviet joint statement issued following the recent summit talks in Washington, relates therefore only to United States and Soviet strategic ballistic systems. It has no implications for the modernisation of the United Kingdom's strategic deterrent.

RN SSIX Missile

Mr. O'Neill: To ask the Secretary of State f
(1) what is the cost of the RNSSIX missi
associated systems;
(2) if he will outline the purpose of the RNSS

Mr. Sainsbury: It is assumed that these que
to the RN SSIXS satellite communications sy
system is fitted in most Royal Navy submarines,
Invincible class carriers and ashore, to facilitate
teleprinter communications between the B
United States navies.
The cost of an installation depends
configuration of the equipment fitted, but rang
£270,000 and £400,000.

Sea Harrier

Mr. O'Neill: To ask the Secretary of State f
if he will outline the changes that will be ma
Harrier to update it to FRS 2 standard.

Mr. Sainsbury: Blue Vixen target acquis
tracking radar will replace the Blue Fox
advanced medium range air-to-air missiles will
to complement Sidewinder missiles. These imp
will allow look-down detection and engag
airborne targets in all weather conditions.

Mr. O'Neill: To ask the Secretary of State fo
when work will commence on full updating
Harrier; and what is the cost of the programm

Mr. Sainsbury: Work on updating the Se
started in 1983 at both British Aerospace and Fe
incentive contract for the radar developm
production was placed with Ferranti in that y
similar contract for the aircraft will be concl
British Aerospace shortly.

RFA Argus

Mr. O'Neill: To ask the Secretary of State fo
what penalties have been paid to his Depa
Harland and Wolff for cost overrunning on
Argus.

Mr. Sainsbury: None. MOD has a firm pric
with Harland and Wolff.

Mr. O'Neill: To ask the Secretary of State fo
what is the total cost of RFA Argus.

Mr. Sainsbury: The contract with Harland
was placed following a competition. De
commercially confidential.

Departmental Staff

Mr. O'Neill: To ask the Secretary of State fo
(1) how many black and Asian personnel are em
the executive branch of the Civil Service
Department;
(2) how many black and Asian personnel are
in the administrative branch of the Civil Servi
Department.

Mr. Sainsbury: The voluntary survey of t
origins of non-industrial civil servants is being c
in six phases and the first three phases h

completed. The MOD respondents to this voluntary survey included 15 black and 29 Asian people employed in the executive officer, higher executive officer, and senior executive officer grades, and 189 black and 157 Asian people employed in the administrative assistant and administrative officer grades.

Tucano

Mr. Rogers: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what changes are currently being made to the Shorts Tucano aircraft.

Mr. Sainsbury: Several modifications are being carried out to ensure that the aircraft meets the required specification. This is not unusual in the early stages of delivery.

Mr. Rogers: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what effect delays on the Shorts Tucano aircraft have had on the cost of the project.

Mr. Sainsbury: None.

Mr. Rogers: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether his Department intends to review its decision to order the Shorts Tucano aircraft.

Mr. Sainsbury: No.

Mr. Rogers: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence why no Shorts Tucano aircraft have been delivered to the RAF.

Mr. Sainsbury: Deliveries cannot be made until the service release trials have progressed far enough to permit release to the RAF.

Mr. Rogers: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what British contracts have been awarded in Brazil to offset the purchase of Tucano.

Mr. Sainsbury: Some 90 per cent. of the value of the Tucano airframe order is in work to be carried out in the United Kingdom, mainly by Shorts. The balance does not warrant an offset undertaking.

Mr. Rogers: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many flying hours have been recorded for the Tucano aircraft accepted by his Department.

Mr. Sainsbury: Three quarters of an hour.

Mr. Rogers: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if, pursuant to his answer of 16 November 1987, *Official Report*, column *454*, he can now give a date for the start of release for service trials on the Shorts Tucano.

Mr. Sainsbury: The first Tucano aircraft started its release to service programme on 8 December 1987, and the second aircraft on 14 December 1987.

Strategic Defence Initiative

Mr. Rogers: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what is the value of strategic defence initiative contracts awarded in the United Kingdom to date.

Mr. Sainsbury: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given to the hon. Member for Southwark and Bermondsey (Mr. Hughes) on 8 December 1987 at column *438*.

Mr. Rogers: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many United Kingdom academic institutions are currently involved in strategic defence initiative research.

Mr. Sainsbury: Seventeen.

Mr. Rogers: To ask the Secretary of State for Defe how many United Kingdom companies have b awarded strategic defence initiative contracts to date.

Mr. Sainsbury: Thirty-eight.

Mr. Rogers: To ask the Secretary of State for Defe what recent dicussions he has had with his United Sta counterpart concerning strategic defence initia contracts; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Sainsbury: None recently, but there have b several ministerial and senior official contacts with United States Department of Defence in recent months United Kingdom participation in the United Sta strategic defence initiative research programme.

SDIPO

Mr. Rogers: To ask the Secretary of State for Defe how many civilian industrial consultants are curre employed in the SDIPO.

Mr. Sainsbury: Four, all of whom have severed th relationship with their respective companies for duration of their secondment.

Mr. Rogers: To ask the Secretary of State for Defe how many civilian industrial consultants have b employed in SDIPO since the office was established.

Mr. Sainsbury: Four.

Mr. Rogers: To ask the Secretary of State for Defe what has been the total cost of running the SDIPO off

Mr. Sainsbury: Since its formation in December 19 approximately £1 million.

Mr. Rogers: To ask the Secretary of State for Defe how many civil servants are currently employed in SDIPO.

Mr. Sainsbury: Twenty-three, including three Uni Kingdom-based civilians and four locally emplo civilians located in the United States.

Mr. Rogers: To ask the Secretary of State for Defe how many United States personnel are currently emplo or attached to the SDIPO.

Mr. Sainsbury: None.

Mr. Rogers: To ask the Secretary of State for Defe if he will list the companies from which indust consultants to the SDIPO have been provided.

Mr. Sainsbury: British Aerospace plc, Thorn EM Ferranti plc and Hunting Engineering, each of which h provided one consultant on secondment for a period two years.

Faslane and Coulport

Mr. McFall: To ask the Secretary of State for Defe (1) what is the latest estimate of the eventual total cost the expansion work at Faslane and Coulport;

(2) what proportion of the cost of expansion work the Clyde submarine base is allocated to the Trid budget;

(3) what has been the total cost of construction wo at Faslane and Coulport from 1962 to 1987; and wha the estimated cost from 1987 to 1995.

Mr. Freeman: The total cost, excluding contingenc and PSA resource costs, of the development at the Cly

submarine base, which includes Faslane and Coulport, is estimated at some £660 million; of this, some £350 million is attributable to the Trident programme. About £580 million is expected to be spent between 1 April 1987 and 31 March 1995. I regret that it would involve disproportionate effort to identify expenditure back to 1962.

Mr. McFall: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will estimate the number of civilian jobs at the bases at Faslane and Coulport currently held by individuals residing in Dumbarton district.

Mr. Sainsbury: Approximately 3,100.

Rating Reform

Mr. McFall: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many people he estimates will pay the community charge as from RNAD Coulport and Faslane.

Mr. Freeman: Around 7,160 service and civilian personnel over the age of 18 are employed or based at Faslane and Coulport. All these personnel, and adult members of their families, will be liable to pay the community charge in respect of their sole or main residence.

Patriot Missile System

Mr. Rogers: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether his Department intends to purchase the Patriot missile system.

Mr. Sainsbury: There are no plans to do so.

Interceptor Aircraft

Mr. Rogers: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many interceptor aircraft are maintained on quick reaction alert at security state Bikini Black.

Mr. Ian Stewart: Details of forces assigned to quick reaction alert duties are classified.

Ground-launched Missile Systems

Mr. Rogers: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence which Royal Air Force ground-launched missile systems are capable of engaging high targets above 70,000 ft.

Mr. Ian Stewart: Details of the operational capabilities of military equipment are, in general, classified. However, the Bloodhound ground-to-air missile system is capable of engaging targets at high altitude.

Air Defence Region (Interceptions)

Mr. Rogers: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence on how many occasions Tornado F3 aircraft have intercepted Soviet military aircraft that have penetrated the United Kingdom's air defence region.

Mr. Ian Stewart: None, as yet.

Mr. Rogers: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether any Backfire, Blinder or Fencer aircraft have been detected or intercepted in the United Kingdom air defence region; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Ian Stewart: It is not our practice to give details of penetrations into the United Kingdom air defence region by Soviet military aircraft, or of their i Royal Air Force aircraft. However, I would Member to the reply I gave to the hon. M Western Isles (Mr. Macdonald) on 14 Dec column *412*.

Radar

Mr. Rogers: To ask the Secretary of Sta (1) whether any research into over-the-ho currently taking place at RSRE Malvern; make a statement;

(2) what funding is currently being pr Department for over-the-horizon radar res

(3) what assessment he has made of the a the-horizon radar to detect low-flying aircr

Mr. Sainsbury: I refer the hon. Member the hon. Member for Orkney and Shetland on 8 December 1987 at column *156*. RSR involved with these studies and, by the beg financial year, some £1 million (at 1987-8 been spent by the United Kingdom.

Bloodhound

Mr. Rogers: To ask the Secretary of Stat what is the total cost of the Bloodhound mi

Mr. Sainsbury: As my right hon. Friend for Tonbridge and Malling (Mr. Stanley) the of State for the Armed Forces, informed the for Kingston upon Hull, North (Mr. McNa April 1987 at column *590*, the Bloodhound is expected to remain in service until the Further improvements to the system to maintain its capability against the increasin under consideration, but no decisions have ye

Aircraft (Maximum Operating Altit

Mr. Rogers: To ask the Secretary of State what is the maximum operating altitude of F3, Phantom F4J-FG1-FGR2 and Lightning

Mr. Ian Stewart: The information requested Member is classified.

Mr. Rogers: To ask the Secretary of State what information he has about the estimate operating altitudes of Bison, Badger, Bea Blinder, Fencer, Foxhound and Foxbat aircr

Mr. Ian Stewart: Bison, Badger, Bear, Back and Fencer aircraft all have estimated maximu altitudes of between 40,000 and 50,000 ft. The Foxhound are capable of operating above 60,

Arms Exports

Mr. Battle: To ask the Secretary of State f (1) what is his policy towards the export countries with a record of human rights abuse will make a statement;

(2) what steps will be taken to ensure that equipment on display at the British Army exhibition at Aldershot in June 1988 is s otherwise reaches, countries with records of hu abuses; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Sainsbury: Our policy is not to allow th defence equipment likely to be used for internal

or to violate human rights. All exports of defence equipment are subject to strict licensing procedures. In considering applications for licences we look at each on its merits, and the human rights record of the country concerned would be one fact taken into account when deciding whether or not to grant a licence.

Contracts Organisation (Leeds)

Mr. Battle: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if the undertaking given in the "Statement on the Defence Estimates" on 1 July 1986, that the Leeds branch of the contracts organisation would not be closed, remains his policy; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Sainsbury: I have nothing to add at present to the reply my right hon. Friend gave to my hon. Friend the Member for Bury St. Edmunds (Sir E. Griffiths) on 11 December 1987 at column *310*.

Defence Budget

Mr. Hinchliffe: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what proportion of the 1987-88 defence budget is devoted to non-military defence spending.

Mr. Ian Stewart: I refer the hon. Member to the Supply Estimates 1987-88, class 1, Ministry of Defence, and to the "Statement on the Defence Estimates 1987", for details of defence spending. Non-military defence spending is not a concept that can be readily defined.

Air Defence Ground Environment

Mr. Rogers: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what is the total cost of the improved United Kingdom air defence ground environment to date.

Mr. Sainsbury: It is estimated that expenditure on the improved United Kingdom air defence ground environment to the end of the current financial year will be £386 million (at 1987-88 prices) for the command and control system, new radars and communications. In addition, £44 million (at outturn prices) has been spent on associated works services. The contracts for the system are at fixed prices and over half the overall cost is being recovered from NATO.

Trident

Mr. Chris Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence at what sterling-dollar exchange rate the purchase of the Trident missile system will be undertaken.

Mr. Sainsbury: The sterling-dollar exchange rates at which the purchase of the Trident missile system will be undertaken will be those applicable at the time the MOD purchases United States dollars for overseas payments.

Earth Tremor (South-West Scotland)

Mr. Wilson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what information he has on the force and nature of the earth tremor which affected parts of south-west Scotland on 17 November.

Mr. Jackson: I have been asked to reply.

The tremor referred to was detected by a NERC British Geological Survey seismograph at 00.09 on 18 November. The tremor was not an earthquake or other seismic event in the ground or underwater, but was almost cer sonic boom in the air. Such events are throughout Britain and are usually caused by However, on this occasion the available data consistent with an aircraft sonic boom and, possible sighting of a fireball at about 00.17 in R the most probable interpretation is that the trer caused by a supersonic meteor in the atmosphere

NATIONAL FINANCE

Income Tax

Mr. Neil Hamilton: To ask the Chancellor Exchequer if he will estimate *(a)* on the basis of income levels, allowances and higher rate thresho *(b)* on the basis of forecast 1988-89 income level 1988-89 allowances and higher rate thresholds, a statutory indexation therefore in the 1988 Budget year cost of (i) abolishing the 60 per cent. rate so top rate is 55 per cent., (ii) abolishing the 55 an cent. rates so that the top rate is 50 per ce abolishing the 50, 55 and 60 per cent. rates so tha rate is 45 per cent., (iv) abolishing the 45, 50, 55 per cent. rates so that the top rate is 40 per cent., abolishing all the higher rates.

Mr. Norman Lamont: The direct revenue costs year at 1987-88 and 1988-89 income levels of ab the higher rates of income tax are given in the ta

	Direct revenue costs	
Top rate of tax (per cent.)	*at 1987-88 levels of income*	*at forec 1988-89 le of inco*
55	190	
50	450	
45	850	1,
40	1,400	1,
27	3,250	3,

The costs at 1988-89 levels of income assume inc of the current income tax bands and allowances to levels as in table 4.1 of the 1987 Autumn Statem estimates assume that the wife's earnings election where it is beneficial, but no other allowance is m possible changes in taxpayers' behaviour.

Mr. Gordon Brown: To ask the Chancellor Exchequer how many people owed tax inter penalties as a result of Inland Revenue investigati each year since 1979; and what proportion of th income tax at *(a)* basic rate only, *(b)* above basic *(c)* above 60 per cent. in each year.

Mr. Norman Lamont *[holding answer 18 D 1987]:* I regret that the information is not availab form requested.

Information is available about the number o Revenue investigations and the yield, but the stati not held in a form that would permit the extractio number of people in arrears or the distribution number as between the different rates of liability

Taxation (Conscientious Objectors)

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Chancellor of the Exch he will make a statement about the Inland Re

current policy towards the prosecution of individuals who withhold or divert tax on the grounds of a conscientious objection to paying for military expenditure through their taxes.

Mr. Norman Lamont: The Inland Revenue has a number of options of civil, not criminal, action where individuals refuse to pay tax. The type of action taken is decided on the basis of the particular circumstances of each case. However, withholding or attempting to divert on the grounds of conscientious objection, of whatever type, is not a factor in deciding whether to take a particular action.

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will list for each year since 1980 *(a)* the number of people who have been prosecuted for withholding or diverting tax on the grounds of a conscientious objection to paying for military expenditure through their taxes and *(b)* the number of individuals whose prosecution for withholding or diverting tax on the grounds of a conscientious objection to paying for military expenditure through their taxes has resulted in (i) a warrant of execution against goods, (ii) garnishee proceedings, (iii) attachment of earnings orders, (iv) bankruptcy and (v) a prison sentence.

Mr. Norman Lamont: The Inland Revenue does not take criminal prosecutions in these circumstances but uses civil actions of distraint or through the courts.

I regret that the detailed information about such actions is not readily available and could not be obtained without disproportionate cost.

Value Added Tax

Mr. Teddy Taylor: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what representations he has received from trade associations and the Confederation of British Industry regarding the implications of the current case in the European Court of Justice on zero-rating; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Lilley: Several representations have been received from interested parties including trade associations.

Mr. Teddy Taylor: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement on the relative effect of levying value added tax on gas, electricity, water and sewerage on larger firms which are registered for value added tax and on smaller firms which are exempt because of their turnover.

Mr. Lilley: If VAT were levied on these goods and services, large firms which are registered for VAT would be able to recover any tax incurred on purchases relating to their taxable activities through the normal input tax credit mechanism. Firms not registered for VAT would have to bear the tax in the same way as they currently bear the VAT incurred on their taxable purchases.

Mr. Teddy Taylor: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement setting out information available to him on the nature of the industrial and commercial buildings which the Advocate General argued should be levied for value added tax in his advice to the European Court of Justice of 2 December; and if buildings for local authorities, public bodies and charities were covered by his advice.

Mr. Lilley: The Advocate General's be that, while the zero-rating for the cons and private housing is permissible, that buildings and civil engineering works is

Mr. Teddy Taylor: To ask the C Exchequer if he has now received fro Court of Justice its decision on the prop Commission that the United Kingdom s to levy value added tax on spectacles; an a statement.

Mr. Lilley: The European Court of J delivered its judgment; it is now expected year.

Mr. Barry Field: To ask the Ch Exchequer (1) what reduction there has b of value added tax under section 20 of Tax Act 1983 to local government bodi privatisation of local authority services, years;

(2) what sum of value added tax Treasury is attributable to privatis government services; and what is the for of the Local Government Bill.

Mr. Lilley: I regret that information is a sufficient level of detail to identif privatisation on refunds of value ad section 20.

Mr. Gordon Brown: To ask the C Exchequer (1) what revenue would be rai the introduction of value added tax at travel fares;

(2) what is his estimate of the add household on transport costs of imposing at 15 per cent. on travel fares;

(3) what is his estimate of the annual of imposing value added tax on travel fa

Mr. Lilley *[holding answer 18 Decem* estimated full year net revenue yield imposing value added tax at 15 per cent. £575 million.

The average additional cost per househ costs of imposing value added tax at transport fares is estimated to be about 1987.

Most businesses would be able to re added tax on fares and so would face no traders who choose not to register or those supplies would face any increase in costs. to give an estimate but the figure is tho small.

Mr. Gordon Brown: To ask the Ch Exchequer what additional revenue wou 1988-89 by increasing the rate of value ad per cent, *(b)* 17 per cent, *(c)* 17·5 per cent, and *(e)* 19 per cent.

Mr. Lilley *[holding answer 18 Decem* estimated net additional revenue would b

Rate of value added tax per cent.	£ m
16·0	
17·0	

Rate of value added tax per cent.	£ million
17·5	2,320
18·0	2,770
19·0	3,655

Britoil

Mr. Salmond: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what discussions his Department had with BP concerning that company's intention to purchase shares in Britoil, prior to 8 December.

Mr. Norman Lamont: None.

Mr. Salmond: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what discussions his Department has had with private companies about the Government's policy towards using their special rights preference share in Britoil; and on what dates such discussions took place.

Mr. Norman Lamont: Ministers and officials have frequent contacts with private companies. It is not usual practice to give details of the timing or subject matter of such meetings.

The Government have publicly stated that in present circumstances they intend to use its special share in Britoil to prevent any bidder from gaining control of the Britoil board.

Mr. Salmond: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer when he was first informed of the intention of the Atlantic Richfield Company of Los Angeles to purchase shares in Britoil.

Mr. Norman Lamont: The Government first learnt of the Atlantic Richfield Company's intention of purchasing shares in Britoil on Friday 11 December when a press release was issued.

Mr. Salmond: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer when he was first informed of BP's intention to purchase shares in Britoil.

Mr. Norman Lamont: BP informed the Government of its intention to purchase shares in Britoil on Tuesday 8 December.

Public Expenditure

Mr. Butler: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer by how much he now estimates that public expenditure has risen in real terms since 1978-79, including his latest plans for 1988-89.

Mr. Major: On the basis of the plans for 1988-89 published in the Autumn Statement, the real increase in general Government expenditure, excluding privatisation proceeds, between 1978-79 and 1988-89 is expected to be 18·6 per cent., representing an average annual increase of 1·7 per cent.

North-East Region

Rev. Martin Smyth: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is the annual figure for Government subventions, grants and expenditures to the economy of the north-east region of England, indicating the absolute figures, the north-east region contribution and the per capita figure for the population of the United Kingdom as a whole; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Major: Apart from expenditure responsibility of the territorial Departments expenditure is planned on a national basis possible to identify separately expenditure particular area.

Management Consultants

Mr. Blair: To ask the Chancellor of the Ex information he has on the number of external consultants employed by Her Majesty's Gove terms of reference and the cost per Department.

Mr. Brooke: Comprehensive informa number of external management consultants Her Majesty's Government, their terms of the cost per Government Department is centrally and could be provided only at dis cost.

Coulport and Faslane

Mr. McFall: To ask the Chancellor of t what has been the amount paid to the local lieu of rates for RNAD Coulport and Faslan *(a)* 1983-84, *(b)* 1984-85 and *(c)* 1986-87.

Mr. Major: The amounts paid were as fo

	1983-84 £	1984-85 £
RNAD Coulport	813,584	902,756
Clyde Submarine Base, Faslane	1,510,294	1,616,149

YTS (Civil Service)

Mr. Clelland: To ask the Chancellor of t how many YTS trainees are engaged in the tr for the Civil Service.

Mr. Luce: I have been asked to reply. None.

Privatisation (Special Shares)

Mr. Gordon Brown: To ask the Chan Exchequer which special shares held by H Government in privatised companies expire *(b)* 1989 and *(c)* 1990.

Mr. Norman Lamont *[holding answer 1987]:* The articles of association of th concerned give the definitive statement restrictions attaching to the Government's However, the redemption of such shares is n request of the special shareholder, with exceptions:

(i) Jaguar: the company will redeem th on 31 December 1990;

(ii) Enterprise Oil: the company will rede share on 31 December 1988, unless arise in which the special shareholder elect for a later date;

(iii) Amersham International: the special be redeemed earlier than 31 March

Tax Receipts

Mr. Gordon Brown: To ask the Chan Exchequer if he will list *(a)* the capital gain

and *(b)* the corporation tax receipts, for each of the Inland Revenue districts in Greater London for 1979 and for the last financial year available, in current and in constant prices.

Mr. Norman Lamont *[holding answer 18 December 1987]:* I regret that this information is not centrally available.

Government Inco

Mr. Alan Williams: To ask th Exchequer how much income tax, revenue and privatisation proce Government have received in each using 1986-87 prices.

Mr. Lawson *[holding answer* Following is the information:

1986-87 prices[1]

	Income tax	*VAT receipts*	*North sea revenues*	*Privatisati proce*
1978-79	36·5	9·4	0·8	
1979-80	34·3	13·6	3·9	0
1980-81	34·1	15·4	5·3	0
1981-82	36·7	15·2	8·3	0
1982-83	36·2	16·5	9·3	0
1983-84	35·5	17·4	10·0	1
1984-85	35·5	20·2	13·1	2
1985-86	36·4	19·9	11·7	2
1986-87	38·5	21·4	4·8	4

[1] Revalued at 1986-87 prices using GDP deflator.

COI (Photographic Library)

Mr. Cartwright: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what plans he has for the photographic library of the Central Office of Information; and if they involve the destruction of any part of the collection.

Mr. Brooke *[holding answer 17 December 1987]:* From April 1988 the photographic services of the Central Office of Information, including the library function, are to be reorganised. The aim will be to improve the service to Government Departments, who are the main customers of the COI. The existing photographic library will be closed: it is not an archive, but the Public Record Office and other appropriate libraries are being consulted about original material which will be offered to various specialist collections for safe keeping.

Taxation

Mr. Simon Hughes: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will give estimates for the direct and indirect revenue yield from increases in income tax of 1 per cent., 2 per cent., 3 per cent., 4 per cent., 5 per cent. and 6 per cent., taking into account current economic growth and unemployment figures.

Mr. Lamont *[holding answer 16 December 1987]:* The direct revenue effect of increasing the basic rate of income tax by 1p in the pound is forecast at £1·25 billion in 1988-89 and £1·60 billion in 1989-90, as published in table 4·5 of the Autumn Statement 1987. Direct effects of further increases in the basic rate of tax are proportionately greater. These estimates make no allowance for possible changes in taxpayers' behaviour.

Estimates of further, second round effects would require simulations on an economic model and would depend on the precise assumptions chosen.

ENVIRONMEN

Bed and Breakfast Accor

Mr. Harry Barnes: To ask the Sec Environment what information he children in the following inclusive a parent or parents in bed and break *(a)* birth to three years, *(b)* four to seven years, *(d)* eight to 11 years, *(f)* 15 and 16 years; and if he will n

Mrs. Roe: At 30 September 198 households temporarily placed in accommodation by English local a homelessness provisions of the Information on the number of households is not collected by the D

Rating Reform

Mr. Fraser: To ask the Secreta Environment what representations he exemption from the community provided for political refugees; and statement.

Mr. Howard: We have received seeking exemptions. We have, representations that the community be used to track down political therefore, decided to take step confidentiality of people at risk, to en for the community charge without names and addresses.

Mr. Rooker: To ask the Secreta Environment why, pursuant to his ans *Official Report*, columns *275-76*, a co effort is involved in producing the in in respect of the poll tax.

Mr. Howard: Estimates of gainers using a complex computer-based tax

is constructed to produce results which are net of rebates since this is the better measure of the impact of our proposals on households. To produce figures which are gross of rebates would require parts of the computer model and the associated data handling routines to be rewritten and tested for consistency.

Mr. Rooker: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if information relating to an adult's date of birth will be used in any personal identification system for the purposes of the poll tax.

Mr. Howard: The Local Government Finance Bill provides that each registration officer shall compile and maintain a register of the persons in his area who are subject to the community charge. The Bill does not provide for any personal identification system based on dates of birth. It will be for charging authorities to decide how they wish to identify individual accounts.

Mr. Rooker: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if, pursuant to his reply to the hon. Member for Billericay (Mrs. Gorman) on 2 December, *Official Report*, column *619*, he will state under what specific powers poll tax registration officers will be required to omit from the community charge register the names and addresses of people who are in fear of physical injury.

Mr. Howard: In making regulations under paragraph 14(1)*(a)* of schedule 1 to the Local Government Finance Bill, my right hon. Friend will provide that the extract of prescribed information taken from the community charge register should exclude the names and, where appropriate, the addresses of people living in danger of physical injury.

Mr. Rooker: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will make available consultation papers and draft regulations on poll tax rebates in advance of the Committee stage of the Local Government Finance Bill.

Mr. Scott: I have been asked to reply.

Discussions with the local authority associations on the details of the rebate scheme have already started, and we hope to send the associations draft regulations covering a substantial part of the provisions needed for the community charge rebate scheme before the end of this month.

A precise timetable for the discussion of particular provisions within the Local Government Finance Bill in Committee has not been fixed, but it is unlikely that the rebate provisions will be considered before then.

Urban Development Corporation (Leeds)

Mr. Battle: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment when his Department will publish a definitive map of the mini urban development corporation proposed for Leeds; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Trippier: When the order designating the UDC is laid before Parliament, probably in the spring.

Nitrate Pollution

Ms. Richardson: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what steps he intends to take to ascertain links between stomach cancers and *(a)* nitrate pollution in drinking water and *(b)* nitrite pollution in drinking water.

Mr. Moynihan: The many studies into stomach cancer and nitrate concentrations in water have not established any links in so far as nitrate is converted t body. Furthermore, Government medical advised that nitrate and nitrite concentra water supplies are not a health risk. This confirmed by independent medical experts

Water Industry

Ms. Richardson: To ask the Secretary Environment who will be responsible for t compulsory installation of water meters; will be borne by *(a)* landlords, *(b)* tena occupiers and *(d)* water public limited co

Mr. Moynihan: Paragraph 5 of schedule Utility Transfers and Water Charges Bill undertakers to meet the cost of compulsor meters in existing properties, but the Go agreed in principle to contribute up to 50 cost of the limited number of compulsory now being planned by the water industry.

Ms. Richardson: To ask the Secretary Environment what steps will be taken to reg of metered water by landlords to tena safeguards will be imposed; and by whom

Mr. Moynihan: If controls are found t my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State Industry already has power to make reg section 26 of the Consumer Protection Act the resale of water, however it is charge similar to those already proposed for the re electricity. Enforcement would be by tra officers.

Poll Tax Registers

Mr. Rooker: To ask the Secretary of Environment if he proposes to keep a nati tax registers for England under the powe under schedule 1 to the Local Governmen

Mr. Howard: No.

Planning Appeals

Dr. Cunningham: To ask the Secretary Environment if he will list, for each year s many occasions decisions made by inspec by him to determine planning appeals have or varied by Ministers in his Department.

Mr. Ridley: When inspectors are determine planning appeals their decision my behalf and I have no power to overrul

In the few cases where, in accordance policy, jurisdiction for the appeal is as Secretary of State the inspector makes a rec not the decision. Most such recomm accepted, as the following table shows:

Year	Total number of appeals decided	Appeals recovered Secretary: Number decided after inquiry	N co
1980	13,130	845	
1981	14,451	919	

Year	Total number of appeals decided	Appeals recovered for decision by Secretary of State: Number decided after inquiry	Appeals recovered for decision by Secretary of State: Number of decisions contrary to inspectors recommendation
1982	12,915	596	20
1983	11,221	370	13
1984	11,643	253	16
1985	14,639	289	23
1986	14,823	383	23
1987[1]	12,614	329	17

[1] January-September.

Local Government Finance Bill

Mr. Rooker: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) how many copies of the fact sheets relating to the Local Government Finance Bill were made available to right hon. and hon. Members at the time of the Bill's publication;

(2) how many copies of the questions and answers paper published in conjunction with the Local Government Finance Bill were made available to *(a)* right hon. and hon. Members and *(b)* to others;

(3) how many copies of the fact sheets relating to the Local Government Finance Bill were made available, and to whom.

Mr. Howard: The fact sheets and question and answer briefing referred to by the hon. Member were produced as part of a press pack for use by the media on introduction of the Local Government Finance Bill. Three hundred copies were sent to national and local media and about 100 copies were made available at the press conference itself. Copies were also provided to the Library of the House.

Other copies of the material have been provided to individuals on request, but no record has been kept of the numbers or to whom they have been sent.

Local Authority Finance

Dr. Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list for each local authority, on a ranked and class basis, the total population used in caculating each authority's expected grant entitlement for 1988-89 and 1987-88, giving the percentage change between the two years.

Mr. Ridley: The information is as follows:

Percentage change in population for grant purposes between 1987-88 1st Supplementary Report and 1988-89 settlement

	1987-88 population for grant purposes	1988-89 population for grant purposes	Percentage change	Rank in class
Shire counties				
Avon	942,000	946,624	0·5	20
Bedfordshire	516,700	520,959	0·8	15
Berkshire	724,000	734,073	1·4	6
Buckinghamshire	601,600	612,863	1·9	2
Cambridgeshire	621,400	635,205	2·2	1
Cheshire	942,400	946,504	0·4	25
Cleveland	559,900	557,580	−0·4	39
Cornwall	441,900	446,231	1·0	14
Cumbria	484,400	486,603	0·5	24
Derbyshire	912,400	916,834	0·5	22
Devon	988,000	998,988	1·1	11
Dorset	627,700	638,215	1·7	3
Durham	600,900	599,553	−0·2	37
East Sussex	682,400	689,695	1·1	12
Essex	1,504,700	1,512,083	0·5	21
Gloucestershire	511,400	517,105	1·1	10
Hampshire	1,523,900	1,527,666	0·2	29
Hereford and Worcester	650,800	654,504	0·6	19
Hertfordshire	986,100	985,723	−0·0	35
Humberside	850,000	848,504	−0·2	36
Isle of Wight	122,900	124,555	1·3	7
Kent	1,495,200	1,500,927	0·4	27
Lancashire	1,380,300	1,380,727	0·0	34
Leicestershire	872,200	874,953	0·3	28
Lincolnshire	560,300	567,253	1·2	8
Norfolk	719,100	727,817	1·2	9
Northamptonshire	546,100	554,441	1·5	5
Northumberland	300,600	301,020	0·1	31
North Yorkshire	696,600	699,786	0·5	23
Nottinghamshire	1,005,900	1,006,437	0·1	33
Oxfordshire	565,400	574,703	1·6	4
Shropshire	390,300	392,685	0·6	18
Somerset	447,000	448,888	0·4	26
Staffordshire	1,020,400	1,020,991	0·1	32
Suffolk	624,200	628,578	0·7	17

	1987-88 population for grant purposes	1988-89 population for grant purposes	Percentage change	Rank in class
Surrey	1,013,700	1,011,424	−0·2	38
Warwickshire	479,700	480,744	0·2	30
West Sussex	687,700	694,722	1·0	13
Wiltshire	540,800	545,225	0·8	16
Greater London				
City of London	5,021	4,847	−3·5	1
Camden	180,400	183,290	1·6	2
Greenwich	216,200	217,841	0·8	3
Hackney	187,500	187,074	−0·2	10
Hammersmith and Fulham	150,900	150,784	−0·1	7
Islington	167,900	167,969	0·0	6
Kensington and Chelsea	137,600	137,430	−0·1	8
Lambeth	243,500	245,000	0·6	4
Lewisham	232,400	231,981	−0·2	9
Southwark	215,900	216,043	0·1	5
Tower Hamlets	147,100	152,761	3·8	1
Wandsworth	258,800	257,144	0·6	11
Westminster	179,100	176,138	−1·7	12
Barking and Dagenham	148,600	148,113	−0·3	16
Barnet	301,200	304,630	1·1	1
Bexley	218,500	220,130	0·7	3
Brent	254,900	255,689	0·3	4
Bromley	297,900	297,024	−0·3	15
Croydon	319,000	319,283	0·1	9
Ealing	292,400	295,528	1·1	2
Enfield	265,000	265,446	0·2	7
Haringey	197,200	196,066	−0·6	19
Harrow	201,700	201,893	0·1	8
Havering	238,500	238,073	−0·2	14
Hillingdon	232,300	231,965	−0·1	12
Hounslow	195,600	194,857	−0·4	17
Kingston-upon-Thames	133,900	133,765	−0·1	11
Merton	164,500	164,794	0·2	6
Newham	208,600	205,196	−1·6	20
Redbridge	228,000	227,920	−0·0	10
Richmond-upon-Thames	161,500	161,969	0·3	5
Sutton	169,600	168,713	−0·5	18
Waltham Forest	216,200	215,834	−0·2	13
ILEA	2,322,321	2,328,302	0·3	1
London Fire & CD Authority	6,767,500	6,775,190	0·1	1
Metropolitan Police	7,237,116	7,242,746	0·1	1
Greater Manchester				
Bolton	261,200	261,579	0·1	5
Bury	173,300	172,581	−0·4	24
Manchester	451,100	451,437	0·1	7
Oldham	219,700	220,027	0·1	4
Rochdale	206,100	206,581	0·2	3
Salford	240,000	239,277	−0·3	19
Stockport	291,200	289,886	−0·5	25
Tameside	215,500	215,221	−0·1	14
Trafford	217,800	216,303	−0·7	32
Wigan	306,700	306,590	0·0	10
Merseyside				
Knowsley	166,300	163,822	−1·5	35
Liverpool	491,500	483,021	−1·7	36
St. Helens	188,300	187,949	−0·2	15
Sefton	298,400	298,030	−0·1	13
Wirral	336,500	334,799	−0·5	29
South Yorkshire				
Barnsley	223,300	222,226	−0·5	27
Doncaster	288,500	289,275	0·3	2
Rotherham	252,700	252,074	−0·2	16
Sheffield	538,700	534,324	−0·8	34

	1987-88 population for grant purposes	1988-89 population for grant purposes	Percentage change	Rank in class
Tyne and Wear				
Gateshead	208,100	207,297	−0·4	22
Newcastle upon Tyne	282,200	281,375	−0·3	18
North Tyneside	193,200	192,252	−0·5	28
South Tyneside	157,600	156,857	−0·5	26
Sunderland	298,800	297,705	−0·4	21
West Midlands				
Birmingham	1,007,500	1,004,097	−0·3	20
Coventry	312,200	310,375	−0·6	31
Dudley	300,800	300,897	0·0	9
Sandwell	303,300	301,124	−0·7	33
Solihull	201,900	202,154	0·1	6
Walsall	262,900	261,820	−0·4	23
Wolverhampton	253,200	251,852	−0·5	30
West Yorkshire				
Bradford	463,500	463,072	−0·1	12
Calderdale	191,700	193,110	0·7	1
Kirklees	376,900	376,634	−0·1	11
Leeds	710,500	710,948	0·1	8
Wakefield	310,200	309,332	−0·3	17

Percentage change for grant purposes between 1987-88 1st supplementary report and 1988-89 settlement

	1987-88 population for grant purposes	1988-89 population for grant purposes	Percentage change	Rank in class
Greater Manchester Police Authority	2,582,600	2,579,482	−0·1	2
Merseyside Police Authority	1,481,000	1,467,621	−0·9	6
South Yorkshire Police Authority	1,303,200	1,297,899	−0·4	5
Northumbria Police Authority	1,440,500	1,436,506	−0·3	3
West Midlands Police Authority	2,641,800	2,632,319	−0·4	4
West Yorkshire Police Authority	2,052,800	2,053,096	0·0	1
Greater Manchester Fire and CD Authority	2,582,600	2,579,482	−0·1	2
Merseyside Fire and CD Authority	1,481,000	1,467,621	−0·9	6
South Yorkshire Fire and CD Authority	1,303,200	1,297,899	−0·4	5
Tyne and Wear Fire and CD Authority	1,139,900	1,135,486	−0·4	4
West Midlands Fire and CD Authority	2,641,800	2,632,319	−0·4	3
West Yorkshire Fire and CD Authority	2,052,800	2,053,096	0·0	1
Greater Manchester Transport Authority	2,582,600	2,579,482	−0·1	2
Merseyside Transport Authority	1,481,000	1,467,621	−0·9	6
South Yorkshire Transport Authority	1,303,200	1,297,899	−0·4	5
Tyne and Wear Transport Authority	1,139,900	1,135,486	−0·4	4
West Midlands Transport Authority	2,641,800	2,632,319	−0·4	3
West Yorkshire Transport Authority	2,052,800	2,053,096	0·0	1

Percentage change in population for grant purposes between 1987-88 1st supplementary report and 1988-89 settlement

	1987-88 population for grant purposes	1988-89 population for grant purposes	percentage change	Rank in class
Avon				
Bath	84,300	84,422	0·1	188
Bristol	393,800	391,497	−0·6	265
Kingswood	87,900	88,547	0·7	128
Northavon	124,100	126,153	1·7	43
Wansdyke	78,000	78,206	0·3	171
Woodspring	173,900	177,799	2·2	21
Bedfordshire				
North Bedfordshire	133,900	134,868	0·7	129
Luton	166,100	166,339	0·1	189
Mid Bedfordshire	108,100	110,764	2·5	14
South Bedfordshire	108,600	108,988	0·4	161
Berkshire				
Bracknell	90,700	93,206	2·8	9
Newbury	130,600	134,072	2·7	10

	1987-88 population for grant purposes	1988-89 population for grant purposes	percentage change	Rank in class
Reading	135,300	134,984	−0·2	235
Slough	98,600	98,484	−0·1	226
Windsor and Maidenhead	133,400	132,444	−0·7	272
Wokingham	135,400	140,883	4·0	4
Buckinghamshire				
Aylesbury Vale	139,400	142,504	2·2	22
South Buckinghamshire	61,140	61,143	0·0	211
Chiltern	90,820	90,505	−0·3	246
Milton Keynes	153,200	161,758	5·6	1
Wycombe	157,040	156,953	−0·1	221
Cambridgeshire				
Cambridge	98,700	99,782	1·1	90
East Cambridgeshire	56,900	58,382	2·6	12
Fenland	68,900	69,967	1·5	53
Huntingdonshire	137,300	141,661	3·2	6
Peterborough	144,600	148,217	2·5	13
South Cambridgeshire	115,000	117,196	1·9	34
Cheshire				
Chester	116,600	116,613	0·0	208
Congleton	83,900	84,666	0·9	112
Crewe and Nantwich	96,300	96,548	0·3	174
Ellesmere Port and Neston	80,200	80,165	0·0	218
Halton	122,900	123,218	0·3	172
Macclesfield	151,500	151,804	0·2	181
Vale Royal	113,500	113,507	0·0	210
Warrington	177,500	179,983	1·4	65
Cleveland				
Hartlepool	91,600	90,667	−1·0	288
Langbaurgh	147,700	146,846	−0·6	263
Middlesbrough	144,800	144,280	−0·4	247
Stockton-on-Tees	175,800	175,787	−0·0	213
Cornwall				
Caradon	72,500	72,662	0·2	178
Carrick	78,300	78,969	0·9	118
Kerrier	85,800	85,835	0·0	202
North Cornwall	68,700	69,822	1·6	47
Penwith	55,400	56,593	2·2	25
Restormel	81,200	82,350	1·4	62
Cumbria				
Allerdale	95,600	95,819	0·2	177
Barrow in Furness	74,100	74,181	0·1	193
Carlisle	101,300	101,434	0·1	192
Copeland	71,200	71,436	0·3	167
Eden	44,800	45,272	1·1	96
South Lakeland	97,400	98,461	1·1	93
Derbyshire				
Amber Valley	108,800	109,650	0·8	123
Bolsover	70,750	70,119	−0·9	283
Chesterfield	96,800	96,748	−0·1	220
Derby	215,300	216,203	0·4	156
Erewash	105,000	106,166	1·1	88
High Peak	82,700	83,402	0·8	119
North East Derbyshire	97,050	97,631	0·6	141
South Derbyshire	69,400	70,120	1·0	99
Derbyshire Dales	66,600	66,795	0·3	168
Devon				
East Devon	112,200	113,171	0·9	117
Exeter	99,700	99,295	−0·4	252
North Devon	80,400	81,593	1·5	58
Plymouth	253,656	256,044	0·9	107
South Hams	69,444	71,405	2·8	8
Teignbridge	100,600	105,417	4·8	2
Mid Devon	60,700	61,422	1·2	84
Torbay	117,900	117,288	−0·5	256
Torridge	49,500	49,950	0·9	113
West Devon	43,900	43,403	−1·1	289

	1987-88 population for grant purposes	1988-89 population for grant purposes	percentage change	Rank in class
Dorset				
Bournemouth	149,700	152,158	1·6	45
Christchurch	41,100	41,129	0·1	198
North Dorset	50,700	51,948	2·5	15
Poole	124,500	126,449	1·6	51
Purbeck	43,300	44,326	2·4	17
West Dorset	81,300	82,283	1·2	82
Weymouth and Portland	60,900	62,135	2·0	29
Wimborne	76,200	77,787	2·1	27
Durham				
Chester-le-Street	53,160	53,365	0·4	159
Darlington	99,700	99,163	−0·5	259
Derwentside	86,300	86,088	−0·2	236
Durham	86,260	86,123	−0·2	228
Easington	97,100	96,470	−0·6	269
Sedgefield	89,280	88,564	−0·8	279
Teesdale	24,400	24,766	1·5	56
Wear Valley	64,700	65,014	0·5	148
East Sussex				
Brighton	143,100	141,937	−0·8	280
Eastbourne	80,500	80,696	0·2	175
Hastings	80,200	81,079	1·1	91
Hove	89,500	89,803	0·3	166
Lewes	84,400	87,042	3·1	7
Rother	79,900	81,574	2·1	26
Wealden	124,800	127,564	2·2	23
Essex				
Basildon	156,300	156,937	0·4	157
Braintree	115,602	115,845	0·2	180
Brentwood	70,997	70,850	−0·2	233
Castle Point	86,100	85,888	−0·2	237
Chelmsford	147,900	149,831	1·3	73
Colchester	143,100	145,116	1·4	63
Epping Forest	114,703	114,098	−0·5	257
Harlow	75,200	74,001	−1·6	293
Maldon	51,000	52,161	2·3	20
Rochford	74,800	74,871	0·1	194
Southend-on-Sea	158,200	159,928	1·1	92
Tendring	121,200	122,806	1·3	71
Thurrock	124,400	124,084	−0·3	238
Uttlesford	65,198	65,667	0·7	130
Gloucestershire				
Cheltenham	86,000	86,749	0·9	116
Cotswold	71,600	72,708	1·5	54
Forest of Dean	74,100	75,178	1·5	59
Gloucester	91,100	90,855	−0·3	241
Stroud	104,500	106,668	2·1	28
Tewkesbury	84,100	84,947	1·0	101
Hampshire				
Basingstoke and Deane	137,600	137,891	0·2	179
East Hampshire	97,000	97,760	0·8	122
Eastleigh	99,000	99,523	0·5	144
Fareham	94,200	95,705	1·6	49
Gosport	77,800	77,513	−0·4	249
Hart	80,200	81,283	1·4	68
Havant	118,500	118,918	0·4	162
New Forest	155,600	159,000	2·2	24
Portsmouth	187,900	186,884	−0·5	260
Rushmoor	81,400	79,145	−2·8	295
Southampton	202,300	200,501	−0·9	282
Test Valley	98,700	99,335	0·6	137
Winchester	93,700	94,208	0·5	143
Hereford and Worcester				
Bromsgrove	89,400	89,215	−0·2	232
Hereford	48,300	48,373	0·2	186
Leominster	38,100	38,105	0·0	207
Malvern Hills	85,697	86,924	1·4	61
Redditch	73,300	74,757	2·0	31
South Herefordshire	48,600	48,679	0·2	184

	1987-88 population for grant purposes	1988-89 population for grant purposes	percentage change	Rank in class
Worcester	77,400	77,839	0·6	142
Wychavon	96,903	97,629	0·7	125
Wyre Forest	93,100	92,983	−0·1	227
Hertfordshire				
Broxbourne	81,900	82,401	0·6	140
Dacorum	133,100	132,595	−0·4	250
East Hertfordshire	116,880	118,110	1·1	97
Hertsmere	88,100	88,091	0·0	214
North Hertfordshire	111,400	111,614	0·2	183
St. Albans	128,800	128,747	0·0	217
Stevenage	75,120	74,371	−1·0	287
Three Rivers	80,300	80,287	0·0	215
Watford	76,500	76,186	−0·4	253
Welwyn Hatfield	94,000	93,321	−0·7	273
Humberside				
Beverley	108,300	109,708	1·3	75
Boothferry	61,500	61,935	0·7	131
Cleethorpes	68,800	68,585	−0·3	243
Glanford	68,300	69,460	1·7	41
Great Grimsby	90,900	90,415	−0·5	258
Holderness	48,300	48,697	0·8	120
Kingston upon Hull	262,000	258,048	−1·5	292
East Yorkshire	78,300	79,165	1·1	89
Scunthorpe	63,600	62,491	−1·7	294
Isle of Wight				
Medina	69,688	70,653	1·4	67
South Wight	53,212	53,902	1·3	76
Kent				
Ashford	91,000	92,402	1·5	55
Canterbury	127,350	127,679	0·3	173
Dartford	79,715	79,088	−0·8	275
Dover	102,552	103,871	1·3	77
Gillingham	95,200	95,856	0·7	135
Gravesham	93,525	92,988	−0·6	262
Maidstone	132,431	133,607	0·9	115
Rochester upon Medway	145,600	146,218	0·4	153
Sevenoaks	107,860	107,891	0·0	204
Shepway	88,498	88,671	0·2	182
Swale	110,800	110,853	0·0	201
Thanet	122,500	123,633	0·9	110
Tonbridge and Malling	99,600	99,658	0·1	200
Tunbridge Wells	98,569	98,512	−0·1	222
Lancashire				
Blackburn	141,100	139,061	−1·4	290
Blackpool	145,800	145,416	−0·3	240
Burnley	87,452	86,878	−0·7	270
Chorley	94,622	95,621	1·1	95
Fylde	72,800	72,765	0·0	219
Hyndburn	79,397	80,010	0·8	124
Lancaster	128,500	129,953	1·1	87
Pendle	84,818	84,532	−0·3	245
Preston	124,400	125,000	0·5	149
Ribble Valley	53,133	53,211	0·1	187
Rossendale	64,000	64,185	0·3	169
South Ribble	98,078	97,177	−0·9	284
West Lancashire	107,500	106,832	−0·6	267
Wyre	98,700	100,086	1·4	64
Leicestershire				
Blaby	80,300	81,493	1·5	57
Charnwood	143,500	144,922	1·0	102
Harborough	63,200	63,944	1·2	85
Hinckley and Bosworth	93,279	94,108	0·9	114
Leicester	282,900	281,076	0·6	268
Melton	42,900	42,868	0·1	223
North West Leicestershire	78,621	78,932	0·4	158
Oadby and Wigston	52,500	52,038	0·9	281
Rutland	35,000	35,572	1·6	46

	1987-88 population for grant purposes	1988-89 population for grant purposes	percentage change	Rank in class
Lincolnshire				
Boston	51,900	51,911	0·0	206
East Lindsey	108,700	110,500	1·7	42
Lincoln	78,200	78,966	1·0	103
North Kesteven	81,400	82,887	1·8	37
South Holland	63,700	64,307	1·0	106
South Kesteven	99,900	101,610	1·7	39
West Lindsey	76,500	77,072	0·7	126
Norfolk				
Breckland	100,600	101,908	1·3	74
Broadland	99,800	100,752	1·0	105
Great Yarmouth	84,200	85,632	1·7	40
North Norfolk	87,400	90,201	3·2	5
Norwich	122,300	121,620	0·6	261
South Norfolk	98,800	99,423	0·6	139
King's Lynn and West Norfolk	126,000	128,281	1·8	38
Northamptonshire				
Corby	50,700	50,701	0·0	212
Daventry	59,800	61,248	2·4	16
East Northamptonshire	62,800	64,234	2·3	19
Kettering	72,000	73,155	1·6	48
Northampton	169,800	172,507	1·6	50
South Northamptonshire	66,700	67,512	1·2	81
Wellingborough	64,300	65,084	1·2	80
Northumberland				
Alnwick	29,700	29,834	0·5	151
Berwick-upon-Tweed	26,300	26,494	0·7	127
Blyth Valley	78,000	78,268	0·3	164
Castle Morpeth	50,696	50,711	0·0	203
Tynedale	54,904	55,285	0·7	134
Wansbeck	61,000	60,428	0·9	285
North Yorkshire				
Craven	48,200	48,231	0·1	199
Hambleton	76,000	75,707	−0·4	251
Harrogate	144,500	145,226	0·5	147
Richmondshire	48,400	49,043	1·3	69
Ryedale	88,800	89,428	0·7	133
Scarborough	103,300	103,650	0·3	165
Selby	85,200	86,918	2·0	30
York	102,200	101,583	−0·6	266
Nottinghamshire				
Ashfield	106,900	106,666	−0·2	234
Bassetlaw	104,200	104,937	0·7	132
Broxtowe	105,600	106,097	0·5	150
Gedling	111,162	110,834	−0·3	242
Mansfield	100,700	100,337	−0·4	248
Newark and Sherwood	102,338	102,869	0·5	145
Nottingham	279,402	277,775	−0·6	264
Rushcliffe	95,958	96,992	1·4	66
Oxfordshire				
Cherwell	119,100	121,467	2·0	32
Oxford	115,000	116,186	1·0	100
South Oxfordshire	133,300	133,044	−0·2	231
Vale of White Horse	108,400	110,432	1·9	35
West Oxfordshire	89,600	93,574	4·4	3
Shropshire				
Bridgnorth	51,500	51,512	0·0	205
North Shropshire	51,900	53,090	2·3	18
Oswestry	31,600	31,499	−0·3	244
Shrewsbury and Atcham	90,509	91,353	0·9	108
South Shropshire	34,906	35,037	0·4	160
Wrekin	129,885	130,194	0·2	176
Somerset				
Mendip	93,400	93,484	0·1	195
Sedgemoor	93,000	94,138	1·2	79
Taunton Deane	90,900	91,283	0·4	155

	1987-88 population for grant purposes	1988-89 population for grant purposes	percentage change	Rank in class
West Somerset	30,600	31,004	1·3	72
South Somerset	139,100	138,979	−0·1	224
Staffordshire				
Cannock Chase	85,000	85,134	0·2	185
East Staffordshire	94,000	93,907	−0·1	225
Lichfield	90,600	91,693	1·2	83
Newcastle-under-Lyme	118,400	117,820	−0·5	254
South Staffordshire	103,300	104,911	1·6	52
Stafford	117,800	117,959	0·1	191
Staffordshire Moorlands	95,900	95,978	0·1	197
Stoke-on-Trent	248,700	246,884	−0·7	274
Tamworth	66,700	66,705	0·0	209
Suffolk				
Babergh	76,400	77,107	0·9	109
Forest Heath	57,800	55,692	−3·6	296
Ipswich	118,130	118,291	0·1	190
Mid Suffolk	74,400	75,478	1·4	60
St. Edmundsbury	90,300	91,453	1·3	78
Suffolk Coastal	103,970	105,987	1·9	33
Waveney	103,200	104,570	1·3	70
Surrey				
Elmbridge	111,400	110,322	−1·0	286
Epsom and Ewell	67,100	67,158	0·1	196
Guildford	125,256	125,038	−0·2	230
Mole Valley	77,100	77,611	0·7	136
Reigate and Banstead	116,600	115,807	−0·7	271
Runnymede	71,400	71,281	−0·2	229
Spelthorne	90,200	88,844	−1·5	291
Surrey Heath	79,325	80,152	1·0	98
Tandridge	76,500	76,117	−0·5	255
Waverley	112,517	112,491	0·0	216
Woking	86,302	86,603	0·3	163
Warwickshire				
North Warwickshire	60,200	59,725	−0·8	277
Nuneaton and Bedworth	112,500	113,072	0·5	146
Rugby	85,600	84,919	−0·8	278
Stratford on Avon	104,600	105,735	1·1	94
Warwick	116,800	117,293	0·4	154
West Sussex				
Adur	57,800	58,057	0·4	152
Arun	126,600	126,949	0·3	170
Chichester	101,700	104,368	2·6	11
Crawley	84,000	83,779	−0·3	239
Horsham	104,100	105,810	1·6	44
Mid Sussex	118,700	119,850	1·0	104
Worthing	94,800	95,909	1·2	86
Wiltshire				
Kennet	67,000	67,431	0·6	138
North Wiltshire	108,500	109,378	0·8	121
Salisbury	102,500	103,436	0·9	111
Thamesdown	159,800	162,792	1·9	36
West Wiltshire	103,000	102,188	−0·8	276
All purpose authority				
Isles of Scilly	1,980	1,978	−0·1	1

Dr. Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list the budgeted income and estimated outturn of total expenditure of each local authority subject to rate limitation in each year from 1985-86 to 1987-88.

Mr. Ridley: The information in respect of authoriti selected for rate or precept limitation under section 2 the Rates Act is as follows:

	1985-86 Budget	1985-86 Outturn	1986-87 Budget	1986-87 Outturn	
Authorities first selected for 1985-86					
Sheffield	218·631	217·538	not selected		
Camden	117·609	108·160	147·266	[1]149·699	
Greenwich	66·637	[1]66·639	109·231	[1]104·189	
Hackney	97·150	[1]94·399	136·503	[1]128·222	
Islington	85·723	86·636	106·115	[1]109·421	
Lambeth	116·212	112·266	167·777	[1]171·942	
Lewisham	90·914	78·401	126·868	[1]112·505	
Southwark	108·437	106·942	136·215	[1]133·984	
Brent	148·356	140·402	not selected		
Haringey	136·048	128·632	167·188	[1]168·067	
Basildon	13·662	8·860	16·945	[1]16·198	
Thamesdown	14·199	14·022	14·848	14·849	
Leicester	24·392	24·116	not selected		not se
Portsmouth	16·511	16·511	not selected		not se
GLC	608·746	605·600	abolished		aboli
ILEA	945·057	886·804	n/a		n/
Merseyside MCC	213·479	203·219	abolished		aboli
South Yorkshire MCC	178·674	176·289	abolished		aboli
Authorities first selected for 1986-87					
Liverpool	n/a		287·554	284·024	not
Newcastle upon Tyne	n/a		162·952	164·653	
Authorities first selected for 1987-88					
Gateshead	n/a		n/a		
North Tyneside	n/a		n/a		
Tower Hamlets	n/a		n/a		
Hounslow	n/a		n/a		
Newham	n/a		n/a		
Middlesbrough	n/a		n/a		
Brighton	n/a		n/a		

[1] Denotes revised estimate.

Information on outturn for 1987-88 is not yet available. Information in respect of authorities deemed to have been designated for precept limitation by virtue of section 68 of the Local Government Act 1985 is a matter for my right hon. Friends the Home Secretary, the Secretary of State for Education and Science, and the Secretary of State for Transport.

Dr. Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list the original and final expenditure levels underlying rate and prec the original and final rate and precept limi authority subject to rate limitation, in e 1985-86 to 1988-89.

Mr. Ridley: The information in respect selected for rate or precept limitation und the Rates Act is as follows:

Table 1: Expenditure levels

	1985-86 Original £ million	1985-86 Redetermined £ million	1986-87 Original £ million	1986-87 Redetermined £ million	1987-88 Original £ million	1987-88 Redetermined £ million	Origin £ millio
Authorities first selected for 1985-96							
Sheffield	216·573	—	[1]	[1]	258·915	264·093	
Camden	117·429	—	133·669	136·919	136·919	—	136·92
Greenwich	66·584	—	88·629	95·228	95·228	—	95·23
Hackney	82·315	—	119·422	128·572	128·572	—	128·57
Islington	85·564	—	106·113	—	106·113	—	
Lambeth	113·558	—	144·068	152·309	152·309	—	152·31
Lewisham	79·301	—	112·062	115·594	115·594	—	115·59
Southwark	108·437	—	134·190	—	134·190	—	134·19
Brent	140·021	—	[1]	[1]	176·690	180·200	
Haringey	128·658	—	152·813	—	152·813	—	156·14
Basildon	13·662	—	13·662	—	13·662	—	13·66
Thamesdown	14·199	—	14·199	—	14·199	—	14·20
Leicester	24·392	—	[1]	[1]	[1]	[1]	
Portsmouth	16·751	—	[1]	[1]	[1]	[1]	
Greater London Council	785·233	—	[2]	[2]	[2]	[2]	
ILEA	900·366	—	[3]	[3]	[3]	[3]	
Merseyside MCC	205·180	—	[2]	[2]	[2]	[2]	
South Yorkshire MCC	178·291	—	[2]	[2]	[2]	[2]	

	1985-86		1986-87		1987-88		1988-
	Original £ million	Redetermined £ million	Original £ million	Redetermined £ million	Original £ million	Redetermined £ million	Original £ million
Authorities first selected for 1986-87							
Liverpool	[3]	[3]	265·070	274·550	[1]	[1]	307·742
Newcastle upon Tyne	[3]	[3]	151·252	154·652	154·652	—	159·305
Authorities first selected for 1987-88							
Gateshead	[3]	[3]	[3]	[3]	95·986	97·906	[1]
North Tyneside	[3]	[3]	[3]	[3]	93·259	95·124	[1]
Tower Hamlets	[3]	[3]	[3]	[3]	121·601	124·033	124·033
Hounslow	[3]	[3]	[3]	[3]	112·220	114·464	[1]
Newham	[3]	[3]	[3]	[3]	154·353	157·440	[1]
Middlesbrough	[3]	[3]	[3]	[3]	17·225	17·570	17·570
Brighton	[3]	[3]	[3]	[3]	14·610	14·902	[1]
Authorities first selected for 1988-89							
Manchester	[3]	[3]	[3]	[3]	[3]	[3]	316·394
Ealing	[3]	[3]	[3]	[3]	[3]	[3]	157·153
Waltham Forest	[3]	[3]	[3]	[3]	[3]	[3]	142·028
Kingston-upon-Hull	[3]	[3]	[3]	[3]	[3]	[3]	30·942

[1] Not selected.
[2] Abolished.
[3] Not applicable.

Note:
Redetermined figures shown only where applicable. The "redetermined" figures for 1987-88 are those produced by application 2 to the Local Government Finance Act 1987.

Table 2: Rate and precept limits

	1985-86		1986-87		1987-88
	Proposed	Final	Proposed	Final	Final
Authorities first selected for 1985-86					
Sheffield	207·07	—	[1]	[1]	259·07
Camden	92·02	—	118·35	—	120·07
Greenwich	96·42	—	124·21	—	120·89
Hackney	114·09	147·18	141·96	—	123·30
Islington	111·21	112·07	93·20	—	78·90
Lambeth	107·57	—	126·11	—	112·42
Lewisham	87·49	99·66	141·86	—	127·12
Southwark	112·69	—	121·16	—	111·31
Brent	196·42	—	[1]	[1]	224·84
Haringey	222·17	268·50	254·59	—	238·37
Basildon	50·33	—	52·75	—	52·84
Thamesdown	57·22	—	54·68	—	55·16
Leicester	16·27	25·22	[1]	[1]	[1]
Portsmouth	26·88	—	[1]	[1]	[1]
GLC	36·52	—	[3]	[3]	[3]
ILEA	74·19	77·25	[3]	[3]	[3]
Merseyside MCC	82·86	—	[3]	[3]	[3]
South Yorkshire MCC	81·32	—	[3]	[3]	[3]
Authorities first selected for 1986-87					
Liverpool	[3]	[3]	232·09	—	[1]
Newcastle upon Tyne	[3]	[3]	321·23	—	290·82
Authorities first selected for 1987-88					
Gateshead	[3]	[3]	[3]	[3]	231·46
North Tyneside	[3]	[3]	[3]	[3]	265·77
Tower Hamlets	[3]	[3]	[3]	[3]	110·38
Hounslow	[3]	[3]	[3]	[3]	206·82
Newham	[3]	[3]	[3]	[3]	232·67
Middlesbrough	[3]	[3]	[3]	[3]	44·57
Brighton	[3]	[3]	[3]	[3]	22·50
Authorities first selected for 1988-89					
Manchester	[3]	[3]	[3]	[3]	[3]
Ealing	[3]	[3]	[3]	[3]	[3]
Waltham Forest	[3]	[3]	[3]	[3]	[3]
Kingston upon Hull	[3]	[3]	[3]	[3]	[3]

[1] Not selected.
[2] Abolished.
[3] Not applicable.

Note:
"Final" column only denotes figures which differ from "proposed". For 1987-88 there were no proposed limits; final limits were under the Local Government Finance Act 1987. Final limits for 1988-89 have not yet been determined.

Information in respect of authorities deemed to have been designated for precept limitation by virtue of section 68 of the Local Government Act 1985 is a matter for my right hon. Friends the Home Secretary, the Secretary of State for Education and Science, and the Secretary of State for Transport.

Dr. Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list the aggregate Exchequer grant, rate support grant, block grant, domestic rate relief grant, relevant expenditure, total expenditu expenditure at rate support grant settle estimated outturn in each year from 19

Mr. Ridley: The following table li Exchequer grant, relevant expenditure, and current expenditure at RSG settle estimated outturn in each year from 19 where figures are available. Figures are Support Grant Reports (England) an Grant Supplementary Reports (England years except where otherwise shown.

	Aggregate Exchequer Grant	*Rate Support Grant*	*Block Grant*	*Domestic Rate Relief Grant*	*Relevant Expenditure*	*T Expendi*
1981-82						
Settlement	10,895·0	9,027·0	8,364·0	663	18,423·0	
Budget	[1]10,843·0	[1]8,952·0	[1]8,289·0	663	18,673·0	
Audited Outturn	[1]10,939·0	[1]9,009·0	[1]8,346·0	663	19,933·0	
1982-83						
Settlement	11,484·0	9,360·0	8,682·0	678	20,463·0	18,5
Budget	[1]11,119·0	[1]8,982·0	[1]8,304·0	678	[2]21,942·0	[2]19,9
Audited Outturn	[1]11,242·0	[1]9,027·0	[1]8,349·0	678	21,765·0	19,7
1983-84						
Settlement	11,782·0	9,416·0	8,730·0	686	22,307·0	20,1
Budget	[1]11,503·0	[1]9,135·0	[1]8,449·0	686	[2]23,070·0	[2]20,9
Estimated Outturn	[1]11,486·0	[1]9,075·0	[1]8,389·0	686	23,082·0	20,8
1984-85						
Settlement	11,872·0	9,323·0	8,631·0	692	22,883·0	20,5
Budget	[1]11,497·0	[1]8,868·0	18,176·0	692	3,801·0	21,3
Estimated Outturn	[1]11,902·0	[1]9,104·0	[1]8,412·0	692	23,872·0	21,2
1985-86						
Settlement	11,764·0	9,188·0	8,489·0	699	24,161·0	21,8
Budget	[1]11,225·0	[1]8,638·0	[1]7,939·0	699	24,446·0	22,0
Estimated Outturn	[1]11,780·0	[1]9,138·0	[1]8,439·0	699	24,116·0	21,7
1986-87						
Settlement[4]	11,764·0	8,988·0	8,280·0	708	25,328·5	22,7
Budget	11,879·0	9,010·0	8,302·0	708	26,658·0	24,0
1987-88						
Settlement[4]	12,842·0	9,549·0	8,832·0	717	27,746·0	24,7
Budget	[6]12,697·1	[5]9,466·1	[5]8,749·1	[5]717	[3]28,813·0	[3]25,8
1988-89						
Settlement	13,775·0	10,209·0	9,482·0	727	29,846·0	26,5

[1] Figure after holdback.
[2] Figure not available on a consistent basis with later years.
[3] Figure estimated.
[4] Figures exclude additional allowance for teachers' pay.
[5] Figure from revision of estimate of block grant, September 1987, under Section 66(1) of the Local Government Planning a
[6] Notional figure derived from [5].

Grant-related Expenditure

Dr. Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list, on a ranked and class basis, the percentage change in the grant-related expenditure of each local authority between 1987-88 and 1988-89.

Mr. Ridley: The information is as follows:

Percentage change in grant-related expenditure between 1987-88 1st supplementary report and 1988-89 settlement

	Percentage change	*Rank in class*
Shire Counties		
Avon	8·5	20
Bedfordshire		8
Berkshire		9
Buckinghamshire		9
Cambridgeshire		9
Cheshire		8
Cleveland		7
Cornwall		8
Cumbria		6
Derbyshire		8
Devon		7
Dorset		8

	Percentage change	Rank in class
Durham	7·6	29
East Sussex	9·3	6
Essex	8·1	25
Gloucestershire	8·8	10
Hampshire	8·6	14
Hereford and Worcester	7·0	38
Hertfordshire	7·5	33
Humberside	7·5	32
Isle of Wight	9·9	1
Kent	7·8	27
Lancashire	7·7	28
Leicestershire	9·0	9
Lincolnshire	8·5	18
Norfolk	8·3	23
Northamptonshire	9·2	8
Northumberland	7·4	36
North Yorkshire	8·6	17
Nottinghamshire	8·0	26
Oxfordshire	7·5	34
Shropshire	8·6	16
Somerset	8·4	21
Staffordshire	7·4	35
Suffolk	9·2	7
Surrey	8·6	15
Warwickshire	7·3	37
West Sussex	9·6	3
Wiltshire	8·5	19
Greater London		
City of London	8·5	1
Camden	6·5	3
Greenwich	−0·3	11
Hackney	−0·8	12
Hammersmith and Fulham	7·1	1
Islington	2·7	8
Kensington and Chelsea	6·1	4
Lambeth	6·5	2
Lewisham	5·0	5
Southwark	4·6	6
Tower Hamlets	0·7	10
Wandsworth	3·6	7
Westminster	1·9	9
Barking and Dagenham	5·6	19
Barnet	9·1	4
Bexley	8·4	10
Brent	6·4	16
Bromley	8·2	11
Croydon	7·2	13
Ealing	9·1	5
Enfield	8·8	7
Haringey	7·8	12
Harrow	9·7	2
Havering	6·1	18
Hillingdon	8·7	8
Hounslow	7·2	14
Kingston-upon-Thames	11·3	1
Merton	8·6	9
Newham	5·0	20
Redbridge	9·3	3
Richmond-upon-Thames	6·4	17
Sutton	8·9	6
Waltham Forest	7·1	15
ILEA	8·8	1

	Percentage change
London Fire and Civil Defence Authority	4·9
Metropolitan Police	8·2
Greater Manchester	
Bolton	6·8
Bury	6·9
Manchester	5·4
Oldham	8·2
Rochdale	8·5
Salford	5·7
Stockport	5·0
Tameside	6·5
Trafford	7·4
Wigan	6·9
Merseyside	
Knowsley	8·0
Liverpool	5·1
St. Helens	7·5
Sefton	7·8
Wirral	7·5
South Yorkshire	
Barnsley	7·0
Doncaster	7·7
Rotherham	8·9
Sheffield	6·5
Tyne and Wear	
Gateshead	6·9
Newcastle upon Tyne	9·0
North Tyneside	8·5
South Tyneside	7·9
Sunderland	8·5
West Midlands	
Birmingham	7·9
Coventry	8·7
Dudley	7·3
Sandwell	7·6
Solihull	7·4
Walsall	7·2
Wolverhampton	6·7
West Yorkshire	
Bradford	9·4
Calderdale	8·1
Kirklees	8·3
Leeds	8·0
Wakefield	7·4

Percentage change in grant-related expenditure betw supplementary report and 1988-89 settle

	Percentage change
Greater Manchester Police Authority	11·9
Merseyside Police Authority	11·9
South Yorkshire Police Authority	13·8
Northumbria Police Authority	14·4
West Midlands Police Authority	11·9
West Yorkshire Police Authority	13·0
Greater Manchester Fire & CD Authority	2·8
Merseyside Fire & CD Authority	2·0
South Yorkshire Fire & CD Authority	4·8
Tyne and Wear Fire & CD Authority	5·6
West Midlands Fire & CD Authority	3·5
West Yorkshire Fire & CD Authority	3·3

	Percentage change	Rank in class
Greater Manchester Transport Authority	0·8	2
Merseyside Transport Authority	−8·4	6
South Yorkshire Transport Authority	−0·2	3
Tyne and Wear Transport Authority	−0·4	4
West Midlands Transport Authority	3·6	1
West Yorkshire Transport Authority	−2·2	5

Percentage change in grant-related expenditure between 1987/88 1st supplementary report and 1988-89 settlement

	Percentage change	Rank in class
Avon		
Bath	5·1	73
Bristol	5·7	58
Kingswood	3·8	140
Northavon	5·9	54
Wansdyke	8·4	8
Woodspring	6·8	27
Bedfordshire		
North Bedfordshire	4·6	101
Luton	8·0	9
Mid Bedfordshire	4·6	102
South Bedfordshire	3·3	168
Berkshire		
Bracknell	6·3	40
Newbury	3·5	157
Reading	3·4	159
Slough	6·8	28
Windsor and Maidenhead	1·3	262
Wokingham	6·2	44
Buckinghamshire		
Aylesbury Vale	4·1	123
South Bucks	3·5	158
Chiltern	1·5	258
Milton Keynes	9·4	3
Wycombe	3·9	130
Cambridgeshire		
Cambridge	−0·5	290
East Cambridgeshire	3·3	167
Fenland	3·6	153
Huntingdonshire	6·0	48
Peterborough	6·8	31
South Cambridgeshire	2·4	223
Cheshire		
Chester	3·9	129
Congleton	4·7	95
Crewe and Nantwich	3·0	189
Ellesmere Port and Neston	7·8	10
Halton	7·6	17
Macclesfield	1·9	244
Vale Royal	3·2	176
Warrington	4·9	82
Cleveland		
Hartlepool	9·4	4
Langbaurgh	−7·2	295
Middlesbrough	14·6	1
Stockton-on-Tees	6·1	46
Cornwall		
Caradon	4·0	127
Carrick	4·6	100
Kerrier	4·7	90
North Cornwall		
Penwith		
Restormel		
Cumbria		
Allerdale		
Barrow in Furness		
Carlisle		
Copeland		
Eden		
South Lakeland		
Derbyshire		
Amber Valley		
Bolsover		
Chesterfield		
Derby		
Erewash		
High Peak		
North East Derbyshire		
South Derbyshire		
Derbyshire Dales		
Devon		
East Devon		
Exeter		
North Devon		
Plymouth		
South Hams		
Teignbridge		
Mid Devon		
Torbay		
Torridge		
West Devon		
Dorset		
Bournemouth		
Christchurch		
North Dorset		
Poole		
Purbeck		
West Dorset		
Weymouth and Portland		
Wimborne		
Durham		
Chester-le-Street		
Darlington		
Derwentside		
Durham		
Easington		
Sedgefield		
Teesdale		
Wear Valley		
East Sussex		
Brighton		
Eastbourne		
Hastings		
Hove		
Lewes		
Rother		
Wealden		
Essex		
Basildon		
Braintree		
Brentwood		
Castle Point		
Chelmsford		
Colchester		
Epping Forest		
Harlow		
Maldon		
Rochford		

...ntage ...ange	Rank in class
3·4	165
7·3	22
6·3	39
1·1	267
3·2	180
4·2	115
5·2	70
3·9	133
2·1	237
2·8	198
2·9	195
5·5	63
3·9	132
0·7	279
3·2	179
1·8	250
1·9	246
-2·5	292
2·0	240
4·7	93
7·4	20
7·7	12
7·6	16
5·6	62
6·9	25
6·9	26
4·5	104
1·0	272
7·5	18
5·5	64
6·0	50
7·1	24
7·4	21
6·0	49
9·9	2
4·4	110
2·8	293
0·7	280
2·6	209
1·7	252
6·6	296
3·5	155
3·4	163
3·1	182
2·7	204
5·2	72
9·1	5
5·7	57
9·8	277
5·8	29
3·0	188
9·0	287
3·3	226
1·7	201
1·0	242
1·1	181
1·1	232
1·4	222
1·4	164
1·1	235
1·8	251

	Percentage change	Rank in class
Southend-on-Sea	6·5	34
Tendring	2·4	219
Thurrock	5·1	75
Uttlesford	1·1	266
Gloucestershire		
Cheltenham	5·9	53
Cotswold	0·7	282
Forest of Dean	5·2	68
Gloucester	5·2	69
Stroud	4·6	97
Tewkesbury	5·6	59
Hampshire		
Basingstoke and Deane	4·7	89
East Hampshire	4·2	121
Eastleigh	4·4	111
Fareham	4·1	122
Gosport	1·4	260
Hart	4·7	91
Havant	6·4	35
New Forest	3·4	161
Portsmouth	4·8	86
Rushmoor	2·5	213
Southampton	7·5	19
Test Valley	5·1	76
Winchester	3·7	148
Hereford and Worcester		
Bromsgrove	2·8	199
Hereford	4·9	81
Leominster	2·7	206
Malvern Hills	4·3	114
Redditch	6·5	33
South Herefordshire	4·6	99
Worcester	5·8	55
Wychavon	2·5	214
Wyre Forest	3·1	185
Hertfordshire		
Broxbourne	3·2	174
Dacorum	2·7	203
East Hertfordshire	4·4	109
Hertsmere	1·8	248
North Hertfordshire	2·1	234
St. Albans	2·2	228
Stevenage	4·2	117
Three Rivers	2·2	227
Watford	3·1	186
Welwyn Hatfield	1·7	254
Humberside		
Beverley	3·5	156
Boothferry	2·0	241
Cleethorpes	1·7	253
Glanford	8·8	7
Great Grimsby	2·3	225
Holderness	2·5	210
Kingston upon Hull	5·7	56
East Yorkshire	4·4	107
Scunthorpe	5·2	71
Isle of Wight		
Medina	4·7	94
South Wight	7·7	14
Kent		
Ashford	1·0	270
Canterbury	3·8	141
Dartford	4·4	106
Dover	3·8	137
Gillingham	5·1	77
Gravesham	2·3	224
Maidstone	3·6	150
Rochester upon Medway	4·0	126
Sevenoaks	2·6	208

	Percentage change
Shepway	1·9
Swale	4·3
Thanet	3·9
Tonbridge and Malling	1·4
Tunbridge Wells	3·0
Lancashire	
Blackburn	2·0
Blackpool	7·1
Burnley	6·5
Chorley	4·2
Fylde	2·9
Hyndburn	3·1
Lancaster	7·9
Pendle	5·4
Preston	8·9
Ribble Valley	2·5
Rossendale	2·0
South Ribble	2·4
West Lancashire	6·5
Wyre	3·7
Leicestershire	
Blaby	1·9
Charnwood	3·5
Harborough	1·4
Hinckley and Bosworth	2·7
Leicester	5·0
Melton	1·9
North West Leicestershire	0·7
Oadby and Wigston	1·5
Rutland	—
Lincolnshire	
Boston	2·0
East Lindsey	7·1
Lincoln	3·1
North Kesteven	2·9
South Holland	0·7
South Kesteven	4·0
West Lindsey	4·5
Norfolk	
Breckland	2·1
Broadland	3·7
Great Yarmouth	4·1
North Norfolk	5·1
Norwich	6·2
South Norfolk	0·9
King's Lynn and West Norfolk	4·0
Northamptonshire	
Corby	6·1
Daventry	3·7
East Northamptonshire	3·9
Kettering	5·4
Northampton	-6·7
South Northamptonshire	2·7
Wellingborough	1·5
Northumberland	
Alnwick	1·7
Berwick-upon-Tweed	0·9
Blyth Valley	4·5
Castle Morpeth	0·5
Tynedale	0·5
Wansbeck	4·1
North Yorkshire	
Craven	4·2
Hambleton	1·4
Harrogate	3·7
Richmondshire	3·4
Ryedale	3·5
Scarborough	6·5
Selby	4·1

	Percentage change	Rank in class
York	4·5	105
Nottinghamshire		
Ashfield	3·1	187
Bassetlaw	3·2	175
Broxtowe	4·7	96
Gedling	3·0	190
Mansfield	−0·9	291
Newark and Sherwood	2·4	221
Nottingham	6·8	30
Rushcliffe	4·2	119
Oxfordshire		
Cherwell	4·8	87
Oxford	3·6	152
South Oxfordshire	1·7	256
Vale of White Horse	3·0	192
West Oxfordshire	4·9	80
Shropshire		
Bridgnorth	2·2	229
North Shropshire	2·4	216
Oswestry	1·2	265
Shrewsbury and Atcham	3·8	138
South Shropshire	1·0	271
Wrekin	5·6	60
Somerset		
Mendip	5·3	67
Sedgemoor	7·7	13
Taunton Deane	4·6	98
West Somerset	4·2	116
South Somerset	4·4	108
Staffordshire		
Cannock Chase	3·4	166
East Staffordshire	5·6	61
Lichfield	2·4	215
Newcastle-under-Lyme	1·7	255
South Staffordshire	3·8	139
Stafford	1·6	257
Staffordshire Moorlands	0·9	273
Stoke-on-Trent	6·2	43
Tamworth	6·3	37
Suffolk		
Babergh	2·4	218
Forest Heath	0·9	275
Ipswich	3·0	191
Mid Suffolk	−0·0	289
St. Edmundsbury	3·4	160
Suffolk Coastal	3·6	151
Waveney	6·0	51
Surrey		
Elmbridge	3·9	135
Epsom and Ewell	2·9	194
Guildford	3·3	170
Mole Valley	2·5	212
Reigate and Banstead	5·0	78
Runnymede	6·1	45
Spelthorne	2·4	217
Surrey Heath	3·3	171
Tandridge	3·1	183
Waverley	2·0	238
Woking	6·0	52
Warwickshire		
North Warwickshire	2·2	230
Nuneaton and Bedworth	3·9	136
Rugby	3·2	173
Stratford on Avon	0·1	285
Warwick	3·2	178
West Sussex		
Adur	4·9	83
Arun	3·6	154
Chichester	3·7	145
Crawley	4·7	92
Horsham	−0·0	288
Mid Sussex	3·2	177
Worthing	6·2	41
Wiltshire		
Kennet	3·4	162
North Wiltshire	2·1	236
Salisbury	2·4	220
Thamesdown	4·2	118
West Wiltshire	2·1	231
All purpose authority		
Isles of Scilly	6·7	1

Dr. Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list, on a ranked basis, the percentage change in the grant-related expenditure of each non-metropolitan county and each non-metropolitan district between *(a)* 1981-82 and 1988-89 and *(b)* 1985-86 and 1988-89.

Mr. Ridley: The information is as follows:

Percentage changes in grant-related expenditure between (a) *1981-82 4th supplementary report and 1988-89 settlement, and* (b) *1985-86 3rd supplementary report and 1988-89 settlement*

	(a) *1981-82 to 1988-89*		(b) *1985-86 to 1988-89*	
	per cent. change	*Rank in class*	*per cent. change*	*Rank in class*
Shire counties				
Avon	49·0	35	22·1	29
Bedfordshire	52·6	26	20·2	36
Berkshire	59·4	9	23·8	16
Buckinghamshire	67·9	1	25·0	9
Cambridgeshire	62·9	3	25·3	6
Cheshire	50·0	31	23·8	15
Cleveland	53·3	22	21·6	32
Cornwall	63·9	2	26·9	1
Cumbria	49·2	32	22·7	25
Derbyshire	54·7	19	23·9	14
Devon	56·7	13	23·2	23
Dorset	60·1	5	25·1	7
Durham	50·4	30	23·5	19
East Sussex	56·9	12	23·1	24

	(a) 1981-82 to 1988-89		(b) 1985-86 to 1988-89	
	per cent. change	Rank in class	per cent. change	Rank in class
Essex	53·0	23	23·3	21
Gloucester	54·4	20	25·5	2
Hampshire	50·7	29	21·6	31
Hereford and Worcester	55·2	18	22·3	28
Hertfordshire	42·5	39	19·8	37
Humberside	52·5	27	22·1	30
Isle of Wight	56·0	17	21·2	33
Kent	52·7	25	22·5	27
Lancashire	56·6	15	23·4	20
Leicestershire	59·5	8	24·3	12
Lincolnshire	59·9	6	25·3	5
Norfolk	59·4	10	25·1	8
Northamptonshire	59·7	7	23·6	18
Northumberland	44·3	37	16·7	39
North Yorkshire	53·3	21	24·9	11
Nottinghamshire	48·3	36	21·0	35
Oxfordshire	43·2	38	19·6	38
Shropshire	60·1	4	25·5	3
Somerset	56·7	14	24·0	13
Staffordshire	52·0	28	22·6	26
Suffolk	56·6	16	25·4	4
Surrey	49·0	34	21·1	34
Warwickshire	49·1	33	23·2	22
West Sussex	58·6	11	24·9	10
Wiltshire	52·9	24	23·8	17
Avon				
Bath	12·5	215	16·0	29
Bristol	22·9	143	18·0	22
Kingswood	28·2	115	8·5	102
Northavon	23·6	140	6·5	153
Wansdyke	8·2	247	6·6	152
Woodspring	33·0	87	10·7	67
Bedfordshire				
North Bedfordshire	38·1	64	14·5	40
Luton	49·6	31	23·3	6
Mid Bedfordshire	41·2	51	12·6	55
South Bedfordshire	13·7	208	8·4	105
Berkshire				
Bracknell	90·6	1	14·0	43
Newbury	11·2	226	8·8	93
Reading	42·3	46	14·3	41
Slough	32·5	92	18·8	16
Windsor and Maidenhead	11·9	219	4·3	200
Wokingham	14·3	205	8·3	110
Buckinghamshire				
Aylesbury Vale	35·7	76	6·7	147
South Bucks	−2·3	284	−0·1	274
Chiltern	4·0	265	−2·8	292
Milton Keynes	90·1	2	14·2	42
Wycombe	40·8	53	2·8	238
Cambridgeshire				
Cambridge	25·6	128	9·2	86
East Cambridgeshire	39·7	57	9·6	80
Fenland	26·1	126	9·9	77
Huntingdonshire	29·2	112	18·5	19
Peterborough	30·0	107	18·7	17
South Cambridgeshire	17·5	184	7·7	124
Cheshire				
Chester	35.0	79	10.2	71
Congleton	35·9	74	5·4	177
Crewe and Nantwich	10·8	229	3·8	215
Ellesmere Port and Neston	17·0	188	7·2	139
Halton	32·9	88	18·4	20
Macclesfield	11·0	228	3·1	226
Vale Royal	22·4	153	4·6	189
Warrington	54·6	18	15·0	34

	(a) 1981-82 to 1988-89		(b) 1985-86 to 1988-89	
	per cent. change	Rank in class	per cent. change	Rank in class
Cleveland				
Hartlepool	32·4	93	13·0	51
Langbaurgh	3·6	267	−6·1	295
Middlesbrough	45·9	36	24·7	5
Stockton-on-Tees	28·0	118	16·2	27
Cornwall				
Caradon	32·5	91	4·6	190
Carrick	17·0	187	6·4	154
Kerrier	18·1	178	8·0	118
North Cornwall	21·1	160	5·3	179
Penwith	16·6	189	13·7	45
Restormel	25·2	132	9·2	87
Cumbria				
Allerdale	13·5	211	−6·2	296
Barrow in Furness	27·7	119	16·1	28
Carlisle	41·8	49	8·9	91
Copeland	22·8	144	3·0	229
Eden	16·6	190	4·1	207
South Lakeland	9·0	244	3·5	222
Derbyshire				
Amber Valley	0·3	276	3·7	218
Bolsover	4·5	264	3·0	230
Chesterfield	38·4	63	8·4	106
Derby	58·3	15	15·8	30
Erewash	17·7	179	6·6	150
High Peak	10·3	237	4·4	196
North East Derbyshire	18·6	174	−1·4	285
South Derbyshire	10·7	231	1·8	255
Derbyshire Dales	−4·9	289	0·5	265
Devon				
East Devon	22·0	157	2·2	251
Exeter	50·4	28	11·9	59
North Devon	13·7	209	7·8	121
Plymouth	45·0	39	28·5	2
South Hams	5·4	260	7·9	120
Teignbridge	15·8	193	4·8	185
Mid Devon	30·6	103	6·0	160
Torbay	45·9	35	19·0	14
Torridge	2·9	269	2·0	252
West Devon	−1·1	278	−0·9	279
Dorset				
Bournemouth	50·9	24	25·5	4
Christchurch	39·0	60	5·9	164
North Dorset	39·6	58	4·1	208
Poole	37·3	66	14·0	44
Purbeck	31·1	100	7·5	129
West Dorset	15·2	196	4·1	206
Weymouth and Portland	57·3	16	19·6	12
Wimborne	5·6	259	2·8	239
Durham				
Chester-le-Street	6·5	251	6·7	148
Darlington	33·0	85	4·3	201
Derwentside	32·6	90	2·2	250
Durham	42·3	45	5·7	167
Easington	−6·6	293	8·7	95
Sedgefield	−7·0	294	3·0	231
Teesdale	23·6	139	−0·5	277
Wear Valley	3·9	266	7·5	133
East Sussex				
Brighton	31·5	98	8·7	99
Eastbourne	48·1	32	8·8	92
Hastings	53·8	21	26·8	3
Hove	41·4	50	19·0	15
Lewes	10·4	235	−2·2	289
Rother	26·9	123	1·4	260
Wealden	1·7	272	0·1	273
Essex				

	(a) 1981-82 to 1988-89		(b) 1985-86 to 1988-89	
	per cent. change	Rank in class	per cent. change	Rank in class
Basildon	1·2	274	−2·8	291
Braintree	14·8	200	2·9	232
Brentwood	8·8	246	3·1	228
Castle Point	28·3	114	7·0	141
Chelmsford	60·6	12	5·8	165
Colchester	55·3	17	7·6	128
Epping Forest	53·8	20	9·4	83
Harlow	22·4	152	9·3	84
Maldon	12·4	216	5·5	174
Rochford	9·6	242	2·9	235
Southend-on-Sea	31·4	99	15·6	31
Tendring	36·8	67	7·8	122
Thurrock	4·8	262	12·7	52
Uttlesford	−5·2	290	0·4	268
Gloucestershire				
Cheltenham	44·2	40	15·3	33
Cotswold	10·4	234	−1·0	280
Forest of Dean	−2·7	286	−3·5	294
Gloucester	52·8	22	14·5	39
Stroud	29·4	111	5·3	178
Tewkesbury	22·5	150	6·6	149
Hampshire				
Basingstoke and Dean	65·1	9	7·5	130
East Hampshire	−2·3	283	4·2	203
Eastleigh	42·3	44	7·7	123
Fareham	22·6	146	8·7	98
Gosport	35·9	75	13·3	48
Hart	16·5	191	8·0	119
Havant	22·8	145	8·4	107
New Forest	15·2	198	4·3	198
Portsmouth	11·7	221	22·7	7
Rushmoor	22·5	151	12·0	58
Southampton	50·1	29	22·1	8
Test Valley	14·7	201	5·5	173
Winchester	17·3	186	3·3	223
Hereford and Worcester				
Bromsgrove	22·4	154	3·1	225
Hereford	87·7	3	15·6	32
Leominster	25·5	129	1·7	256
Malvern Hills	10·7	230	2·3	249
Redditch	40·9	52	15·0	35
South Herefordshire	20·8	162	2·7	240
Worcester	60·7	11	16·9	24
Wychavon	14·0	207	2·6	245
Wyre Forest	7·8	249	5·2	180
Hertfordshire				
Broxbourne	−5·7	291	18·0	21
Dacorum	76·6	5	7·4	134
East Hertfordshire	35·0	80	11·3	61
Hertsmere	17·6	182	9·1	88
North Hertfordshire	40·6	54	7·2	137
St. Albans	42·8	43	6·0	162
Stevenage	28·1	117	10·9	66
Three Rivers	2·5	270	4·2	204
Watford	9·8	241	12·0	57
Welwyn Hatfield	50·4	27	6·1	157
Humberside				
Beverley	36·2	70	−2·1	288
Boothferry	13·3	212	−2·4	290
Cleethorpes	27·3	121	−0·4	276
Glanford	41·9	48	3·9	212
Great Grimsby	32·4	94	5·7	168
Holderness	28·4	113	−2·1	287
Kingston upon Hull	60·3	13	8·3	108
East Yorkshire	18·9	172	1·3	261
Scunthorpe	−7·2	295	0·3	270
Isle of Wight				
Medina	33·7	83	11·0	64
South Wight	34·2	81	17·1	23

	(a) 1981-82 to 1988-89		(b) 1985-86 to 1988-89	
	per cent. change	Rank in class	per cent. change	Rank in class
Kent				
Ashford	28·2	116	1·6	258
Canterbury	33·4	84	8·6	101
Dartford	−5·7	292	9·0	89
Dover	5·8	256	6·6	151
Gillingham	31·8	97	12·4	56
Gravesham	6·4	253	3·9	213
Maidstone	12·3	217	4·0	211
Rochester upon Medway	6·5	252	8·6	100
Sevenoaks	14·0	206	−0·1	275
Shepway	20·7	164	6·8	145
Swale	9·6	243	5·9	163
Thanet	24·0	137	7·5	132
Tonbridge and Malling	25·7	127	2·0	253
Tunbridge Wells	30·4	104	3·8	214
Lancashire				
Blackburn	32·8	89	10·0	75
Blackpool	73·0	6	30·9	1
Burnley	15·6	194	14·9	36
Chorley	11·1	227	10·1	74
Fylde	32·1	96	8·7	97
Hyndburn	21·8	159	6·9	143
Lancaster	42·1	47	14·7	37
Pendle	16·2	192	14·5	38
Preston	51·6	23	21·8	9
Ribble Valley	2·1	271	4·9	182
Rossendale	29·6	109	9·8	79
South Ribble	9·9	240	3·5	220
West Lancashire	5·8	255	8·2	114
Wyre	18·1	177	1·9	254
Leicestershire				
Blaby	18·4	175	4·5	194
Charnwood	17·3	185	6·0	159
Harborough	−2·1	280	1·7	257
Hinckley and Bosworth	24·0	136	7·2	138
Leicester	44·1	41	16·4	25
Melton	14·5	202	4·1	209
North West Leicestershire	11·4	224	3·8	216
Oadby and Wigston	36·1	71	5·4	176
Rutland	32·1	95	3·7	217
Lincolnshire				
Boston	36·5	68	3·3	224
East Lindsey	24·1	135	7·5	131
Lincoln	62·0	10	13·2	49
North Kesteven	4·9	261	3·5	221
South Holland	1·6	273	2·4	247
South Kesteven	30·6	102	6·0	158
West Lindsey	−2·1	281	2·6	243
Norfolk				
Breckland	10·5	232	2·6	244
Broadland	19·3	171	0·2	271
Great Yarmouth	50·8	25	8·0	117
North Norfolk	33·0	86	2·9	233
Norwich	22·5	149	20·5	11
South Norfolk	−2·2	282	−1·1	281
King's Lynn and West Norfolk	23·0	142	5·4	175
Northamptonshire				
Corby	25·3	131	8·3	109
Daventry	46·4	34	3·6	219
East Northamptonshire	38·4	62	2·8	237
Kettering	5·7	258	7·0	142
Northampton	39·4	59	9·3	85
South Northamptonshire	35·5	77	−1·2	283
Wellingborough	22·5	147	8·2	115
Northumberland				
Alnwick	19·4	169	−1·7	286
Berwick-upon-Tweed	50·7	26	−1·4	284
Blyth Valley	1·1	275	9·5	81
Castle Morpeth	13·2	213	0·3	269
Tynedale	−2·4	285	−3·3	293
Wansbeck	27·6	120	11·2	62

	(a) 1981-82 to 1988-89		(b) 1985-86 to 1988-89	
	per cent. change	Rank in class	per cent. change	Rank in class
North Yorkshire				
Craven	21·9	158	0·9	264
Hambleton	18·2	176	0·2	272
Harrogate	19·8	168	5·6	169
Richmondshire	19·3	170	7·0	140
Ryedale	36·0	72	1·0	262
Scarborough	38·8	61	8·3	111
Selby	15·2	197	6·3	155
York	66·6	8	21·3	10
Nottinghamshire				
Ashfield	10·3	238	10·2	72
Bassetlaw	10·4	233	8·7	94
Broxtowe	15·3	195	5·6	172
Gedling	47·5	33	13·1	50
Mansfield	−8·0	296	10·9	65
Newark and Sherwood	17·7	180	4·6	187
Nottingham	69·1	7	18·6	18
Rushcliffe	22·5	148	7·6	127
Oxfordshire				
Cherwell	24·7	133	8·3	112
Oxford	40·6	55	12·7	53
South Oxfordshire	13·1	214	2·5	246
Vale of White Horse	34·0	82	4·3	197
West Oxfordshire	29·7	108	8·7	96
Shropshire				
Bridgnorth	36·3	69	2·9	234
North Shropshire	30·2	105	0·4	267
Oswestry	79·7	4	1·4	259
Shrewsbury and Atcham	39·7	56	6·1	156
South Shropshire	11·3	225	4·5	193
Wrekin	11·8	220	9·8	78
Somerset				
Mendip	26·4	124	5·1	181
Sedgemoor	29·4	110	6·7	146
Taunton Deane	23·9	138	5·7	166
West Somerset	11·5	223	4·5	195
South Somerset	45·3	37	4·0	210
Staffordshire				
Cannock Chase	15·1	199	8·2	113
East Staffordshire	45·1	38	7·6	126
Lichfield	49·9	30	4·3	202
Newcastle-under-Lyme	36·0	73	4·9	183
South Staffordshire	17·6	181	5·6	171
Stafford	22·1	156	4·6	188
Staffordshire Moorlands	23·0	141	−1·1	282
Stoke-on-Trent	58·5	14	19·4	13
Tamworth	26·2	125	2·7	242
Suffolk				
Babergh	−0·1	277	0·9	263
Forest Heath	−1·7	279	8·5	103
Ipswich	43·4	42	13·5	46
Mid Suffolk	13·5	210	2·8	236
St. Edmundsbury	30·0	106	4·9	184
Suffolk Coastal	20·7	163	4·2	205
Waveney	20·5	165	7·3	136
Surrey				
Elmbridge	6·4	254	9·5	82
Epsom and Ewell	−3·2	287	8·1	116
Guildford	12·2	218	11·1	63
Mole Valley	3·4	268	7·4	135
Reigate and Banstead	18·9	173	10·1	73
Runnymede	5·8	257	12·6	54
Spelthorne	7·8	248	7·6	125
Surrey Heath	22·3	155	10·3	69
Tandridge	35·4	78	9·9	76
Waverley	10·3	239	10·3	70
Woking	11·5	222	10·5	68

	(a) 1981-82 to 1988-89		(b) 1985-86 to 1988-89	
	per cent. change	Rank in class	per cent. change	Rank in class
Warwickshire				
North Warwickshire	−4·6	288	0·5	266
Nuneaton and Bedworth	4·5	263	8·4	104
Rugby	25·3	130	4·3	199
Stratford on Avon	20·4	166	−0·7	278
Warwick	14·5	203	5·6	170
West Sussex				
Adur	21·1	161	8·9	90
Arun	14·3	204	4·5	192
Chichester	7·6	250	2·4	248
Crawley	54·1	19	11·9	60
Horsham	20·1	167	6·9	144
Mid Sussex	10·3	236	4·6	191
Worthing	37·8	65	16·3	26
Wiltshire				
Kennet	31·0	101	2·7	241
North Wiltshire	17·5	183	4·7	186
Salisbury	24·6	134	6·0	161
Thamesdown	27·1	122	13·4	47
West Wiltshire	8·9	245	3·1	227
All purpose authority				
Isles of Scilly	62·4	1	26·3	1

Rate Support Grant

Dr. Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what was the cost to his Department of administering the rate support grant in each year from 1979-80 to 1987-88.

Mr. Ridley: An approximate estimate for the financial year 1986-87 based on the costs of staff effort and of printing, computing and so on is £1·4 million. The cost in 1987-88 may be about £1·2 million. These estimates do not include certain other costs, such as accommodation, which cannot easily be attributed to particular functions. Consistent figures for earlier years are not available.

Dr. Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list the rate poundage implied for each authority at taxpayer level by the rate support grant for 1988-89, assuming that each authority meets his Department's spending assumption, with no additions to or withdrawals from funds or balances, and assuming 1987-88 penny rate products; and if he will list, on a class and ranked basis, each authority's 1987-88 rate poundage, showing the difference between 1987-88 poundage and the implied one for 1988-89 and showing the resulting percentage change.

Mr. Ridley: I have today placed the information in the Library.

Dr. Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what changes were made to the method of calculating grant-related expenditure in each rate support grant settlement from 1981-82 to 1988-89.

Mr. Ridley: Changes to the method of calculating grant related expenditure assessment in each rate support grant settlement are as follows:

1982-83

Changes to GRE components for:

Education

increase the weight given to additional educational needs

double the weighting of ethnic minorities within the additional educational needs indicator

to introduce a component for the young u
to be distributed on youth unemployment
to distribute debt charges arising from p
capital expenditure on past years' actual de

Personal social services, miscellaneous

to base the assessed need for provision on a
estimation against an indicator of housing
conditions in place of the previous
distribution

Passenger transport

to distribute debt charges arising from p
capital expenditure on a past year's actual de
and introduction of a new GRE compone
negative central total) for:

Interest receipts

to be distributed on all other assessed GRE

1983-84

Changes to GRE components for:

Education

to widen the scope of adult education GRE
non-release part-time day courses in ac
evening-only courses; but to leave the
distribution unchanged;
to replace, in the component for school meal
the indicator of numbers of pupils receiving
meals with a new indicator of pupils in fami
head is in receipt of supplementary benefits

Passenger transport revenue support

to allocate a proportion solely to metropolita
and to distribute this between them on th
loaded train miles.

Sports and parks and parish precepts

to amalgamate into a single GRE c
('recreation'); and to omit the visitor right
from the assessment.

Rate collection

to omit the rateable values indicators
assessment.

Coast protection

to change the basis of distribution from pop
coastal authorities to length of protected co
and introduction of a new explicit GRE compo
building regulations — to be distributed
number of building regulation applications d

1984-85

Changes to GRE components for:

Education
a change to the sparseness of population indicator need in the component for secondary education to remove school size.
Personal social services
complete change to the methodology.
Probation
removal of the population density indicator.
Housing outside the HRA
to include an indicator of numbers in private rented accommodation.
Economic development
to distribute on the basis of numbers of unemployed.
Building control
to divide the control total initially between inner London, including GLC and other authorities on the basis of past spending to reflect the different responsibilities in inner London.
Interest receipts
to divide the negative control total initially between the classes of authority on the basis of past levels of interest receipts.

1985-86
Changes to the GRE components for:
Passenger transport revenue support
distributed on a public transport demand factor and loaded train miles;
Normal road maintenance, winter maintenance and street lighting
distributed on road lengths, road usage and severity of winter weather;
Contribution to the housing revenue account
change to the methodology to take into account more recent information for various items and to project separately each major HRA item.
Recreation
to introduce a new methodology based on the product of numbers in need of recreational facilities and the unit cost of providing them;
Cemeteries and crematoria
to distribute on numbers of deaths.
Enhancement of the method of adjusting for higher labour costs in and around London differentiating by groups of services according to the share of costs nationally relating to direct manpower expenditure and the local labour content of non-labour costs in each service grouping.

1986-87
Changes to GRE components for:
Concessionary fares
to change the basis of distribution from numbers of elderly to a client group assessment of the numbers in need of public transport and its availability;
Local authority support for local rail networks
to take account of all rail services rather than just those British Rail services supported under s.20 of the Transport Act 1968, and change the basis of distribution from loaded train miles to a combination of rail route mileage and network infrastructure costs in each metropolitan area:
Education
to distribute debt charges arising from pre 1981-8 capital expenditure on the basis of all other educatio assessed GREs; and to sub-divide the sparseness population indicator into two indicators reflecti differing degrees of sparseness;
Personal social services
to change the basis of distribution of costs of soci workers and social services central management an administration to assessed social services GRE fo children and the elderly;
Refuse collection and waste disposal
to modify the density of population indicator in eac case.
1987-88
Changes to GRE components for:
The police service
to change the basis of distribution to polic establishments;
Personal social services
to combine the PSS categories for children aged unde 5 and aged 5 to 17;
Education
to include fully the cost of pupils, not belonging to th area of any authority in the 'no area' pool and t exclude them from the numbers of school pupil indicators;
Roads maintenance (winter)
to substitute air frost for grass frost in the weathe adjustment factor;
Housing revenue account
to modify the treatment of an earlier assessed rer increase;
and
Introduction of new GRE components for
Airports debt charges
Public transport pension payments
both to be distributed on the basis of authorities' actua expenditure.

1988-89
Changes to GRE components for:
Non-advanced further education
to include all YTS students in the indicator for non advanced further education students;
Housing benefits
to modify the proportion of certificated and non certificated housing benefits qualifying for GRE, t reflect changes to be made to the financing of housin benefits by DHSS from 1 April 1988;
Building regulations
to change the basis of distribution from number o building regulation applications determined to num bers of domestic and non-domestic properties.

Dr. Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for th Environment if he will list the total of grant-relate expenditure, by service and in total, at rate support gran settlement and at estimated outturn, in each year fron 1981-82 to 1988-89, by class.

Mr. Ridley: The available information is as follows:

Table 1: Grant-related expenditure by class of authority, 1981-82 to 1988-89

£ millio

	1981-82		*1982-83*		*1983-84*		*1984-85*		*1985-86*	
	Sett.	*Final SR*	*Sett.*	*Final SR*	*Sett.*	*Final SR*	*Sett.*	*Final SR*	*Sett.*	*3rd S*
Shire districts	1,243	1,267	1,400	1,374	1,470	1,468	1,414	1,436	1,462	1,46
Shire counties	8,300	8,378	8,934	8,906	9,287	9,276	9,770	9,826	10,442	10,47
Metropolitan districts	3,489	3,528	3,762	3,729	3,891	3,873	3,978	3,997	4,187	4,19
Metropolitan counties	786	802	864	862	927	927	996	1,005	1,186	1,19
City of London	11	13	16	16	17	17	16	16	17	1
Inner London boroughs	573	583	643	628	678	664	661	664	729	73
Outer London boroughs	1,437	1,452	1,562	1,548	1,616	1,606	1,628	1,635	1,708	1,71
ILEA	468	468	514	509	517	513	533	532	555	52
GLC	406	427	481	457	480	464	517	525	549	54

	1981-82		1982-83		1983-84		1984-85		
	Sett.	Final SR	Sett.	Final SR	Sett.	Final SR	Sett.	Final SR	
Metropolitan police	268	274	338	327	346	348	367	367	
Isles of Scilly	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	
England	16,982	17,194	18,515	18,357	19,231	19,156	19,882	20,003	21

	1986-87		1987-88		1988-89
	Sett.	3rd SR	Sett.	1st SR	Sett
Shire districts	1,617	1,614	1,540	1,540	1,601
Shire counties	11,059	11,150	11,628	11,909	12,894
Metropolitan districts	5,040	5,082	5,232	5,348	5,744
Joint fire authorities	152	152	167	167	173
Joint police authorities	328	328	363	363	408
Joint transport authorities	284	282	305	305	303
City of London	24	24	34	34	37
Inner London boroughs	1,112	1,107	1,149	1,149	1,190
Outer London boroughs	2,081	2,088	2,167	2,210	2,384
ILEA	545	547	559	580	631
London Fire and CD Authority	125	126	136	136	142
Metropolitan police	421	421	460	460	498
Isles of Scilly	2	2	2	2	2
England	22,790	22,924	23,742	24,202	26,006

Table 2: Grant-related Expenditure by Service, 1981-82 to 1988-89

	1981-82		1982-83		1983-84		1984-85		
	Sett.	Final SR	Sett.	Final SR	Sett.	Final SR	Sett.	Final SR	
Education, arts & libraries	9,367		10,217		10,349	10,329	10,624	10,650	11
Personal Social Services	1,643		1,943		2,085	2,081	2,205	2,208	2
Law and Order	1,479		1,649		1,785	1,789	1,890	1,893	2
Transport	1,286		1,373		1,398	1,387	1,487	1,497	1
Employment and Consumer Protection	100		107		110	110	115	115	
Housing	509		591		536	561	514	538	
Environment Services	2,176		2,405		2,507	2,470	2,520	2,558	2
Financing items	423		230		461	430	527	544	
Total	16,982	17,194	18,515	18,357	19,231	19,156	19,882	20,003	21

	1986-87		1987-88		1988-89
	Sett.	3rd SR	Sett.	1st SR	Sett.
Education, arts and libraries	11,618	11,729	12,576	13,036	13,939
Personal Social Services	2,553	2,553	2,757	2,757	2,913
Law and order	2,152	2,152	2,363	2,363	2,555
Transport	1,929	1,929	2,045	2,045	2,024
Employment and Consumer Protection	127	127	148	148	159
Housing	826	829	825	825	816
Environment Services	2,926	2,945	3,000	3,000	3,137
Financing items	660	660	29	29	464
Total	22,790	22,924	23,742	24,202	26,006

Notes:

1. Outturn figures for 1985-86 onwards are not yet available so latest supplementary report figures have been used. For 1983-8 1986-87 the latest data are as in the consultation papers issued by the Department of the Environment to each local authority 1987.
2. Service breakdowns of the final 1981-82 and 1982-83 GREs are not available.
3. Figures may not sum due to rounding.

Homes Insulation

Mr. Stern: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment when he intends to introduce the new homes insulation scheme announced by the then Minister for Housing and Construction, the hon. Member for Oxford, West and Abingdon (Mr. Patten) on 19 December 1986; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Waldegrave: A new homes insulation scheme has today been laid before Parliament. Nearly 90 per cent. of accessible loft spaces are now insulated and available resources need to be concentrated o in need of assistance with loft insulation wo scheme therefore withdraws the rate of gra cent. available to eligible householders in extends the availability of 90 per cent. grants householders who are in receipt of hou supplementary benefit—income support fro —or family income supplement—family April 1988. The grant available will be 90 pe

costs of work up to a ceiling of £137, which is a substantial increase over the maximum grant previously available. The new scheme applies to England, Scotland and Wales and will come into effect on 1 February 1988.

Advisory Comittees

Mr. Richard Shepherd: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list in the *Official Report* the names of his advisory committees, together with an indication of those whose members are required to sign a declaration under, or who have otherwise had drawn to their attention, the provisions of section 2 of the Officials Secrets Act.

Mr. Ridley *[pursuant to his reply, 18 December 1987, c. 787]:* The list of advisory bodies for which I am responsible should also have included the Royal Commission on Environmental Pollution.

Sheltered Workshops

Mr. Hannam: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment whether local authorities will still be able to use the priority suppliers scheme if the Local Government Bill is passed in its present form; and if he will make a statement regarding the relationship between the local authorities' sheltered workshops in light of the proposals on competitive tendering.

Mr. Chope: The effect of the Bill's provisions on the priority suppliers scheme is currently under consideration. Any additional costs incurred in the employment of local authority disabled employees who are involved in activities affected by the competition provisions of the Bill, whether in sheltered workshops or otherwise, will be taken into account by the Secretary of State in deciding whether to act against any failure to meet the financial objectives provided for by the Bill.

Wimpey No-fines Dwellings

Mr. Winnick: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) when the Walsall metropolitan borough council will be notified of his Department's decision regarding expenditure for 1988-89 on improvements to the Wimpey no-fines dwellings;

(2) what submissions have been made by the Walsall metropolitan borough council regarding the improvements to the Wimpey no-fines dwellings in the next financial year; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Roe: Walsall metropolitan borough council was notified on 18 December 1987 that it would receive an HIP allocation of £6·9 million for 1988-89. This allocation took full account of the most recent submissions by Walsall metropolitan borough council on the repair and improvement of Wimpey no-fines houses, which were made during the preceding HIP round. HIP allocations do not differentiate between separate items of expenditure, and it will be for Walsall metropolitan borough council to determine its own expenditure priorities during the coming financial year.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Mr. Jeremy Warner

Mr. Sedgemore: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry will invite the inspectors investigating allege dealing by civil servants not to take out an appli punishment of Mr. Jeremy Warner, business c dent of *The Independent*; and if he will make a s

Mr. Maude: The inspectors applied to the Hi in March 1987 for the court to inquire into the Mr. Warner to answer certain questions put to h inspectors. The House of Lords has now decided Warner did not have a reasonable excuse for his answer. By order of the House of Lords the m now be remitted to the High Court. It will be for to decide how to deal with the matter. It is no inspectors to make any recommendatio punishment.

British Steel Corporation (Monopolies and M Commission Report)

Mr. Gould: To ask the Chancellor of the L Lancaster when he received and when he ex publish the Monopolies and Mergers Commissi following its investigation of the British Steel Cor

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: The report was comm under section 11 of the Competition Act 1 delivered in August 1986.

The long delay in publication has been cause need to consider very carefully a request by th Steel Corporation that the Secretary of Stat exercise his powers under section 17 of the Act t number of excisions to the published report in avoid prejudicing the interests of the corporation publish the report as soon as possible.

Gallows (Export)

Mr. Gould: To ask the Chancellor of the L Lancaster if he will take steps to prohibit the e United Kingdom firms of gallows and other eq whose sole purpose is use in the carrying out of t sentence; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Alan Clark: No. I understand that gall related equipment may be constructed from items for other purposes and the export of which it w impractical to control.

Nissan

Mr. Caborn: To ask the Chancellor of the L Lancaster what grants have been made available t over the past three months in relation to its ex plans in the north-east.

Mr. Atkins: The Government have offered assistance to Nissan of up to £25 million in respe company's plans to produce a second mode Sunderland plant.

Clothing Industry (Morpeth and Ashingto

Mr. Jack Thompson: To ask the Chancello Duchy of Lancaster what has been the total regional aid granted to the clothing industry Morpeth and Ashington employment areas since regional development grant, regional selective a and northern selective assistance to date.

Mr. Atkins: Identifiable regional aid grante clothing and knitwear industry in the Castle Mor

Wansbeck local authority districts since 1975 amounted to £0·1 million. However this does not include aid under the original regional development grant scheme for which sufficiently detailed information is not available.

Mr. Jack Thompson: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what grants have come from the European Economic Community since 1979 for the clothing industry in the Morpeth and Ashington employment areas.

Mr. Atkins: There have been no grants from the European Community since 1979 for the clothing industry companies in this area.

Mr. Jack Thompson: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what has been the estimated number of jobs created or saved by regional or European Economic Community grant aid since 1979 in the Morpeth and Ashington employment areas.

Mr. Atkins: It was estimated that around 2,650 jobs would be created or safeguarded as a result of regional aid granted in the Castle Morpeth and Wansbeck local authority districts since 1979. This does not include aid under the original regional development grant (RDG) scheme which was not job-related and for which sufficiently detailed information is in any case not available.

Note:

Aid from the European regional development fund (ERDF) may be payable in respect of companies in receipt of RDG and/or regional selective assistance. Such ERDF support does not go to companies, but is instead retained by the Government to increase the total level of assistance to industry.

Mr. Jack Thompson: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what clothing companies in the Morpeth and Ashington employment areas have received European Economic Community aid since 1979.

Mr. Atkins: The following clothing companies in the Castle Morpeth and Wansbeck local authority districts have been granted regional aid since 1979:

Hadrian Fashions Ltd.
P. Shapira Ltd.

There have been no grants from the European Community since 1979 for clothing industry companies in these districts.

Note:

For Regional Development Grants detailed records are only available for the revised scheme introduced in November 1984.

Mr. Jack Thompson: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what proportion of total grant aid to the Morpeth and Ashington employment areas the grant aid to the clothing industry has represented since 1979.

Mr. Atkins: Since 1979, identifiable grant aid to the clothing and knitwear industry in the Castle Morpeth and Wansbeck local authority districts was 1 per cent. of total aid granted by my Department to the area under the same schemes.

Note:

The schemes referred to are the revised regional development grant scheme, regional selective assistance, support for major projects, innovation linked investment scheme, and support for innovation. Sufficiently detailed information is not available for the original regional development grant scheme.

Clothing Industry (Blyth and

Mr. Ronnie Campbell: To ask the Duchy of Lancaster what has been regional aid granted to the clothing in and Cramlinton employment areas sinc development grant, regional selectiv northern selective assistance.

Mr. Atkins: Identifiable regional clothing and knitwear industry in authority district since 1975 amounte However, this does not include aid regional development grant scheme fo detailed information is not available.

Mr. Ronnie Campbell: To ask the Duchy of Lancaster what grants ha European Economic Community si clothing industry in the Blyth and C ment areas.

Mr. Atkins: There have been no European Community since 1979 for th companies in this area.

Mr. Ronnie Campbell: To ask the Duchy of Lancaster what proportion o the Blyth and Cramlinton employment the clothing industry has represented s

Mr. Atkins: Since 1979, identifiabl clothing and knitwear industry in the authority district was 8 per cent. of to my Department to the area under the

Notes:—The grant schemes referred regional development grant scheme, assistance, support for major projects, investment scheme, and support for inno detailed information is not available for t development grant scheme.

Mr. Ronnie Campbell: To ask the Duchy of Lancaster which clothing com and Cramlinton employment area European Economic Community aid si

Mr. Atkins: There have been no European Community since 1979 for th companies in this area.

Job Creation (Blyth and Cra

Mr. Ronnie Campbell: To ask the Duchy of Lancaster what has been the of jobs created or saved by regio Economic Community grant aid since and Cramlinton employment areas.

Mr. Atkins: It was estimated that would be created or safeguarded as a res granted in the Blyth Valley local auth 1979. This does not include aid under th development grant scheme which was n for which sufficiently detailed informat not available.

Notes:—

(1) The above information includes bot assistance (RSA) and the revised regional (RDG) scheme introduced in Novembe RDG are sometimes both granted in re project. There may therefore be an el counting in the jobs figure quoted.

(2) Aid from the European regional development fund (ERDF) may be payable in respect of companies in receipt of RDG and/or RSA. Such ERDF support does not go to companies, but is instead retained by the Government to increase the total level of assistance to industry.

Shipbuilders

Mr. Beggs: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster to what extent his Department has subsidised shipbuilders in Great Britain in each of the last five years; if he will publish a list of British shipyards and the subsidy allocated to each; and how much money is presently committed further to subsidise each shipyard in Great Britain.

Mr. Atkins: State aid has been provided to British Shipbuilders in the form of contract-related support through the shipbuilding intervention fund and by the injection of public dividend capital as follows:

	£ mill
1982-83	11
1983-84	30
1984-85	20
1985-86	9
1986-87	29
Total	1,02

The current year forecast is for total payr million. An estimate of £80 million has b 1988-89.

Payments of shipbuilding intervention fu sector shipbuilders have been as set out in current year forecast is for total payments An estimate of £2·47 million has been mad

	1982-83	*1983-84*	*1984-85*	*1985-86*	*1986-87*
Richards (Shipbuilders) Ltd.	1·19	0·34	0·16	0·88	0·54
Cochrane (Shipbuilders) Ltd.	1·20	1·07	0·79	2·21	1·19
Richard Dunston Ltd.	1·43	0·55	0·03	0·25	0·79
McTay Marine Ltd.	0·14	0·43	0·99	0·42	1·01
James Cook Ltd.	Nil	Nil	Nil	0·20	Nil
Cubow Ltd.	0·09	0·02	Nil	Nil	Nil
G. & O. Brown Ltd.	0·06	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
Totals	4·11	2·41	1·97	3·96	3·53

International Tin Agreement

Mr. Tim Smith: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what have been the costs to date of defending the various legal actions brought against the Government following the collapse of the international tin agreement in 1985.

Mr. Atkins: Payments in respect of legal costs by the Treasury Solicitor acting for the Government Departments concerned in various actions in the courts in England arising out of the cessation of the buffer stock operation of the International Tin Council totalled £219,096 at 31 December 1987.

Mr. Tim Smith: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what contribution the United Kingdom has made to the International Tin Council since the collapse of the international tin agreement in 1985.

Mr. Atkins: The Government's contribution to the administrative account of the International Tin Council for the years ended 30 June 1986 and 30 June 1987 was £55,071 and £76,117 respectively, and is £73,458 for the current year.

Patent Office (Relocation)

Mr. Blunkett: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster whether, pursuant to his answers to the hon. Members for Bradford, West (Mr. Madden) and for Harrogate (Mr. Banks), *Official Report*, column *239*, he will reconsider his decision on Patent Office relocation in the light of the decision of the Trustee Savings Bank to relocate to Newport.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: As I have stated on previous occasions, the location of the Patent Office close to other large DTI establishments in Cardiff or Newport would yield significant operational and financial ad officials are currently examining the feasibi move and I have no plans to look else moment.

Furniture (Polyurethane Foam

Mr. Wareing: To ask the Chancellor of Lancaster how many representations he about the fire hazard arising from the use of foam in upholstered furniture; if he will int on the use of such material for that purpose he has received about the availability of al safer materials; and if he will make a staten

Mr. Maude: I refer the hon. Gentle statement I made on this subject this aftern

Advisory Committees

Mr. Richard Shepherd: To ask the Cha Duchy of Lancaster if he will list in the *Offic* names of his advisory committees, toget indication of those whose members are requ declaration under, or who have otherwise their attention, the provisions of section 2 Secrets Act.

Mr. Maude *[holding answer 18 December* in the table my Department's advisory bod of those in list A are required to sign a decla or have otherwise had drawn to their a provisions of section 2 of the Official Members of those in list B are not. Membe list C may be asked to sign a declaration unc the event of information with a natio classification coming before them.

List A
British Overseas Trade Board
Export Guarantees Advisory Council
Industrial Development Advisory Board
Overseas Projects Board
Production Statistics Advisory Committee
Regional Industrial Development Boards

List B
China Clay Council
Focus Committee on Information Technology Standards
Joint Optoelectronics Research Scheme Assessment Committee
Joint Optoelectronics Research Scheme Displays Assessment Committee
Standing Advisory Committee on Patents
Standing Advisory Committee on Trade Marks
Technology Transfer Services Advisory Committee

List C
Technology Requirements Board
Sectoral Advisory Committees:
Advanced Manufacturing Technology
Applied Electronics
Aviation
Biotechnology
Computing, Software and Communications
Electrical Technology
Electronic Devices and Materials
Maritime Technology
Mechanical Engineering
Metals, Minerals and Reclamation
Standards, Quality and Measurement
Non-Metrallic Materials and Chemicals
Process Plant
Textiles and Other Manufactures
Vehicle

TRANSPORT

Motorway Cones

4. **Mr. Stern:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many miles of motorway were coned on 10 January.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: About 30 miles of motorway at 16 sites were subject to lane closures for major maintenance works; there may also have been some closures for minor and emergency works; we do not keep records of these.

Vehicle Mileage

5. **Mr. Waller:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what has been the percentage change in vehicle mileage on roads in England since 1982.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: 22 per cent.

London Underground (Rodents)

6. **Ms. Gordon:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement on the extent of rodent infestation on the London Underground system.

Mr. David Mitchell: No. This is entirely a matter for London Underground Limited.

London Underground Ltd.

7. **Mr. Simon Hughes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he has any plans to put any of the work of London Underground Ltd. out to competitive tender; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. David Mitchell: Neither my right hon. Friend nor I are responsible for putting work out to tender.

Parliament has placed on London
obligation to see that tenders
appropriate.

Drink-Drivin

8. **Mr. John Marshall:** To ask th
Transport if he will make a staten
campaign against drinking and dri

Mr. Peter Bottomley: The Christ
round campaign stressed the impo
avoid drinking and driving, an
providing non-alcoholic drinks to g
The July and October phases of th
a considerable impact on public att
will continue throughout 1988.

British Rail (Electrif

9. **Mr. Dalyell:** To ask the S
Transport if he will make a furt
discussions with British Rail on th
Edinburgh-Fauldhouse-Glasgow
Edinburgh-Linlithgow-Glasgow lin

Mr. David Mitchell: British R
whether there is a case for electrifyi

Roadbuilding Prio

10. **Mrs. Gillian Shephard:** To
State for Transport if he has any
priorities in roadbuilding.

Mr. Channon: My objectives
Britain remain the reduction of tra
economic growth, the removal of
unsuitable roads in towns and
enhancement of road safety. All the
programme meet one or more of the
them achieve all three, and I have no

Aircraft Noise

11. **Mr. Higgins:** To ask the S
Transport when next he plans to mee
Civil Aviation Authority to discuss

Mr. Channon: I frequently mee
discuss a whole range of topics with

Motorways (Hazard War

12. **Mr. Pike:** To ask the Sec
Transport what improvements he ex
hazard warning lights on the motor

Mr. Peter Bottomley: Improvem
design, operation and provision a
made. In 1988 trials will be underta
detect incidents and operate signals a
signals will be installed throughout
control system.

Manchester Internationa

13. **Mr. Hind:** To ask the Sec
Transport what level of developmen
for Manchester International airpor
eight years.

Mr. Channon: Approvals have been given which have allowed capital expenditure by Manchester airport totalling £89·9 million over the eight years ending in 1986-87. A table showing the annual figures is being printed in the *Official Report*.

Approvals have been given which have allowed the following levels of capital expenditure by Manchester International airport:

Financial year	*Expenditure £ million*
1979-80	8·4
1980-81	7·0
1981-82	10·5
1982-83	7·1
1983-84	10·2
1984-85	11·5
1985-86	17·8
1986-87	17·4

Sources:
1979-80 to 1985-86: Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy "Local Authority Airports and Statistics".
1986-87: Monopolies and Mergers Commission Report "Manchester Airport plc".

British Rail

14. **Mr. A. J. Beith** (Berwick upon Tweed): To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when he last met the chairman of British Rail; and what matters were discussed.

Mr. Channon: I last met the chairman on 3 December and discussed a wide range of matters of current interest.

British Rail Engineering Ltd

15. **Mrs. Dunwoody:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what has been the investment in new machinery in British Rail Engineering Ltd. workshops at Crewe for each year from 1985-86 to 1987-88.

Mr. David Mitchell: BREL has provided the following figures for investment in new machinery and associated reorganisation programmes at Crewe:

Year	*£ Million*
1985-86	2·0
1986-87	4·0
1987-88 (Forecast)	1·6

Figures are rounded to the nearest £100,000.

Investment Finance

16. **Mr. Corbyn** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how much investment finance his Department has provided for London Regional Transport and British Rail's Network SouthEast for each of the last three years.

Mr. David Mitchell: Investment by London Regional Transport and British Rail's Network SouthEast has been as follows:

			£ Million
	1984-85	1985-86	1986-87
NSE	[1]125	125	129
LRT	[1]192	226	241

[1] Adjusted from 15 month figure January 1985—March 1986.

British Rail (Electrification)

17. **Mr. Gregory:** To ask the Secretar Transport when he expects the first stretch Edinburgh electrification scheme to becom

Mr. David Mitchell: A full electric servic to Huntingdon and Peterborough has been May 1987. Services to Leeds are now expe August 1988, a year earlier than originally

London Regional Transport

19. **Mr. Tony Banks:** To ask the Secreta Transport what is his policy towards fu revenue subsidy for London Regional Tra

Mr. David Mitchell: It is not expected need further revenue support after the end financial year, but substantial grants will made to finance capital investment.

20. **Mr. Chapman:** To ask the Secretar Transport if he will make a statemen investment in London Regional Transport's in the current and the next financial y particular reference to plans for capital expe Northern line.

Mr. David Mitchell: Capital expenditur the underground is expected to be £199 mi in excess of £200 million next year. Curren Northern line include an additional eight tr and investment of £45 million over the next continuing station modernisation, lifts a signalling and better communications information systems.

Foreign Lorries

21. **Mr. Flynn:** To ask the Secretary Transport, when the surveillance of for increased by 50 per cent., what percentag number of foreign lorries will be checked fo at ports and elsewhere.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: The 8,800 forei expect to weigh this year are about three p total number of inward journeys. Many carried out by regular visitors whose cumu of being weighed during the year are highe

Civil Aviation (Competition)

22. **Mr. Steen:** To ask the Secretary Transport what representations he has re level of competition in civil aviation.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: We have received r from several hon. Members, airlines, ot parties and members of the public about va policy issues.

Manningtree Station

23. **Mr. Yeo:** To ask the Secretary Transport if he will pay an official visit to station.

Mr. David Mitchell: I have no plans to

Freight Transport

24. **Mr. Darling:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what representations he has received in connection with the charges made for transporting freight on the rail network in the United Kingdom.

Mr. David Mitchell: None recently.

National Dock Labour Scheme

25. **Mr. Butler:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when he last met representatives of the national dock labour scheme employers; and what subjects were discussed.

Mr. David Mitchell: The chairmen of the British Ports Association and the National Association of Port Employers met my right hon. Friend on 10 July 1987 and expressed their concerns about the workings of the dock labour scheme.

European Air Fares

26. **Mr. Heathcoat-Amory:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what further steps he is taking to encourage moves towards the liberalisation of European air fares; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: The EC liberalisation package came into force on 1 January this year. It is an important step in opening up aviation in the EC to market forces. It gives airlines the opportunity to introduce lower fares, to decide for themselves what capacity to operate, to open up new routes and to compete more vigorously on routes already served, within a framework of fair competition.

It is only a first step. The Council is committed to bringing in further measures during 1990 as part of the process of completing the internal market by 1992.

We have already negotiated even more liberal arrangements with Germany and the Benelux countries. We shall be seeking to build on this in further bilateral discussions with other member states.

Saltash Tunnel

Mr. John Browne: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what is the estimated cost of the Saltash tunnel now under construction; and what is its design traffic flow.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: The estimate cost of this 410m long tunnel is £4·2 million and its traffic capacity is 4,500 vehicles per hour.

Hatfield, Waltham Cross and Holmesdale Tunnels

Mr. John Browne: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what were the total costs of the construction of the Hatfield, Waltham Cross and Holmesdale tunnels, respectively.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: The latest estimate of the final cost of the A1(M) Hatfield tunnel is £30 million. The two M25 tunnels at Holmesdale near Waltham Cross and Bell common, south of Epping, cost £19·45 million and £14·82 million respectively. These figures are for the civil engineering, mechanical and electrical works. They exclude land-compensation costs and the costs of the actual carriageways through the tunnels.

Rochester Way and Sidcup Bypass

Mr. John Browne: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what are the design traffic flows in the A2 Rochester Way relief road and the A20 Sidcup bypass.

Mr. Channon: The Rochester Way relief road was designed by the Greater London council which estimated in 1980 that the busiest section of the road, when opened, would carry 3,900 vehicles per hour (westbound) in the morning peak and that off-peak and eastbound morning peak figures would be approximately 1,500 vehicles per hour.

The A20 Sidcup bypass improvement scheme was designed for 41,000 vehicles two-way per 16-hour day including a maximum of 4,200 vehicles per hour during the morning peak (1991 figures) on the busiest section between Frognal corner and Crittalls corner.

London River Crossing

Mr. John Browne: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what is the design traffic flow for the A406 London river crossing.

Mr. Channon: The Thames bridge section of the proposed East London river crossing has forecast traffic flows of 5,700 (low growth) and 6,200 (high growth) vehicles per hour in the morning peak in 1991.

Enfield (Bounds Green—Halls Lane Improvements)

Mr. John Browne: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what is the total estimated cost of the three improvements to the A406 in the London borough of Enfield between Bounds Green and Halls lane; and what are the average 16 hour peak traffic flows on these sections of the road.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: There are four improvement schemes in preparation or under construction on the A406 North Circular road in the London borough of Enfield. The total estimated cost, including works, land and fees, at December 1987 prices for each scheme is:

Scheme	*Cost £ million*
Bounds Green—Green Lanes (in preparation)	76·72
Great Cambridge (A10) junction (under construction)	28·13
Silver Street—A1010 (in preparation)	39·68
Dysons Road—Hall Lane (in preparation)	64.54

The average 16-hour traffic flow along the length of the A406 in the London borough of Enfield varies between 35,000 and 45,000 vehicles.

M3 (Sunbury-Popham)

Mr. John Browne: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what was the total cost of construction of the M3 motorway between Sunbury and Popham.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: This section of the M3 was constructed between 1968 and 1974. The total cost at outturn prices, including ancillary works and land, was £46·332 million.

Ferries (Passenger Restraints)

Dr. Godman: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he has any proposals regarding the carriage of passenger restraints on United Kingdom registered passenger ferries; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. David Mitchell: No. The master is provided with powers for keeping order on passenger ferries under section 287 of the Merchant Shipping Act 1984. It is for ferry operators to decide whether to provide passenger restraints.

Aircraft (Passenger Restraints)

Dr. Godman: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what discussions his Department has recently held with the Civil Aviation Authority regarding the carriage of passenger restraints on all United Kingdom commercial passenger aircraft; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: None.

Drivers (Accident Records)

Mr. Atkinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what research his Department has carried out into the accident records of drivers in the first year of holding a full driving licence.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: Past work has focused on the age of the driver rather than the period that has elapsed since passing the driving test. A project over the next two years is identifying the training and driving experience of a sample of L-drivers and reviewing their driving history 12 months later.

Transport Supplementary Grant

Mr. Pike: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when he proposes to announce allocations arising from bids for the additional £19 million supplementary transport allocation for 1987-88; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: Sixty-nine of the 108 local highway authorities in England submitted bids for supplementary capital allocations for 1987-88. These bids have been carefully scrutinised.

Additional allocations of £18 million for capital expenditure on local roads will help local authorities to carry out additional minor improvements to their roads in this financial year, including accident investigation and prevention measures. They will make possible acceleration of some authorities' programmes, maintenance of progress in the face of cost increases on important major schemes such as the north-south route in Enfield and the Penzance primary distributor road and the bringing forward of urban traffic management schemes in Birmingham, Newcastle and Camden.

It has also been agreed that Colchester borough council will be allocated an additional £242,000 for public transport. The allocation of the remainder of the £19 million is still under consideration.

Details of the additional allocations to local highway authorities are set out in the table. Local authorities are being informed individually of their own additional allocations. No authority gets a larger allocation than Lancashire.

The Distribution of Supplementary Capital Allocations for Local Roads 1987-88

Authority	*Supplementary Allocation (£'000)*
Berkshire	350
Cheshire	150
Cleveland	40
Cornwall	400
Cumbria	750
Derbyshire	700
Devon	600
Dorset	560
Durham	340
East Sussex	450
Essex	400
Gloucestershire	90
Hampshire	350
Hereford & Worcester	120
Humberside	650
Isle of Wight	160
Kent	320
Lancashire	1,000
Lincolnshire	120
Northamptonshire	580
Northumberland	200
Oxfordshire	400
Shropshire	200
Somerset	220
Staffordshire	200
Suffolk	400
Warwickshire	280
Wiltshire	170
Total Shire Counties	10,200
Bolton	100
Bury	90
Manchester	520
Oldham	100
Rochdale	80
Tameside	80
Knowsley	100
Liverpool	400
St. Helens	80
Wirral	100
Gateshead	200
Newcastle	980
Barnsley	260
Doncaster	260
Sheffield	400
Calderdale	180
Kirklees	160
Leeds	100
Wakefield	70
Birmingham	730
Dudley	160
Solihull	120
Walsall	200
Wolverhampton	500
Total Metropolitan Districts	5,970
Bexley	180
Camden	300
Enfield	1,000
Hackney	200
Newham	30
Tower Hamlets	120
Total London	1,830
Total England	18,000

Mr. Pike: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what representations he has received following the announcement of the 1988-89 transport supplementary grant; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: I have received eight letters from hon. Members or direct from local authorities. Most are about Lancashire's capital allocation, the third largest of any shire county.

Mr. Pike: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will publish in the *Official Report* details of the capital allocations for road schemes for 1988-89 made in the transport supplementary grant and give details in each case of the bid submitted by each authority and the allocation expenses as a percentage of that bid.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: The information for the 108 local highway authorities in England is set out in the tables. The relationship between each local authority's bid and the capital allocation provided is determined by the relative merits of each authority's proposed programme as described in the transport policies and programme documents submitted to the Department and the total capital allocations available.

Capital allocation for roads 1988-89

Authority	*Bid £ million*	*Allocation £ million*	*Allocation as percentage of bid* Per cent
City of London	1·792	0·650	36·3
Barking and Dagenham	8·749	6·100	69·7
Barnet	2·201	1·040	47·3
Bexley	3·619	2·750	76·0
Brent	1·935	1·210	62·5
Bromley	10·671	8·820	82·7
Camden	4·075	0·360	8·8
Croydon	2·696	0·730	27·1
Ealing	15·115	6·360	42·1
Enfield	33·088	22·850	69·1
Greenwich	6·085	3·390	55·7
Hackney	6·389	1·700	26·6
Hammersmith and Fulham	0·285	0·280	98·2
Haringey	10·482	8·320	79·4
Harrow	11·599	9·590	82·7
Havering	2·895	1·280	44·2
Hillingdon	16·610	10·460	63·0
Hounslow	3·267	1·750	53·6
Islington	1·697	0·410	24·2
Kensington and Chelsea	1·653	1·120	67·8
Kingston upon Thames	6·502	5·630	86·6
Lambeth	1·783	0·780	43·7
Lewisham	4·545	2·410	53·0
Merton	8·146	6·750	82·9
Newham	7·434	2·650	35·6
Redbridge	2·829	1·910	67·5
Richmond upon Thames	1·410	0·700	49·6
Southwark	6·848	4·350	63·5
Sutton	7·155	2·580	36·1
Tower Hamlets	1·763	0·560	31·8
Waltham Forest	2·670	1·670	62·5
Wandsworth	7·150	2·420	33·8
Westminster	13·403	1·490	11·1
Bolton	4·780	4·030	84·3
Bury	3·369	2·280	67·7
Manchester	15·554	7·780	50·0
Oldham	9·368	5·240	55·9
Rochdale	4·266	1·300	30·5
Salford	12·250	7·990	65·2
Stockport	2·650	0·940	35
Tameside	3·125	1·040	33
Trafford	4·431	1·760	39
Wigan	5·342	4·760	89
Knowsley	1·909	0·720	37
Liverpool	7·680	3·510	45
St. Helens	2·036	1·550	76
Sefton	2·111	1·160	55
Wirral	3·833	2·870	74
Barnsley	3·399	1·550	45
Doncaster	3·553	1·890	53
Rotherham	2·549	1·190	46
Sheffield	12·009	2·780	23
Gateshead	5·740	4·300	74
Newcastle upon Tyne	9·750	5·480	56
North Tyneside	1·600	1·000	62
South Tyneside	4·522	1·720	38
Sunderland	6·673	3·790	56
Birmingham	19·861	9·570	48
Coventry	7·749	4·600	59
Dudley	6·561	2·360	36
Sandwell	4·692	2·280	48
Solihull	2·216	1·260	56
Walsall	6·548	4·770	72
Wolverhampton	10·267	7·830	76
Bradford	7·615	4·280	56
Calderdale	3·455	1·120	32
Kirklees	6·311	3·450	54
Leeds	7·745	4·460	57
Wakefield	6·568	1·320	20
Avon	14·300	10·450	73
Bedfordshire	8·479	6·710	79
Berkshire	13·420	9·240	68
Buckinghamshire	5·582	2·740	49
Cambridgeshire	12·695	6·670	52
Cheshire	9·870	4·410	44
Cleveland	12·738	8·720	68
Cornwall	9·571	6·560	68
Cumbria	4·030	3·410	84
Derbyshire	8·805	5·190	58
Devon	17·446	9·780	56
Dorset	18·210	10·190	56
Durham	8·237	4·550	55
East Sussex	15·084	6·300	41
Essex	23·756	18·990	79
Gloucestershire	7·340	4·070	55
Hampshire	16·569	10·450	63
Hereford & Worcester	7·270	4·620	63
Hertfordshire	10·699	8·760	81
Humberside	12·642	10·420	82
Isle of Wight	4·082	1·940	47
Kent	40·695	21·610	53
Lancashire	27·421	13·520	49
Leicestershire	18·239	13·420	73
Lincolnshire	6·140	3·010	49
Norfolk	9·880	5·090	51
Northamptonshire	12·440	10·390	83
Northumberland	3·981	1·590	39
North Yorkshire	9·361	5·210	55
Nottinghamshire	12·204	5·520	45
Oxfordshire	10·777	4·440	41
Shropshire	7·897	5·110	64
Somerset	13·713	8·920	65
Staffordshire	13·815	7·570	54
Suffolk	7·650	4·710	61
Surrey	11·681	8·030	68
Warwickshire	7·556	4·080	54
West Sussex	9·444	7·330	77
Wiltshire	6·429	2·280	35

M6—Heysham Link

Mr. Pike: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport whether he proposes to give trunk road status to the M6—Heysham link; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: We are prepared to consider financial support through the transport supplementary grant system. Its construction is a matter for Lancashire county council. We concluded last year that there is no compelling case for building the link as a trunk road.

M66 (Stockport)

Mr. Andrew F. Bennett: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what discussions are taking place about providing a motorway service station on the M66 in Stockport.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: None. A maintenance compound is proposed at Brinnington and has been discussed with Stockport borough council as the planning authority.

Essex Road—Old Street Stations (Fire)

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what information he has about the cause and circumstances surrounding a fire between Essex Road and Old Street stations on the Finsbury Park to Moorgate line on 16 December 1987; if any inquiry is to be held; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. David Mitchell: There was no fire on the railway between Essex Road and Old Street stations on 16 December 1987. Trains were stopped, passengers were detrained and the fire brigade examined the tunnels as a precaution after smoke was reported. However, no source for the smoke was found and it was considered most likely that smoke had been drawn into the system from the surface down a ventilation shaft.

Piccadilly Line (Fire)

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what information he has about the circumstances in which an underground train drove through a fire on the Piccadilly line near Knightsbridge on 12 December 1987; if any inquiry is to be held; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. David Mitchell: On 12 December 1987 at about 11.35 an incident, which was not statutorily reportable, occurred on the Piccadilly line at Knightsbridge station. A small quantity of rubbish on the track at the end of the platform was seen to be smouldering. It was dealt with by the station staff without it being necessary to close the station or to stop the running of trains. The fire brigade was not called.

Reprocessed Plutonium (Japan)

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to his reply of 8 December, *Official Report*, column 120, from which airport British Nuclear Fuels intends to fly reprocessed plutonium to Japan.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: We understand that British Nuclear Fuels' current preferred option is to use Prestwick airport for this traffic, which will not however take place for several years.

London Underground (Defect Reports)

Mr. Andrew F. Bennett: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many engineering insurance company defect reports were received by the Health and Safety Executive for London Underground lifts and escalators in 1986 and in 1987; and how many were acted on by the Health and Safety Executive.

Mr. David Mitchell: None. The Offices, Shops and Railway Premises (Hoists and Lifts) Regulations 1968 require that lifts shall be examined every six months by a "competent person". The use of an engineering insurance company is not mandatory and London Underground Ltd. uses suitably qualified members of its own staff as competent persons. If the examiner makes the continued use of a lift conditional upon specified defects being remedied, a copy of the report must be sent to the enforcing authority. During 1986 and 1987, one such defect report was forwarded to the railway inspectorate as agents of the Health and Safety Executive. There are no corresponding statutory provisions for escalators.

Settle-Carlisle Railway Line

Mr. Adley: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a further statement on the Settle to Carlisle railway line.

Mr. David Mitchell: I am consulting the relevant local authorities to discover how important they consider the restoration of the Ribblehead viaduct and what contributions towards it they are prepared to make.

Transport Joint Boards

Dr. Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will list the budgeted and estimated outturn where available of total expenditure of each transport joint board in 1986-87 and 1987-88.

Mr. David Mitchell: Those total current expenditure figures which are presently available are shown in the table.

£ million

	Greater Manchester	*Merseyside*	*South Yorkshire*	*Tyne and Wear*	*West Midlands*	*West Yorkshire*
1986-87						
Original budgets[1]	74·5	81·5	59·3	63·9	58·1	61·3
Revised estimates[2]	74·9	81·5	59·6	62·2	59·5	62·4
Outturns[3]	74·6	—	—	61·6	59·6	—
1987-88						
Original budgets[1]	78·8	66·95	46·1	56·8	56·0	59·3

Sources:
1 Rate and Expenditure Return 1987.
2 Rate and Expenditure Return 1988.
3 Rates Fund Services Summary and Block Grant Claim Form 1986-87.

Dr. Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will list the original and financial expenditure levels underlying precept limits, and the original and final precept limits set, for each transport joint board in 1986-87, 1987-88, and 1988-89.

Mr. David Mitchell: The relevant figures are sho the table.

£

	Greater Manchester	Merseyside	South Yorkshire	Tyne and Wear	West Midlands	West Yo
1986-87						
Original EL (£)	74·3	75·2	50·5	60·0	54·2	
Final EL (£)	83·5	81·3	59·3	63·9	58·1	
Proposed PL (p)	19·99	44·88	44·07	24·27	10·3	
Final PL (p)	19·99	44·38	44·07	24·27	10·32	
1987-88						
Original EL (£)	74·1	67·7	45·7	56·6	55·1	
Final EL (£)	75·528	69·054	46·614	57·732	56·202	
Proposed PL (p)	12·9	28·5	34·28	14·52	7·82	
Final PL (p)	12·96	28·49	34·28	14·51	7·81	
1988-89						
Original EL (£)	80·0	58·5	41·5	53·5	59·5	
Final EL (£)	80·0	64·1	41·5	53·5	65·0	
Proposed PL (p)	15·58	26·5	30·35	9·58	10·74	

Final precept limits for 1988-89 have not yet been set.

Bus Deregulation (Cumbria County Council)

Mr. Curry: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what information he has as to the saving made by Cumbria county council as a result of bus deregulation.

Mr. David Mitchell: Cumbria county council's spending on revenue support for passenger transport in 1985-86, the last full year before deregulation, was £1·26 million. In 1987-88 it has budgeted to spend £500,000, a reduction of £760,000 or 60 per cent.

Drink-Drive Casualties

Mr. Ward: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what private sector initiatives he has supported to reduce drink-drive casualties.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: We support and welcome the growing number of private sector initiatives aimed at reducing the appalling toll of death and injury on our roads caused by drinking and driving.

The key initiative is the Brewers' Society's "Wheelwatch" promotion. This encourages publicans to take a more responsible attitude towards discouraging drinking and driving by encouraging drivers and riders to choose non or low alcoholic drinks, offering to order a taxi if alcohol has been drunk, and so on.

Among other imaginative and important initiatives of which we are aware are:

Courage ran TV advertisements over the Christmas period against drinking and driving. Also offered customers free public transport home on new year's eve.

Whitbread launched new low-alcohol beer in December.

General Accident sponsored Gallup poll survey of drinking and driving.

Everards brewery has launched its own versio "Wheelwatch".

Youngs brewery offered free bus passes to custo between 21-31 December.

Shell Oil UK — "travellers' check" shops on f forecourts selling low or non alcoholic beers and wines

Ford Motor Co. Ltd. — "good driving" talks to employees in liaison with Essex police. Planning adva driving courses for company drivers.

Sponsorship of public transport by Fosters lager or year's eve.

Distribution of cards, menus, posters or le highlighting non-alcoholic drinks, by Trust House F Dairy Crest; CPM/Marketing Week; Clausthaler; Licence News; Orangina.

Manchester International Airport (US Carrier Acc

Mr. Alfred Morris: To ask the Secretary of Stat Transport what was the outcome of the recent mee between his Department and representatives of the Un States State and Transportation Departments' tea terms of expediting United States carrier access Manchester International airport; and if he will ma statement.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: There has been no formal mee between the Department and representatives of the Un States State and Transportation Departments to dis wider access to Manchester International airport United States airlines. A letter was handed to them January setting out details of a five-year development with a view to providing opportunities for United St passenger airlines to serve Manchester on a sched basis. The plan was developed in consultation interested parties including Manchester Internati airport authority. It is intended to form a basis discussion.

The United States Government will consider these proposals and respond as soon as possible.

Officials of the Department have indicated that (in exchange, as a quid pro quo) we would be seeking enhanced opportunities for United Kingdom airlines to serve parts of the United States market which are not currently open to us.

SCOTLAND

Rural Transport

43. **Mr. Hood:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what representations he has received about the availability and quality of rural transport *(a)* in the Strathclyde area and *(b)* in the Clydesdale area.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: Over the past 12 months, two representations have been received about bus services in the rural areas of Strathclyde including one representation about bus services in the Clydesdale area. I have also received one representation about rail services in the Clydesdale area.

Post Mortems

Mr. Galbraith: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will give the number of post mortems done under fiscal licence for each year since 1980.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: The information is only available from July 1984 and, so far as can be ascertained, is as follows:

	Number
1984 (July—December)	2,622
1985	5,317
1986	5,239
1987 (January—October)	4,342

Mr. Galbraith: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will give the number of post mortems done under fiscal licence in National Health Service hospitals for each year since 1980.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: I regret that the information is not available.

"Birds, Bogs and Forestry"

Mr. Maclennan: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what response he proposes to make to the Nature Conservancy Council's report "Birds, Bogs and Forestry"; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Rifkind: I am currently considering the report and I hope to make a statement early in the new year.

Education Authorities (Expenditure)

Mr. David Marshall: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how much each education authority in Scotland spends per pupil per year on *(a)* textbooks, *(b)* materials and supplies, *(c)* computers, *(d)* video recorders, *(e)* video cameras, *(f)* television sets and *(g)* paper and reprographics.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: Information is not held centrally in the precise form requested. The information set out in the table, which has been compiled from local authority financial returns, gives information on expenditure p primary and secondary pupil on *(a)* text and library boo and *(b)* educational tools, equipment and materials 1985-86, the latest year for which this information available.

Expenditure per pupil (primary and secondary) 1985-86
£s at out-turn pric

Region	*Text and library books*	*Educational too equipment a materi*
Borders	15·64	0·
Central	[1]33·72	[1]n.
Dumfries and Galloway	9·45	25·
Fife	8·81	30·
Grampian	7·94	24·
Highland	[1]37·53	[1]n.
Lothian	7·22	19·
Strathclyde	8·24	19·
Tayside	7·22	15·
Orkney	10·81	36·
Shetland	12·60	14·
Western Isles	12·60	9·

[1] In recording their expenditure these authorities do n distinguish between amounts spent on books and on equipmen materials. In other cases the recording of expenditure on these tw items is not necessarily consistent between authorities.

Cataract Operations

Mr. McTaggart: To ask the Secretary of State fo Scotland how many cataract operations were carried ou in *(a)* Glasgow, *(b)* Strathclyde and *(c)* Scotland withi the last five years; and what is the approximate cost o such operations.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: The cost of cataract operation is not available. The number of operations carried out as follows:

	Greater Glasgow	*Strathclyde*	*Scotland*
1981	1,385	2,320	5,115
1982	1,129	2,003	4,373
1983	1,857	3,136	6,633
1984	1,836	3,026	6,904
1985	1,737	2,992	6,882

Barlinnie Prison

Mr. McTaggart: To ask the Secretary of State fo Scotland if he will give the optimum figure for prison officers and inmates at Barlinnie prison and the actua number of prison officers and inmates at the present time

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: 387 is the approved complement for grades VI-VIII (the former prison office grades)—which will be adjusted as implementation o the fresh start initiative proceeds. The number of grade VI VIII staff assigned to Barlinnie prison on a permanen basis was 388 at 1 January 1988. Because of unusually high levels of sickness, a further 29 staff had been temporarily assigned to Barlinnie from other establishments. At tha date, 21 civilian staff were also occupying specialist prison officer posts.

The design capacity is 983 (excluding segregation and hospital facilities). The number of inmates on 5 January 1988 was 1,015.

Greater Glasgow Health Board Area (Nursing Staff)

Mr. McTaggart: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will give the ratio of nursing staff to patients in the Greater Glasgow health board area for each year since 1979.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: The information requested is not available centrally, but the following table shows the average number of whole-time equivalent nursing staff[1] per occupied bed in each year to 30 September:

	Ratio
1979	1:1
1980	1:2
1981	1:2
1982	1:3
1983	1:3
1984	1:3
1985	1:3
1986	1:3
[2]1987	1:3

[1] Includes qualified, unqualified and learner nurses.
[2] 31 March 1987.

Children in Prison

Mr. McTaggart: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what action he plans to take on the recommendations contained in the report of Her Majesty's inspector of prisons regarding children in prison.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: In "Children in Prison" published on 17 July 1986, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Prisons for Scotland recommended a procedure to monitor the number of children placed in penal custody and to publish annually the information which was obtained. My right hon. Friend the Member for Ayr (Mr. Younger) accepted this recommendation in his response to the report.

It is our policy that the use of penal establishments for detaining children should be kept to a minimum. We have made substantial grant aid available to local authorities and voluntary school managers to provide additional secure accommodation as an alternative to penal establishments for remand and assessment of children. We are also encouraging local arrangements to reduce the use of unruly certificates by courts under the Criminal Procedure (Scotland) Act 1975 to commit young people to prison. In 1986 the number of children under unruly certificates fell to less than half that for 1985.

Children subject to residential training orders under sections 206 and 413 of the Criminal Procedure (Scotland) Act 1975 are now only exceptionally placed in penal establishments. In recent years no child has been so detained under a section 413 order and under th Justice (Scotland) Act 1987, such placement un 413 orders is abolished with effect from 1 Apr

Information on numbers of children receiv held in custody on remand or on sentence is now in the statistical bulletin "Prison Statistics Scotla is available in the Library.

Remanded Children

Mr. McTaggart: To ask the Secretary of Scotland how many children under the age o were held on remand in each of the last five yea these, how many were subsequently given sentences.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: The nu children aged 14 or 15 received into prison un certificates made by the courts under sections 2 of the Criminal Procedure (Scotland) Act 1975

	Number
1983	144
1984	138
1985	133
1986	50

No information is available on the number of were subsequently given custodial sentences.

Figures for 1987 are not yet available.

Galloway (Radioactive Contaminatio

Mrs. Ray Michie: To ask the Secretary of Scotland what plans he has to initiate a radioactive contamination in Galloway.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: Regular s Dumfries and Galloway are included in the prog monitoring of environmental radioactivity in organised on behalf of the Secretary of Stat Majesty's industrial pollution inspectorate. recent summary of the findings is in the Development Department statistical bulletin No. which is in the Library.

Forestry

Mr. Ron Davies: To ask the Secretary of Scotland if he will give the name of the membe Forestry Commission regional advisory c appointed primarily to represent the envir interest.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: The informa follows:

Committee	*Name of Member*	*Nominating Body or Bodies*
North England	Lady Elizabeth Kirk	Countryside Commission
East England	C. Stratton	Council for the Protection of Rural England
West England	R. Jarman	Royal Society for Nature Conservation
		Royal Society for the Protection of Birds
	D. W. Hildred	Ramblers Association
Wales	Mrs. D. M. Raikes	Countryside Commission
		Council for the Protection of Rural Wales
		Royal Society for Nature Conservation
North Scotland	Professor C. Gimingham	Scottish Wildlife Trust

Committee	Name of Member	Nominating Body or Bodies
Mid Scotland	B. S. Brookes	Nature Conservancy Council
South Scotland	T. Croft	Countryside Commission for Scotland Royal Society for the Protection of Birds

Mr. Ron Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will list the dates in 1987 when the director general of the Forestry Commission met the following groups *(a)* Countryside Link and Wildlife Link, *(b)* Forestry Industry Committee of Great Britain and *(c)* Timber Growers United Kingdom.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: The information is as follows:

(a) 27 January

(b) 18 March, accompanying the Secretary of State for Scotland, and 1 December at the launch of the committee's report "Beyond 2000".

(c) No meeting has taken place specifically with Timber Growers United Kingdom. The director general has, however, been present at a number of meetings during the year at which they were represented, along with other bodies.

Scottish Fire Service Training School, Gullane

Mr. Eadie: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will publish the report of the inquiry carried out by Her Majesty's inspector of fire services regarding allegations of humiliation and degradation at the Scottish Fire Service Training School in Gullane.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: No. The report was private and contained information which was given to Her Majesty's inspector of fire services on the understanding that confidentiality would be observed. However, the findings and recommendations of the report were contained in a very detailed Scottish Office news release published on 16 September 1987, copies of which have been placed in the Library. Subsequently, Lothian and Borders fire board was given a detailed resume of the inquiry and I shall be meeting representatives of the board on 22 January to discuss the matter further.

Hypothermia

Mr. McTaggart: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will give the number of hypothermia and cold-related deaths in Glasgow for each year since 1979.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: The information is as follows:

Deaths mentioning hypothermia, Glasgow city, 1979 to 1986

	Number
1979	66
1980	30
1981	48
1982	36
1983	37
1984	42
1985	35
1986	52

Fine Defaulters

Mr. Worthington: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland when he will respond to the Association of Directors of Social Work document on fine defaulters.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: We shall consider what, if any, action to take on the recommendations contained in the report of the Association of Directors of Work on fine defaulters once we have the results current study of the effectiveness of the 15 fines o appointed to work in the sheriff courts.

We expect the results of the study to be available spring of this year.

Mr. Worthington: To ask the Secretary of Sta Scotland what proposals he has to reduce the num fine defaulters in prison.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: The imposition imprisonment in case of fine default is a matter f courts. The Government have created 15 posts o officers in the sheriff courts and a research study progress into the effectiveness of fines officers in red the number of fine defaulters sent to prison.

Intermediate Treatment Provisions

Mr. Worthington: To ask the Secretary of Sta Scotland if he plans to extend intermediate trea provisions for over 18s in Scotland.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: The equivalent to many o services provided for those under 18 and describe "intermediate treatment" is available to offenders ov age of 18. These include supported accommoda assistance to offenders and their families, in associ with non-custodial disposals available to the courts.

It is the Government's intention to develop and ex the range and extent of non-custodial disposals. We reduced the minimum period of a probation order t months and enabled a requirement as to compensatio be included as a condition of a probation order. We also indicated our willingness to change the fundin community service so that local authorities will receiv per cent. funding for agreed expenditure.

Remand Prisoners

Mr. Worthington: To ask the Secretary of State Scotland what proposals he has to reduce the numbe remand prisoners in Scotland.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: The decision to rem in any particular case is a matter for the courts; and number of persons on remand is governed by the co decisions. The results of a pilot study on remands wi published shortly. The Scottish Office is about undertake a detailed study of bail and remand decis and is funding a feasibility study into the provision of accommodation for those who might otherwise remanded in custody because they have no fixed addr

Parole

Mr. Worthington: To ask the Secretary of State Scotland whether he has any proposals to amend parole regulations for Scotland.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given by my right hon. and learned Friend to the hon. Member for Caithness and Sutherland (Mr. Maclennan) on Wednesday 16 December 1987.

Mentally Ill People (Prisons)

Mr. Worthington: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what proposals he has to reduce the number of mentally ill people in prison.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: The initial disposal of individuals on remand or sentence is a matter for the courts. There is now a wide range of disposals, other than prison, open to the courts in dealing with individuals who may be mentally ill or mentally handicapped. In addition, the courts can decide to obtain a psychiatric assessment, in a mental hospital or in a penal establishment, before deciding on the most appropriate disposal.

A number of schemes have been developed locally under which offenders may be diverted to psychiatric assistance rather than to prosecution in the courts. The largest such scheme is in Glasgow and the operation of this scheme is being evaluated in a research study funded by the Scottish Home and Health Department.

The courts have powers to remand individuals, in appropriate cases, to hospital rather than to prison pre-trial or awaiting sentence. The powers to remand untried individuals to hospital have existed in Scotland for many years. A new "interim hospital order", appropriate to certain convicted offenders, was introduced in 1983 and is regularly being used by the courts. Decisions on individual cases, however, need to be taken on the evidence and reports available to the court.

For those individuals who are sent to prison either on remand awaiting trial or sentence or after sentence, appropriate medical care, including the services of visiting consultant psychiatrists, is available. Visiting psychiatrists will advise the medical officer of the establishment on any cases which are drawn to their attention and the facilities or treatment which might be available elsewhere.

The process of transfer from prison to a mental hospital depends on clinical judgment in individual cases. Closer liaison has been developed between the Scottish prison service and the State hospital Carstairs, and with other mental hospitals on cases where transfer to such a hospital might be appropriate.

There are many forms of short-lived emotional stress or more persistent behavioural disorders which would not necessarily benefit from transfer to a mental hospital. Any individual who has a mental disorder which appears to require assessment or treatment ina psychiatric hospital will be carefully assessed. All requests to transfer a prisoner to psychiatric hospital are now monitored centrally to see whether there are recurrent difficulties or any general issues which need to be addressed.

In 1986, 63 inmates in penal establishments were diagnosed as suffering from psychosis. In the same year there were 35 transfers of prisoners to mental hospitals, 18 of these to the State hospital, Carstairs and 17 to other mental hospitals. This is a significant increase in the number of transfers which took place in 1985 and earlier years as a result of the closer liaison which has been developed in the assessment and consideration of individual cases.

Offenders (Alcoholism)

Mr. Worthington: To ask the Secretary Scotland if he will introduce alternatives to i for those offenders with drink problems.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: I am s offenders with drink problems can, upon co dealt with appropriately through the existi disposals available to the courts, both custo custodial. Some may, in place of pro appropriate cases, be diverted from the cri system in a number of ways including refer work or psychiatric assistance or to a designa similar facilities.

Airport (Rates)

Mr. Andrew Welsh: To ask the Secretary Scotland what information he has on *(a)* values of and *(b)* the rates paid by Scottish ai the British Airports Authority in each year s

Mr. Lang: This information is not held suggest that the hon. Member contacts concerned direct for the information.

Road Accidents (Gordon)

Mr. Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary Scotland (1) how many people have been seric in road accidents in the Gordon constituency i last five years;

(2) how many people have been killed in ro in the Gordon constituency in each of the la

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: The figures constituency are not available. However, the Gordon local authority district are as follows

	Killed	*S*
1982	14	
1983	18	
1984	15	
1985	23	
1986	15	

The figures for 1985 and 1986 have been the annual "Road Accidents, Scotland" series

Motoring Offences (Gordon)

Mr. Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary Scotland how many prosecutions there hav alcohol-related motoring offences in th constituency in which persons have been kille in each of the last five years.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: I regre information requested is not available.

Paisley College (Lady Lane Proper

Mr. Allen Adams: To ask the Secretary Scotland why he has refused Paisley college permission to borrow money required in resp property in Lady lane, Paisley.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: The proposal submi governors of Paisley college of technology

property development at Lady lane entailed a loan from a bank secured by a mortgage on property acquired from public funds. Such a loan would have constituted a contingent liability on the Exchequer which the Government were not prepared to accept.

Student Accommodation

Mr. Allen Adams: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if, in the light of increased demand for privately rented accommodation, he will give the provision of student accommodation a high priority in the coming year.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: Capital expenditure on student accommodation at the centrally funded colleges will continue to be considered against other priority proposals for educational capital expenditure.

Dinoseb

Mrs. Margaret Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what information he has about the use of the product Dinoseb in raspberry production in Scotland.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: In December 1986 it was announced that all approvals except for storage of the use of Dinoseb and chemically related products were to be suspended on evidence of birth defects in experimental animals.

In the spring of 1987 and on the recommendation of the Advisory Committee on Pesticides, the responsible Ministers agreed that the suspension should be relaxed to allow the use of Dinoseb only in Scotland on the raspberry variety Glen Clova for a limited period from 20 April to 29 May 1987 under strict and tightly supervised conditions. Dinoseb treatment is the only known means of controlling excessive cane vigour in Glen Clova, a variety which occupies some 75 per cent. of the total area of raspberry production in Scotland.

Since December 1986 the Advisory Committee on Pesticides has carried out a full review on Dinoseb and its recommendations are now being considered by Ministers; an announcement as to future use of the chemical will be made shortly.

Health Spending

Mrs. Margaret Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what proportion of Scottish gross domestic product is spent on health in Scotland; and if he will publish what information he has on the proportion of gross domestic product spent on health in (i) England, (ii) EEC member states, (iii) Norway, (iv) Sweden, (v) Denmark and (vi) Finland.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: The gross NHS expenditure on health services in Scotland in the year 1984 represented 8·2 per cent. of gross domestic product calculated at factor cost. The comparable figure for England was 6·2 per cent. These figures exaggerate, however, the difference in health expenditure levels in the two countries because they omit private sector expenditure on health and because gross domestic product per head of population is larger in England.

These figures are not comparable, however, with the normally-quoted international comparisons which are calculated on a different basis. In addition, different countries have different systems of providing and financing health care, and different procedur classifying and accounting for the expenditure. Su these substantial qualifications, the calculations Organisation for Economic Co-operation Development of the proportion of gross domestic at market prices spent on all health care in the countries listed in 1984 are as follows:

	Percentage
Belgium	6·2
Denmark	6·3
France	9·1
Germany	8·1
Greece	4·6
Ireland	8·0
Italy	7·2
Luxembourg	6·4
Netherlands	8·6
Portugal	5·5
Spain	5·8
United Kingdom	5·9
Finland	6·6
Norway	6·3
Sweden	9·4

Education Staff (Exchanges)

Mr. McLeish: To ask the Secretary of St Scotland what proposals he has for the interchange at a professional management level between authorities, educational institutions and the S Education Department.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: The advantages to be from the interchange of staff at professional mana levels are recognised, but have to be set against th to preserve continuity in such senior posts. There formal interchange scheme particular to this proposals are considered on their merits taking acc the nature and level of the posts and the can available on both sides.

Further Education Lecturers (Pay)

Mr. McLeish: To ask the Secretary of Sta Scotland if he will take steps to ensure that add funding will be made available to ensure th management side of the Scottish Joint Nego Committee (Further Education) is able to fund an to lecturers of an equivalent value to that given re to school teachers.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: The level of pay awa lecturers in further and higher education in Scotla matter for the Scottish joint negotiating com (further education), and it is for the management negotiate within limits of what can be afforded. December 1987, my right hon. and learned announced an increase in resources for additional ru costs at the centrally funded Colleges in 1988-89 understand that a settlement was reached for that at the SJNC meeting on 8 January. For local aut expenditure we have already announced a realisti support grant settlement for 1988-89 which provid a 9 per cent. increase in resources over the settleme 1987-88 and, on 8 January, a formal offer was made management side which the teachers' side is considering.

Loch Trool Forest Trail

Mr. Foulkes: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland who authorised the closure of Loch Trool forest trail on 15 November 1987; and under what powers.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: The Loch Trool forest trail was not closed to the public on 15 November 1987. A military exercise was taking place in the area and this may have put some pressure on car parking facilities, but I have had no reports of members of the public being denied access to the trail.

Bennan Hill (New Building)

Mr. Foulkes: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what information he has about the scope and purpose of the new building on Bennan hill in Glentrool.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: The site has been leased from the Forestry Commission by Dumfries and Galloway regional council. The building and associated mast have been erected by the council for the purpose of radio communication.

Community Care

Dr. Mooney: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many lump sums or continuing payments have been made by each health board to enable people to move out of hospital into care in the community, since the publication of circular (Gen) 18 in 1985.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: The number of payments made by health boards in terms of the 1985 circular to enable people to move out of hospital into care in the community as notified to my Department is as follows:

Health Board	*Number of lump sum payments*	*Number of continuing payments*
Argyll and Clyde	—	1
Ayrshire and Arran	4	1
Borders	5	—
Dumfries and Galloway	2	—
Fife	8	8
Forth Valley	4	2
Grampian	—	—
Greater Glasgow	1	4
Highland	—	—
Lanark	6	6
Lothian	12	25
Orkney	—	—
Shetland	—	1
Tayside	3	—
Western Isles	—	—

In addition, health boards make payments to enable dependent people to remain in the community rather than be admitted to hospital. Payments also continue to be made in respect of projects approved before April 1985.

Common Services Agency

Mr. Galbraith: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will list the separate functions carried out by the Common Services Agency and the capital and revenue allocations in respect of each such function.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: The information is set out in the table:

Scottish Health Service Common Serv
Allocations 1987-88

(a) Revenue allocations	
Ambulance Service	
Blood Transfusion Service	
Health Education Group	
Dental Estimates Division	
Prescription Pricing Division	
Central Legal Office	
Supplies Division	
Communicable Diseases Unit	
Management Development Group	
Hospital Advisory Service	
Antibody Production Unit	
Hospital Catering School	
Central Administration	
Directorate of Health Service Information Syst	
Computer Centre	
Information and Statistics Division	
Total revenue allocation	
(b) Capital allocations	
Building Division	
Other capital expenditure (not attributed to specific functions)	
Total Capital allocation	
Total Revenue and Capital allocations	

Family Planning (Young Pe

Mr. Steel: To ask the Secretary of S what is the conception rate for people u Scotland.

Mr. Rifkind: The known conception r 1986 was 49·6 per thousand women age

Mr. Steel: To ask the Secretary of S how many health boards in Scotland family planning services for young peop

Mr. Michael Forsyth: This informatio available. It is for individual health boa the pattern of provision of these services which designated facilities are provided.

Mr. Steel: To ask the Secretary of S what support his Department gives to Brook Advisory Centre and to other ag family planning advice and supplies to y

Mr. Rifkind: In the current financial Edinburgh Brook Advisory Centre is from the Scottish Home and Health Dep the administrative costs of its all-Sco activities, and £2,834 from the social wor for a study of the help which the Brook staff may be able to give to social workers are HIV positive or suffering from AIDS

Grant is also provided to the F Association, National Family Planni Scottish Catholic Marriage Advisory Co bodies do not concentrate specifically o Most family planning services are pro boards, some of which make special pro people.

	£000
	31,208
	15,426
	3,232
	1,402
	2,728
	1,051
	1,732
	411
	950
	191
	376
	179
	2,402
s	1,879
	841
	991
	64,999
	5,765
	7,034
	12,799
	77,798

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ion for young

Mr. Steel: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what information he has as to what proportion of people under 20 years received contraceptive help and advice from their general practitioners in the Lothian health area.

Mr. Rifkind: This information is not available centrally.

AIDS

Mr. Steel: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will list the agencies his Department is supporting for their work with AIDS and young people.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: In addition to the general level of support given to local authorities and health boards, the Scottish Office is providing grant in the present financial year in connection with services related to AIDS and HIV infection to the Scottish AIDS Monitor, Network (Scotland) Limited, the Edinburgh Brook Advisory Centre, the Scottish Drugs Forum and the West of Scotland HIV advisory group. These services are available to the public generally, including young people. Additionally, grant support is being provided to the drugs training project at Stirling University, the alcohol studies centre at Paisley college of technology and six local drug projects, all of which undertake work related to the problem of HIV infection and AIDS among drug misusers.

The Scottish Education Department is collaborating with Strathclyde regional council on a project to develop curricular material on AIDS for use in schools within a health education framework.

Brook Advisory Centre

Mr. Steel: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will publish a table showing the level of funding provided by his Department to the Brook Advisory Centre for each of the past five years.

Mr. Rifkind: The grant awarded is as follows:

	£
1982-83	4,000
1983-84	4,000
1984-85	4,200
1985-86	4,400
1986-87	5,000

Mr. Steel: To ask the Secretary of State f how many health boards fund young peo planning services through arrangements with Advisory Centre.

Mr. Rifkind: One—Lothian health board.

Abortions

Mr. Steel: To ask the Secretary of State f how many abortions were carried out on wom years old in Scotland for each of the past five

Mr. Rifkind: The information is as follows

	Number
1982	2,541
1983	2,521
1984	2,891
1985	2,841
1986	2,819

Examination Results

Mrs. Fyfe: To ask the Secretary of State f whether he will give the proportion for each 1979 of *(a)* girls and *(b)* boys takin mathematics, craft, design and technology, a who obtained grades A and B.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: From 1986, ordinary been awarded on a numeric, 1-5, basis which is comparable with the previous A-E awards. Par table gives the information requested on A an for the period 1979 to 1985. Part *(b)* of the information on the percentages obtaining gra in 1986 and 1987.

Percentage of those presented[1] obtaining given Ordinary Grade awards

(a)	*1979*	*1980*	*1981*	*1982*	*1983*	*1984*	*1985*
Girls							
Mathematics							
A	25·7	27·1	27·2	24·1	24·4	24·8	24·1
B	16·9	18·4	15·9	17·3	17·6	15·8	17·3
Craft and Design[2]							
A	0·0	0·0	37·5	29·4	13·3	18·8	23·7
B	18·2	0·0	25·0	17·6	40·0	24·8	19·9
Physics							
A	38·0	33·7	34·9	36·4	30·6	34·8	36·1
B	20·7	19·7	21·0	19·0	20·2	19·8	19·0
Boys							
Mathematics							
A	30·8	31·5	30·6	30·9	29·7	29·1	28·2
B	16·8	17·2	15·8	17·6	17·6	16·8	17·0
Craft and Design[2]							
A	20·9	24·4	25·7	23·0	23·4	24·0	24·3
B	18·3	20·1	13·8	23·8	20·8	20·6	22·1
Physics							
A	31·5	30·1	29·9	31·2	31·1	31·9	32·4
B	17·6	16·8	18·5	16·4	17·7	16·3	16·6

[1] School candidates only.
[2] Craft and Design was introduced in 1984; prior to that the subject was classified as Integrated Craftwork and presentations w to approved pilot schools. Fewer than 20 girls were presented for this subject in any of the years 1979-1983.

(b)	1986	1987
Girls		
Mathematics		
1	13·7	16·6
2	18·0	16·5
Craft and Design		
1	14·8	13·9
2	19·4	22·5
Physics		
1	28·6	27·3
2	23·8	22·5
Boys		
Mathematics		
1	18·8	19·5
2	18·6	17·1
Craft and Design		
1	16·0	15·1
2	19·2	19·9
Physics		
1	23·0	22·4
2	19·4	19·1

Student Awards

Mrs. Fyfe: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland whether he will amend the student awards regulations so that married women are no longer dependent on their husband's income for grant purposes; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: No. The spouse contribution (from husband or wife, as appropriate) reflects the principle that a family should contribute to the cost of the higher education of its members, according to its ability to do so. The same principle underlies the requirement for a parental contribution in respect of dependent children undertaking higher education; it is a basic element of the present awards system.

National Assessment (Sex Bias)

Mrs. Fyfe: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what proposals he has to ensure that any programme of national assessment in state schools is free from sex bias; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: Avoidance of gender bias is fundamental to our education policy. Care will be taken to ensure that the programme of national assessment will reflect this policy.

Women Teachers

Mrs. Fyfe: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what guidelines his Department issues to education boards to encourage back into teaching those women who have taken a career break; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: The recruitment of individuals to teaching posts is entirely a matter for individual education authorities as employers.

Women Inspectors for Schools

Mrs. Fyfe: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many of Her Majesty's inspectors for schools and colleges are women in Scotland; and what proportion of the total this represents.

Mr. Malcolm Rifkind: Thirteen of Her Majesty's inspectors of schools in Scotland are women. This represents 11·9 per cent. of the total.

Rating Refo

Mr. Rooker: To ask the Secreta
(1) if, pursuant to his reply of
Report, column *815*, he will lis
determination of age that an adul
put to in respect of the poll tax;

(2) why, pursuant to his reply o
Report, column *815*, a statement
years is not sufficient in order to
charge register.

Mr. Lang: Section 13(1)*(d)*
Domestic Rates Etc. (Scotland)
dates of birth to be included in
register in order to assist commun
officers in clearly identifying
establishing their community cha

NHS (Tender

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Secreta
if he will publish in the *Official Re*
board managers on tendering a
statement on the response.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: I have
copy of the official letter of 11
implementing the programme th
undertake.

Mobility Allow

Mr. McTaggart: To ask the
Scotland how many people in
applied for mobility allowance in
years; and how many of those ha

Mr. Scott: I have been asked
I regret that this information i

Mentally Handicapped People
Allowances

Mr. Steel: To ask the Secretar
what representations he has rece
increase in board and lodging allo
handicapped.

Mr. Scott: I have been asked
The residential care home limit
handicapped persons is to be inc
from next April at the time of the
The increase has been welcomed
National Council for Voluntary O

General Practitioners (A

Mr. Galbraith: To ask the
Scotland if he will *(a)* list the nu
time equivalents in each main cat
general practitioners are entitled
for part of their salaries under the
(b) give the average cost per whol
reimbursement to unrestricted
practice for each category of
breakdown of these figures for ea
he will make a statement.

Mr. Michael Forsyth *[holding answer 17 December 1987]:* The information on the numbers of staff in whole-time equivalents for whom general practitioners are entitled to claim reimbursement under th scheme is set out in the table. Informatio held centrally.

Number of staff for whom reimbursement may be claimed: 1 April 1987 whole-time equivalents

	Secretary	Other Administration Staff	Receptionist	Secretary Receptionist	Dispenser	Nurse	Combin
Health Board							
Argyll and Clyde	19·3	—	191·8	21·2	—	12·4	
Ayrshire and Arran	49·7	—	80·9	91·5	0·3	17·4	
Borders	14·4	—	26·9	11·9	—	0·1	
Dumfries and Galloway	11·1	—	48·0	35·9	0·5	2·2	
Fife	14·7	—	97·1	90·2	—	13·2	
Forth Valley	33·5	—	69·9	59·1	0·4	3·0	
Greater Glasgow	41·7	—	458·1	111·5	—	22·9	
Grampian	32·8	—	105·6	123·6	0·8	23·6	
Highland	22·6	—	43·8	52·6	—	16·8	
Lanarkshire	15·1	8·5	239·0	34·7	—	16·5	
Lothian	96·6	—	251·7	161·5	—	21·0	
Orkney	1·3	—	—	9·8	—	—	
Shetland	—	—	—	3·9	—	—	
Tayside	36·9	—	97·2	36·6	1·0	16·0	
Western Isles	7·4	—	6·0	5·1	0·4	3·4	
Scotland	397·1	8·5	1,716·0	869·1	3·4	170·5	

Mr. Galbraith: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will give, for each year since 1979, the total health board expenditure *(a)* under the ancillary staff scheme and *(b)* on providing premises und rate scheme, with an indication of the co general price inflation, in each health boa

Mr. Michael Forsyth *[holding answe 1987]:* The information is set out in the t

(a) Ancillary staff scheme

£

Health Board	1979-80	1980-81	1981-82	1982-83	1983-84	1984-85	198
Ayrshire and Arran	639,534	693,069	757,359	791,997	887,968	922,393	997,
Borders	172,054	187,116	195,475	204,419	237,548	247,009	239,
Argyll and Clyde	708,706	804,783	904,756	1,020,779	1,071,999	1,119,152	1,168,
Fife	702,763	658,641	729,856	714,109	792,665	903,366	916,
Greater Glasgow	1,764,299	1,850,283	1,966,220	2,144,672	2,314,645	2,384,467	2,576,
Highland	372,907	404,411	466,792	514,939	571,649	595,277	651,
Lanarkshire	817,527	937,852	966,472	1,024,439	1,087,768	1,154,300	1,150,
Grampian	885,746	1,016,912	1,087,069	1,094,927	1,222,123	1,319,725	1,374,
Orkney	49,419	48,096	52,638	57,764	58,144	62,967	68,
Lothian	1,571,116	1,757,196	1,793,327	1,859,997	1,998,926	2,129,490	2,158,
Tayside	822,069	937,422	957,375	990,157	1,043,624	1,110,477	1,110,
Forth Valley	464,315	512,429	548,657	599,917	675,847	711,814	733,
Western Isles	62,922	66,905	85,889	98,574	104,934	117,058	124,
Dumfries and Galloway	258,294	283,014	320,378	333,857	363,967	374,838	383,
Shetland	41,040	44,273	62,597	61,612	64,635	62,271	72,
Totals	9,332,711	10,202,402	10,894,860	11,512,159	12,496,442	13,214,604	13,725,

(b) Rent and rate scheme

£

Health Board	1979-80	1980-81	1981-82	1982-83	1983-84	1984-85	1985
Ayrshire and Arran	236,099	242,158	268,633	321,539	326,154	318,609	389,
Borders	87,567	86,413	101,242	106,202	159,872	185,529	188,
Argyll and Clyde	408,641	415,897	496,268	574,190	591,968	587,624	596,
Fife	277,658	303,101	299,735	383,299	438,146	386,865	408,
Greater Glasgow	717,708	770,276	852,966	1,007,801	1,182,155	1,232,859	1,254,
Highland	245,669	278,927	305,532	329,789	393,546	383,257	389,
Lanarkshire	349,445	445,490	558,094	672,548	668,374	750,548	739,
Grampian	563,755	620,114	656,648	686,862	784,309	862,412	864,
Orkney	14,335	12,612	12,555	14,779	17,937	15,912	13,
Lothian	582,146	762,297	914,917	886,850	999,810	1,173,327	1,264,

Health Board	1979-80	1980-81	1981-82	1982-83	1983-84	1984-85	1985-86	1986-87
Tayside	345,289	384,672	421,703	473,035	537,190	544,187	549,953	593,877
Forth Valley	167,215	176,384	182,292	220,230	246,227	249,283	259,391	319,913
Western Isles	33,689	36,840	51,038	52,264	52,471	51,228	69,489	59,768
Dumfries and Galloway	82,692	99,854	108,610	117,988	138,873	141,738	160,613	201,462
Shetland	5,705	10,993	21,321	20,809	18,206	14,659	16,217	16,856
Totals	4,117,613	4,646,028	5,251,554	5,868,185	6,555,238	6,898,037	7,168,010	8,115,999

Mr. Galbraith: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland (1) if he will give, for each year since 1979, the average number of whole-time equivalent ancillary staff employed per unrestricted principal in general practice, for each health board in Scotland;

(2) if he will give the total, and a breakdown for each health board, for the last full year for which figures are available, of *(a)* the average number of whole-time equivalent ancillary staff per unrestricted principal in general practice and *(b)* the number of unrestricted principals in general practice who employ less than their full entitlement under the ancillary staff scheme of two whole-time equivalent ancillary staff; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Michael Forsyth *[holding answers 17 December 1987]:* The average numbers of ancillary staff per unrestricted principal are given in the table:

Average number of ancillary staff employed per unrestricted principal whole-time equivalent

	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986
Argyll and Clyde	0·7	0·7	0·7	0·8	0·8	0·8	0·9	0·9
Ayrshire and Arran	1·0	0·9	0·8	0·9	1·0	0·9	0·9	1·0
Borders	0·7	0·7	0·7	0·8	0·9	0·9	0·9	0·9
Dumfries and Galloway	0·8	0·7	0·8	0·8	0·8	0·8	0·8	0·9
Fife	0·8	0·7	0·8	1·0	0·9	1·0	1·1	1·1
Forth Valley	0·9	0·8	0·8	0·8	0·8	0·8	0·9	0·9
Grampian	0·9	0·6	0·6	0·6	0·7	1·1	1·1	1·1
Greater Glasgow	0·8	0·8	0·7	0·9	0·8	1·1	1·2	1·0
Highland	0·7	0·8	0·8	0·8	0·9	0·9	0·9	0·9
Lanarkshire	1·0	1·0	0·9	1·0	0·9	1·0	1·0	1·1
Lothian	0·8	0·8	0·8	0·9	1·0	1·0	1·0	1·0
Orkney	0·6	0·6	0·6	0·6	0·6	0·6	0·7	0·7
Shetland	0·7	0·6	0·6	0·7	0·7	0·8	0·9	1·1
Tayside	0·9	0·9	1·0	1·0	1·1	1·0	1·0	1·1
Western Isles	0·6	0·5	0·6	0·6	0·8	0·9	1·0	0·9
Scotland	0·8	0·8	0·8	0·9	0·9	1·0	1·0	1·0

Information on the numbers of unrestricted principals employing less than their full entitlement of ancillary staff is not held centrally.

General Practitioners

Mr. Galbraith: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will give, for the last year for which figures are available, the total and a breakdown for each health board, of *(a)* the number of general practice premises and *(b)* the amount directly reimbursed to unrestricted principals in general practice for the cost of providing premises under the rent and rates scheme; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Michael Forsyth *[holding answer 17 December 1987]:* Information on the number of general practice premises is not held centrally. The information requested on the amount directly reimbursed to unrestricted principals in general practice for the cost of providing premises under the rent and rates scheme is as follows:

Health board	1986-87 £
Argyll and Clyde	698,594
Ayrshire and Arran	439,215
Borders	205,656
Dumfries and Galloway	201,462
Fife	432,400
Forth Valley	319,913
Grampian	947,645
Greater Glasgow	1,346,205
Highland	414,668
Lanarkshire	868,997
Lothian	1,553,867
Orkney	16,876
Shetland	16,856
Tayside	593,877
Western Isles	59,768
Total	8,115,999

Penal System

Mr. Home Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will set up an independent inquiry to make recommendations on all aspects of the penal system in Scotland.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton *[holding answer 27 October 1987]:* No. Appropriate action is being taken on a number of issues of concern. For instance, we have announced a thorough review of parole, and other forms of early release, under the chairmanship of Lord Kincraig.

SOCIAL SERVICES

Nurses

Mr. Robin Cook: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will publish a table showing both the actual number and the whole-time equivalent number of nurses employed in each pay grade.

Mr. Newton: The table shows the information requested for selected pay grades of nursing and midwifery staff employed in England at 30 September 1986:

Numbers and whole-time equivalents of nursing and midwifery staff employed[1] in selected pay grades at 30 September 1986: England

	Numbers[2]	*Whole-time equivalents*[2]
Regional nursing officer	10	10
District nursing officer	150	150
Director of nursing services	920	920
Senior nurse 6 (clinical managerial)	940	930
Senior nurse 8 (clinical managerial)	3,780	3,760
Health visitor	10,240	9,070
Nursing sister II	65,770	61,820
Staff nurse/senior enrolled nurse	109,440	86,340
Enrolled nurse	86,530	71,520
Nursing auxiliary	114,840	89,930
Students	48,130	48,100
Pupils	10,250	10,230
Director of nurse education I	30	30
Senior nurse (education) 4	420	420
Tutor	2,460	2,390
Clinical teacher	3,140	3,040
Total	457,040	388,660

Source: DHSS Annual census of NHS non-medical manpower.
[1] Excludes agency staff.
[2] All figures are independently rounded to the nearest ten (10).
[3] The information given relates to staff in the pay grades shown, therefore, for example, district nurses are included in the figures shown for Nursing Sister II.

Social Security Tribunals

Mr. Grocott: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) of the unsuccessful appeals in social security tribunal cases in 1980, 1981, 1982, 1983, 1984, 1985 and 1986, in what proportion of cases the claimant was represented;

(2) of the successful appeals in social security tribunal cases in 1980, 1981, 1982, 1983, 1984, 1985 and 1986, in what proportion of cases the claimant was represented.

Mr. Portillo: The table gives the available information. Prior to April 1984 appeal statistics on representation were kept only for supplementary benefit appeal tribunals.

Social security appeal tribunal statistics are now published annually in "Social Security Statistics". The 1986 edition contains information on social security tribunal statistics from April 1984 to December 1985, and the 1987 edition contains information on social security tribunal statistics from January 1986 to December 1986.

Social security appeals in Great Britain—1980-86

Year	*Number of appeals heard and decided* (1) *Successful*	(2) *Unsuccessful*	(3) *Total*	*Appeals at which claimant was represented* (4) *Successful as percentage of column (1)*	(5) *Unsuccessful as percentage of column (2)*
1980	10,914	38,441	49,355	44·9	20·4
1981	8,862	41,002	49,864	49·7	22·2
1982	10,195	45,889	56,084	48·7	22·5
1983	11,828	48,739	60,567	48·8	22·7
1984 (first quarter)	3,314	13,557	16,871	46·2	20·4
1984 (April to December)	15,745	58,797	74,542	44·1	16·7
1985	26,689	87,861	114,550	43·8	16.0
1986	31,675	94,163	125,838	41·2	15·1

Notes:
Figures for period 1980 to 1984 (first quarter) relate to supplementary benefit only.
Figures for period 1984 (April to December) to 1986 relate to all social security benefits.

Social Fund

Mr. Kirkwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will announce his decisions relating to the detailed provisions under the Social Security Act 1986 section 34, dealing with the new internal review procedure, indicating how many days an applicant will have in which to seek a review of a decision made by a social fund officer, how many days an applicant will have in which to appeal to a social fund inspector subsequent to initial review being rejected and how many days his Department will have in which to inform claimants of decisions relating to the social fund.

Mr. Scott: The Social Fund (Application for Review) Regulations will be laid before Parliament shortly. They will provide that applications to a social fund officer or social fund inspector for review of a social fund officer's decision shall be made within 28 days of the decision in question being issued. These time limits may be extended if the social fund officer or social fund inspector considers there are special reasons for doing so.

Paragraphs 3052 and 6041 of the social fund manual, a copy of which is in the Library, advise social fund officers that decisions on applications for budgeting loans and community care grants respectively should, where practicable, be decided within 28 days. Paragraph 4043 advises that when all the necessary information has been obtained applications for crisis loans should be decided without delay.

Dr. Godman: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what amounts of money have been allocated to the offices of his Department in Greenock and Port Glasgow from the social fund in the first and second year and each subsequent year for which projections are available.

Mr. Mullin: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what is the social fund allocation for Sunderland for 1988-89 as a percentage of supplementary benefits single payments in 1986-87.

Mr. Scott: Information on the allocations for 1988-89 was contained in my reply to my hon. Friend the Member for Wells (Mr. Heathcoat-Amory) on 4 November at columns *774-81*. Allocations for future years have not yet been decided. Information on expenditure on single payments in 1986-87 is in the Library.

Mrs. Beckett: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services how many local offices of his Department have responded either to regional or national headquarters of his Department on the level of their social fund budget; and how many expressed concern about the level of their social fund allocation.

Mr. Scott: About 25 local offices have raised operational questions relating to their budget allocation.

Information Technology Staff

Mr. Michael Marshall: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what proportion of the trainees for professional information technology posts within his Department are *(a)* female and *(b)* more than 30 years of age.

Mr. Portillo: Statistical information on the number of civil servants wholly employed on information technology tasks—as specified in Treasury—Central Computer and Telecommunications Agency guidelines — who are trainees and are *(a)* female and *(b)* more than 30 years of age is not kept by this Department.

Detailed information of this sort could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Mr. Michael Marshall: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what proportion of the professional information technology staff in his Department, including programmers, systems analysts and managers, are *(a)* female and *(b)* more than 30 years of age.

Mr. Portillo: Statistical information on the number of civil servants wholly employed on Information Technology tasks — as specified in Treasury — Central Computer and Telecommunications Agency guidelines— who are *(a)* female and *(b)* more than 30 years of age is not held. Detailed information of this sort could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Hepatitis B

Mr. Pike: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what action is being taken to provide to all those employed in the public service at risk appropriate free vaccination against hepatitis B.

Mrs. Currie: I refer the hon. Member to the replies I gave to the hon. Member for Southport (Mr. Fearn) on 13 November at columns *361-62* and to my hon. Friend the Member for Warwick and Leamington (Sir D. Smith) on 18 December at columns *932-33*.

Centralised Services

Mrs. Margaret Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what is the total cost of centralised services provided by his Department to the regional health authorities in England and Wales.

Mrs. Currie: The estimated cost of the central health and miscellaneous services in 1987-88 is £285,966,000. Details of these services are shown in sections B to F of Class XIV, Vote 3, as published in Supply Estimates 1987-88 (HC 227-XIV, XV of 1986-87) as amended by Supply Estimates 1987-88 Summer Supplementary Estimates (HC 16 of 1987-88). These services are not provided specifically to regional health authorities.

Blood Transfusion Service

Mrs. Margaret Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what have been the costs of the blood products laboratory at Elstree; and what proportion of those costs have been charged to the blood transfusion service in each of the last five years.

Mr. Newton: Figures for the revenue cost of the blood products laboratory at Elstree are not separately available. The revenue costs of the Central Blood Laboratories Authority as a whole, the major part of which relate to the blood products laboratory, for the past five years have been:

	£ million
1982-83	3·1
1983-84	4·6
1984-85	5·6
1985-86	4·5
1986-87	8·3

These costs are not recharged to the blood transfusion service.

Withdrawal of Drugs

Mr. Ashley: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) what information he has as to on how many occasions since 1979 withdrawals of drugs or medically related devices in the United States of America have been followed by immediate withdrawal in Britain, and vice versa; and on how many occasions and for which products there has been a delay;

(2) if he will list the names and number of drugs and medically related devices that have had approval withdrawn since 1979; and if he will give for each, information available to him on the period of time for which they were on such list in *(a)* the United Kingdom and *(b)* the United States of America.

Mr. Newton: The licensing authority does not routinely hold information about marketing status in the United States of America, though some specific information will be available on particular licence files. A complete search through all such files would involve disproportionate cost. In the United Kingdom 105 medicinal products have had their licences withdrawn, that is suspended or revoked, since 1 January 1979. A list of these products will be placed in the Library shortly. In addition, for a variety of reasons, 15,645 product licences have been surrendered by companies or have lapsed since that date. These include cases where licences were surrendered voluntarily after concern about safety. Licence holders are not required to

give a reason for surrendering or failing to renew a licence. A list of products where safety was identified by the licence holder as a reason for product withdrawal could be produced only at disproportionate cost.

Claimants

Mr. Darling: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services when he intends to place in the Library the remaining information referred to in his answer, *Official Report*, 18 November, column *573*, relating to the number of claimants in receipt of supplementary benefit and the number of single payments made to various categories of claimants.

Mr. Portillo: The information on the number of claimants in receipt of supplementary benefit is not held centrally and is being collated from a number of sources. It will be placed in the Library as soon as possible. Information on the number of claimants receiving single payments is not kept and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost. The remaining information has been placed in the Library today. I apologise to the hon. Member for the delay in providing this information.

HIV Infection

Mr. Butler: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what prevalence rates of HIV infection have been detected amongst bisexual and homosexual men attending sexually transmitted disease clinics in London.

Mr. Newton: It is not possible to establish accurately the prevalence rates. Information on the type of clinic at which a blood sample is taken for HIV testing and the total numbers of homosexual and bisexual men is not available. Individuals attending sexually transmitted disease clinics may not admit to being homosexual or bisexual. However, among known homosexuals attending such clinics in London, published work describes rates of HIV infection between about 10 per cent. and 30 per cent. The detected rates among known bisexuals are lower.

Mr. Butler: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what information his Department has on the dominant mode of infection by HIV in Africa.

Mr. Newton: Almost all cases of identified HIV infection in Africa are reported to be in heterosexually active adults or in babies. Some cases of infection in all age groups can be linked to therapeutic injections or infusions including blood transfusions. The dominant modes of infection of HIV in Africa are thought to be heterosexual intercourse and vertical transmission (mother to baby).

Pensions (Cash Cards)

Sir John Farr: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what consideration is being given to introducing plastic cards for use in cash dispensing machines in place of the old age pension book; and what assessment has been made of the effect of this proposal on the economics of small post offices.

Mr. Portillo: We have no plans to introduce plastic cash cards as a replacement for retirement pension books.

Health Authorities (Overspending)

Mr. Matthew Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services how many representations were reviewed by his Department regarding the overspending of health authorities and health cutbacks prior to his announcement of extra funding on 16 December.

Mr. Newton: A considerable number.

Thames Regions (Allocations)

Ms. Ruddock: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will express the sums of money allocated to the four Thames health regions in his announcement of 16 December 1987, excluding the moneys allocated *(a)* for AIDS, *(b)* for storm damage, *(c)* for the reduction of waiting lists and *(d)* any other specially allocated moneys.

Mr. Newton: I assume the hon. Member is referring to the additional funds announced for 1988-89. The information requested is as follows:

	£ million
North West Thames	39·6
North East Thames	48·9
South East Thames	44·4
South West Thames	37·6

Lewisham and North Southwark Health Authority

Ms. Ruddock: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) whether he will advise the South East Thames regional health authority to allocate sufficient money from the increase he announced on 16 December 1987, to meet the currently estimated shortfall of £1·9 million within the Lewisham and North Southwark district health authority;

(2) what advice he is giving to the four Thames health regions as to how the increase in funds to meet the current shortfall, announced on 16 December 1987, should be distributed amongst the district health authorities.

Mr. Newton: Within broad guidelines it is for regional health authorities to decide how resources are allocated between district health authorities.

AIDS

Mr. Butler: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what information is available to his Department on *(a)* the number of AIDS cases and *(b)* the number of HIV carriers currently in the world.

Mr. Newton: The number of cases of AIDS reported globally to the World Health Organisation by 9 December 1987 was 72,004. It should be noted that the completeness and accuracy of reporting vary from country to country. Some countries do publish estimates of the number of people infected with HIV, but the inevitable inaccuracies and the lack of complete data make it impossible to arrive at meaningful worldwide figures.

Mr. Butler: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will direct the health departments covering England, Wales and Northern Ireland to project the total number of AIDS cases to the same date to which the Scottish Office projects such figures; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Newton: As my hon. Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Scotland said in his reply to my hon. Friend on 15 December at column *450*, the projections of future numbers of cases of AIDS contained in the report of the working party on Health Service

implications of HIV infection in Scotland—the Tayler report—were made on a very limited base and are being kept under review. The Government look to the Communicable Disease Surveillance Centre and the Communicable Disease (Scotland) Unit for advice on these matters. Their current view is that it is not possible, on the evidence currently available, to make reliable estimates of the numbers of cases of AIDS after this year, as I stated in my reply to my hon. Friend on 20 November at column *708*.

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if any of the additional £10 million to be allocated to the three Thames regions in further recognition of the particular pressures in these areas arising from the number of AIDS patients has been earmarked for the London Lighthouse.

Mr. Newton: The North West Thames regional health authority has approved a capital grant of £500,000 to London Lighthouse following the announcement on October last year of extra allocations for the three Tha regions which have been facing special additio pressures as a result of the large number of people v AIDS they are having to treat. The additional £10 mil allocated to these regions for AIDS-related services, result of my statement to the House on 16 December, not earmarked centrally for specific purposes.

Retirement Pensions

Mr. McFall: To ask the Secretary of State for So Services what has been the increase in cash terms si 1980 in the weekly retirement pension for *(a)* a mar couple and *(b)* a single person, with the 1980 s expressed as 100.

Mr. Scott: The information requested is as follows. dates shown are those when upratings of retirem pension took effect.

	Married couple		*Single person*	
	Cash Amount £	*Index (Nov 80 = 100)*	*Cash Amoount* £	*Index (Nov 80 = 100)*
November 1980	43·45	100	27·15	100
November 1981	47·35	109·0	29·60	109·0
November 1982	52·55	120·9	32·85	121·0
November 1983	54·50	125·4	34·05	125·4
November 1984	57·30	131·9	35·80	131·9
November 1985	61·30	141·1	38·30	141·1
July 1986	61·95	142·6	38·70	142·5
April 1987	63·25	145·6	39·50	145·5
April 1988	65·90	151·7	41·15	151·6

Private Health

Mr. Thurnham: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services how often he publishes statistics on private health provision.

Mrs. Currie: The Department prepares three prime sources of information on private health provision:

i. SBH212 — details on places registered under the Registered Homes Act 1984—published annually.
ii. SH9 — contractual arrangements between the National Health Service and private sector — compiled annually and being placed in the Library.
iii. SBH211—private patients treated in National Health Service hospitals—compiled annually and available in the Library.

The implementation of the Körner recommendations will result in data being collected on a financial year basis. This may affect publication targets. The Department also contributes private medical insurance data to an annual Central Statistical Office publication, "Social Trends".

Mr. Thurnham: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what evidence he has on the effect on waiting lists of private health care.

Mr. Newton: National Health Service waiting lists consist primarily of people waiting for elective surgery, and the majority of operations carried out in the private sector are also for elective procedures, but it is not possible to quantify the inter-action between the two.

Benefit Disqualifications

Mr. Nicholas Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will provide a breakdown of the number of cases in 1986, and separately for cases so far in 1987, of benefit disqualification under section 20(1) of Social Security Act 1975 and associated legislati showing disqualifications due to *(a)* leaving voluntar *(b)* misconduct and *(c)* other reasons.

Mr. Portillo: The table shows the number disqualifications for benefit imposed under section 20 of the Social Security Act 1975 during 1986 and the f nine months of 1987 — the latest period for wh information is available.

Disqualifications for unemployment benefit under s20(1) of Soc Security Act 1975

Reason for disqualification	*1986*	*Janu September 1*
Leaving voluntarily	310,976	231,
Dismissal for misconduct	98,938	73,
Others	9,532	7,
Total	419,446	311,

Source: 100 per cent. count of decisions by adjudication offic

Hospital Beds

Mr. Cummings: To ask the Secretary of State for Soc Services how many beds were available for patients duri the years 1984-85, 1985-86 and 1986-87, in Drybu hospital, Durham, Sunderland district general hospit Sunderland Royal infirmary, Hartlepool district gene hospital, Ryhope general hospital, the County hospit Durham, Cherry Knowle, Ryhope and Winter hospital, Sellafield.

Mrs. Currie: The information requested is given in t table.

Average daily number of available beds, 1984-1986

Health authority and hospital	Year 1984	1985	1986
Durham			
Dryburn hospital	420	427	433
County hospital	60	60	60
Hartlepool			
Hartlepool general hospital	449	446	449
South West Durham			
Winterton hospital	952	945	938
Sunderland			
Royal infirmary	253	247	254
Sunderland district general hospital	708	701	710
Ryhope general hospital	427	396	362
Cherry Knowle hospital	663	672	680

Sir Peter Emery: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will give for the year 1978 and for each of the last five years the total number of hospital beds for each of the following services *(a)* general medical, *(b)* general surgical, *(c)* non-psychiatric acute, *(d)* geriatric, *(e)* maternity, *(f)* mental illness, *(g)* mentally handicapped and *(h)* young chronic sick; and what is the total of these and the number of nurses employed in the counties of Devon and Somerset.

Mrs. Currie: The information requested is given in the tables.

Average available beds in National Health Service hospitals

Specialty or specialty group and county	1978	1982	Year 1983	1984	1985	1986
General medicine[1]						
Devon	439	460	484	463	471	454
Somerset	177	165	159	148	173	166
General surgery						
Devon	539	569	538	505	494	513
Somerset	172	151	172	158	157	158
Other acute specialties						
Devon	2,126	2,100	2,105	2,122	2,114	2,129
Somerset	670	716	719	748	707	725
Geriatric						
Devon	1,357	1,374	1,361	1,342	1,349	1,351
Somerset	515	513	508	511	506	479
Maternity specialties						
Devon	352	345	345	344	342	330
Somerset	137	134	135	135	120	129
Mental illness specialties						
Devon	1,697	1,423	1,427	1,306	1,319	1,180
Somerset	1,271	1,120	1,108	1,103	1,076	1,055
Mental handicap						
Devon	1,303	1,226	1,179	994	808	748
Somerset	553	523	513	497	454	384
Units for the younger disabled						
Devon	50	56	56	56	54	53
Somerset	26	26	26	26	26	26
All specialties						
Devon	7,863	7,553	7,495	7,130	6,951	6,755
Somerset	3,520	3,347	3,339	3,326	3,219	3,121

[1] Figures for 1978 are not comparable with those for later years, due to a change of specialty definitions in 1979.

Note: For the county of Devon figures for Exeter, North Devon, Plymouth and Torbay DHAs have been used. (Devon AHA figures used for the 1978 figures). As regards Somerset, figures for Somerset DHA (Somerset AHA for 1978) have been used.

Nursing and midwifery staff in post-Devon and Somerset counties 30 September

	Whole time equivalent[1] Devon[2]	Somerset[2]
1978	7,400	2,890
1982	8,530	3,190
1983	8,630	3,220
1984	8,490	3,230
1985	8,870	3,270
1986	9,010	3,270

Source: DHSS annual census of NHS non-medical manpower.

[1] All figures are independently rounded to the nearest ten (10) whole-time equivalents.

[2] Figures for 1978 relate to the Devon and Somerset area health

authorities respectively. Figures for 1982-86 are as follows:
Devon county comprises the sum of the North Devon, Plymouth, Torbay and Exeter district health authorities.
Somerset county comprises Somerset district health authority.

Drug Centres (Durham)

Mr. Cummings: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what measures he is taking to establish drug advice centres in the county of Durham.

Mrs. Currie: Local health authorities are responsible for the provision of services for drug misusers. Since 1986-87, regional health authorities have been allocated an extra £5 million a year specifically for the development of these services. Funds from this allocation have been used to set up advice and counselling services in South West Durham, North West Durham and Darlington health authorities; a limited advice and counselling service is also available in Durham health authority. for more information, the hon. Member may like to contact the chairmen of these authorities.

Hospital Car Services

Sir Peter Emery: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) if he will recommend to health authorities that they should reimburse drivers in the hospital car service at rates at least equal to the rates notified annually by his Department, based upon those agreed by the General Whitley council for National Health Service staff;

(2) if he will list those health authorities which reimburse drivers in the hospital car services at rates below those agreed by the General Whitley council.

Mrs. Currie: Each year the Department recommends to health authorities mileage rates for volunteer hospital car service drivers comparable to those agreed for health service staff. The rates adopted are a matter for authorities to decide in the light of local circumstances. Information about the amount per mile paid by individual authorities is not collected centrally.

Conception Rate (Young People)

Mr. Steel: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Service, what is the conception rate for people under 20 years in England and Wales.

Mr. Newton: During 1985 there were 61·7 conceptions to women aged under 20 per 1,000 women aged 15 to 19 resident in England and Wales. This figure includes conceptions leading to maternities or to abortions under the 1967 Act, but excludes conceptions leading to spontaneous abortions.

Unemployed Councillors

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if, in the light of successful appeal by Councillor Mike Hannon of Warrington borough council to the social security appeal tribunal in September 1987, he will introduce legislation to provide that expenses allowed to unemployed councillors should include those incurred in the course of their duties outside official council meetings.

Mr. Portillo: No. It is a matter for the independent adjudication authorities to interpret the regulations in individual cases.

Community Programme

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State fo Services what plans he has to seek to change the l to allow his Department to withhold benef claimants who refuse offers of places on the co programme.

Mr. Portillo: There are no plans to change 20(1)*(b)* of the Social Security Act 1975 under person may be disqualified for receiving unemp benefit if, without good cause, he refuses an suitable employment.

Severe Disablement Allowance

Mrs. Beckett: To ask the Secretary of State fo Services whether, in the light of the judgmen European Court in the Clarke case, he will now claims to severe disablement allowance from mar cohabiting women who fulfilled the conditions contributory invalidity pension in 1984, other household duties test, but were wrongly denie disablement allowance as from 22 December 198 discriminatory provisions of the transitional reg *(b)* make extra-statutory payments to such wom making new claims to severe disablement allow compensate them for non-payment of that benefit December 1984, *(c)* exercise his discretion regulation 9(6) of the Claims and Payments Reg to treat all claims for non-contributory invalidity received from such women in 1984 and 1985 as cl severe disablement allowance, and *(d)* exer discretion under regulation 9(1) of the same regul treat all claims for (i) unemployment benefit, (ii) benefit, (iii) invalidity benefit and (iv) maternity a received from such women in 1984 and 1985 as cl severe disablement allowance; and if he will statement.

Mr. Scott: I refer the hon. Member to my rep on 5 November 1987 at column *869*. We in discharge our legal obligation to pay women entitlement to severe disablement allowan established by the judgment of the European Justice in the case of Mrs. J. B. Clarke. I am adv this applies to married women who had a claim founded on entitlement to non-contributory i pension, between the earliest date for claimi (10.9.84) and the latest date for claiming NCIP (and the claim failed because of the household d or has awaited decision pending the judgment. Th include claims to NCIP treated as claims to SD regulation 9(6) of the Claims and Payments Reg 1979. Central records indicate that there were so to 4,000 such women.

Claims to unemployment benefit, sickness invalidity benefit and maternity allowance whi during this period would have been treated also to SDA where appropriate in accordance with re 9(1) of the same regulations. If, because of the h duties test these SDA claims also failed, they been included within the 3,000 to 4,000.

Because the women who may benefit fr judgment are identifiable from central records, being contacted individually which obviates the a wider invitation to submit claims. Inquiries wil

made to establish whether any payment is due, both currently and for any periods since 22 December 1984. Extra-statutory payments will be made where necessary.

Income Support Regulations

Mrs. Beckett: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will give the reasons for each of the differences between the provisions of the Income Support (Transitional) Regulations 1987 and the draft which was made available at the beginning of November 1987.

Mr. Scott: After the draft version of the Income Support (Transitional) Regulations 1987 had been placed in the Library on 3 November, legal advice led to a number of technical and drafting changes to ensure that the regulations more accurately reflected the original policy intentions.

Yorkshire RHA (Allocation)

Mr. Battle: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services how much of the recently announced additional £4·7 million for the Yorkshire regional health authority will be allocated to *(a)* the designated new liver transplant centre, *(b)* the child cancer unit at St. James's hospital and *(c)* the current Leeds Western budget deficit.

Mrs. Currie: It is for the Yorkshire regional hea authority to decide how the £4·7 million will be allocat within the region. I understand that an announcement h not yet been made by the regional health authority. T hon. Member may wish to approach the regional chairm for the information he is seeking.

The hon. Member may wish to know, however, that from 1 April 1988 the liver transplant centre will be designated supra-regional service. As such it will rece central funding of £287,000 for 1988-89 in addition to current district allocation of £287,000 in 1987-88, a to therefore of £574,000 for 1988-89.

Illegitimate Babies

Ms. Harman: To ask the Secretary of State for Soc Services if he will give, for each year from 1975 onwar the numbers of livebirths of jointly registered illegitim babies in England and Wales with fathers wh occupations were classified as *(a)* social class I, *(b)* soc class II, *(c)* social class III non-manual, *(d)* social cl III manual, *(e)* social class IV, *(f)* social class *(g)* armed services and *(h)* students, unoccupied and occupations not included in *(a)* to *(g)*.

Mrs. Currie: The figures are shown in the table.

Jointly registered illegitimate live births by social class of father 1975-86
England and Wales

Year	All classes	I	II	IIIN	IIIM	IV	V	Armed Forces	Othe includi not stat
1975	26·9	0·8	2·8	1·6	11·8	6·1	2·7	0·4	0
1976	27·4	0·6	3·1	1·6	12·7	5·8	2·8	0·3	0
1977	29·3	0·8	3·5	1·4	12·9	6·7	3·2	0·4	0
1978	32·8	0·8	4·0	1·9	14·8	7·0	3·2	0·4	0
1979	38·3	0·8	4·7	2·3	17·0	7·2	5·2	0·4	0
1980	44·2	1·0	5·0	2·7	19·6	8·6	6·1	0·4	1
1981	47·1	1·0	5·2	3·0	20·6	8·7	6·9	0·5	1
1982	53·4	1·0	6·1	3·5	22·6	10·1	8·1	0·6	1
1983	60·8	1·0	7·2	3·7	25·4	11·7	9·3	0·8	1
1984	69·9	1·3	7·9	4·6	29·3	13·2	10·3	0·7	2
1985	81·8	1·5	9·1	5·0	34·6	15·3	12·2	0·7	3
1986	93·5	2·0	11·3	5·8	38·3	18·2	13·6	0·8	3

Note: Figures are based on a 10 per cent. sample of birth registrations.

Mental Hospital Admissions

Mr. Worthington: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what information he has about the comparative rates of admission to mental hospital for black and white people in the United Kingdom.

Mrs. Currie: I regret that statistics on admissions to mental illness hospitals subdivided into categories by race are not collected centrally.

Mr. Worthington: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what are the rates of admission to mental hospital for *(a)* men and *(b)* women.

Mrs. Currie: In 1986 the rates of admission into National Health Service mental illness hospitals and units in England were 364 male admissions per 100,000 male population and 468 female admissions per 100,000 female population.

Specialist Advisory Staff

Mr. Worthington: To ask the Secretary of State Social Services how many specialist advisory staff at Department's headquarters have a background in *(a)* physical health and *(b)* mental health.

Mrs. Currie: The following table shows the numbers specialist advisory staff at the Department's headquart who have backgrounds in either physical or mental hea

Civil Servants	Physical Health	Mental He
Doctors	103	
Dentists	36	
Nurses	30	
Therapists	6	

In addition, the chief medical officer is able to call u 47 consultant advisers, two of whom have background mental health.

NHS (London)

Mr. Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what has been the resource allocation working party formula at national and each regional level in respect of the four Thames regions, further to his statement of 16 November 1987.

Mr. Newton: The allocation formula devised by the resource allocation working party is described in its report "Sharing Resources for Health in England", a copy of which is in the Library.

Target allocations are arrived at by reference to regional health authority populations weighted to take account of age and sex distribution and the geographical incidence of different conditions requiring health care resources. The pace of change towards targets is decided by Ministers each year, in the light of the additional resources available.

In 1988-89 the Thames regions will again benefit from the £15 million special fund; and they will also receive the bulk of the additional funds made available in recognition of the special pressures arising from AIDS and HIV infection.

Mr. Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will list, by district, the allocations for AIDS, general funding and storm damage for each London health authority following his announcement of 16 December 1987.

Mr. Newton: Allocations to districts are a matter for regional health authorities. The hon. Member may wish to approach the chairmen of the four Thames regional health authorities for this information.

Great Ormond Street Hospital

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what information he has as to how many patients from the Trent health authority have in the last three years been treated at Great Ormond street hospital.

Mrs. Currie: Reliable estimates cannot be made from the sample data held centrally. The hon. Member may wish to write to the chairman of the Hospitals for Sick Children Special Health Authority for the information.

West Midlands RHA

Mr. Nellist: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services when the additional sum for the West Midlands regional health authority which he announced on 16 December, *Official Report*, column 1104, will be paid to the regional health authority; and if there are any restrictions on its use.

Mrs. Currie: The West Midlands regional health authority was informed on 16 December that its share of the additional funds available this year was £6·7 million. Formal notification that the region's cash limit had been increased by this amount was issued on 4 January.

It is for the regional health authority to determine how the funds available should be distributed. We are, however, requiring it to ensure that the additional resources are used where necessary to maintain established services, to assist where hospital services are being reorganised for the future, and to secure a sound financial base on which to build plans for 1988-89.

Hospital Waiting Lists

Mr. Meacher: To ask the Secretary of S Services how many persons according to th had been waiting *(a)* nought to two month five months, *(c)* six to eight months, *(* months, *(e)* 12 to 14 months and 15 mont admission to hospital in each of the mai each district health authority.

Mr. Newton: A copy of the September 19 booklet will be placed in the Library as available.

Census Information

Mr. Rooker: To ask the Secretary of S Services what is the estimated number of p in the United Kingdom who were born in *(* Latvia and *(c)* Lithuania; and why the i country of birth of such residents is recor purposes.

Mrs. Currie: The information requ recorded. All people enumerated in the c state the present name of their country of who recorded that they were born in Eston Lithuania were given the same code as pers USSR.

Pregnancy Testing

Ms. Richardson: To ask the Secretary of S Services what representations he has receiv the proposal by Cambridge health authority pregnancy testing service at Addenbroo Cambridge.

Mrs. Currie: We have received one letter an hon. Member.

Ms. Richardson: To ask the Secretary of S Services (1) what is his policy on the pro pregnancy testing by health authorities; make a statement;

(2) which health authorities provide f testing services; and which health authoriti to provide this service in the last 12 month

Mrs. Currie: Information on free preg services is not held centrally.

Where health authorities offer general direct access to pathology facilities, then th exists for the provision of pregnancy te charge, if the practitioner feels this is appro authorities may also offer free pregnanc patients of family planning clinics, and are importance of facilities being readily ava prompt confirmation of pregnancy, and a of care. This was recommended by the firs Maternity Services Advisory Committee stressed the need for each woman to be a thoroughly, with those who will be respo care, any medical or social factors which course of the pregnancy, and agree a suita care. We have commended this report to hea for their consideration as to the action wh should be taken locally to improve service

Leukaemia Clusters (Cumbria)

Mr. Meacher: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services to what extent any studies he has commissioned into leukaemia clusters in Cumbria have taken account of any possible effects from the consumption of radioactive milk or other substances after the Windscale fire of October 1957.

Mrs. Currie: The independent expert Committee on Medical Aspects of Radiation in the Environment reported in 1986 on the incidence of cancer in West Cumbria. This report was based on evidence — both published and unpublished — of estimated radiation doses to the public from all sources, including radioactive milk, over the period 1951 to 1982 including the effects of the Windscale fire of 1957.

Cancer

Mr. Wareing: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if, in the light of the fact that the request for funding in respect of the "Quest for a Test for Cancer" is to cover improved cytology, he will reconsider his decision to delay responding to this application; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Currie: No. The reasons for deferring a decision were set out in my reply to the hon. Member for Belfast, South (Rev. Martin Smyth) on 17 December 1987 at columns *712-73* and they still apply. Decisions will be made as soon as possible.

Hospitals and Extensions

Mr. Wareing: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will list all new hospitals and new hospital extensions built during the past five years which are not yet fully in use because of staff shortages.

Mrs. Currie: I regret we do not routinely collect such information centrally.

Wealth and Poverty (Report)

Mr. Wareing: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what response he intends to make to the report of the Family Policy Studies Centre on wealth and poverty in Britain.

Mr. Portillo: We will study the report with interest.

Dental Examinations and Eyesight Tests

Mr. Wareing: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services how many letters he has received supporting his proposal to introduce charges for *(a)* dental examinations and *(b)* the eyesight test.

Mr. Newton: About 900 representations have been received on the proposals to restrict the NHS sight test to certain groups and to introduce a charge for the NHS dental examination, subject to numerous exemptions in line with those for other dental charges. They are generally opposed to the proposals, but do not appear to oppose also the substantially increased expenditure on family practitioner services, including the many improvements proposed in the White Paper "Promoting Better Health", which the dental and sight test proposals will help to finance.

Radiotherapy Units (Southend and Oldchurc

Mr. Wareing: To ask the Secretary of State for Services what representations he has received proposals to close the Southend and Old radiotherapy units; what discussions he has had w North East Thames regional health authority abo proposals; and upon what basis the level of provi radiotherapy services is determined.

Mrs. Currie: We have received tens of thous representations from members of the public abou proposals. Following local opposition to the closur Southend radiotherapy unit, the North East T regional health authority has now put the matter right hon. Friend for his final decision.

Health authorities are expected to provide radio services on the basis of what best serves the patie Department's guidance on ways in which such should be organised is currently under review.

Community Charge

Mr. Blunkett: To ask the Secretary of State fo Services whether, in calculating personal incor board and lodging provided as part of the support time volunteers will be disregarded in assessing and eligibility for rebates of community charge.

Mr. Scott: The details of the community charg scheme have yet to be decided, but the present in is that the procedures for calculating entitlement to should follow as closely as practicable the provisio Housing Benefit (General) Regulations 1987. Re 35(5) of these regulations provides that the proced assessing notional income shall not apply in the c person claiming housing benefit who is engage charitable or voluntary body, or who is a volunte appropriate authority is satisfied that it is reason him to provide his services free of charge.

Benefit Rates

Dr. Marek: To ask the Secretary of State fo Services if he will give for single adult ma supplementary benefit or national assistance a sickness or unemployment benefit as a percen average weekly earnings for the last 30 years fo figures are available.

Mr. Portillo: The information required is ava sections 5 and 6 of the "Abstract of Statistics for Retail Prices, Average Earnings, Social Security and Contributions," published by the Department of which is in the Library.

Overseas Visitors (NHS Treatment)

Mr. Waller: To ask the Secretary of State fo Services whether he has any plans to ame regulations which govern National Health treatment for overseas visitors; and if he will statement.

Mr. Newton: Under the National Health (Charges to Overseas Visitors) Regulations 1982, a range of visitors who are exempt from charges. F subject to charge, treatment at or following any r from a special clinic for the treatment of transmitted diseases is nevertheless exempt from

We have concluded this exemption is too widely defined. Regulations being laid today redefine the exemption as being for treatment at such a special clinic or treatment for a sexually transmitted disease following a reference from such a clinic. They also restrict the exemption, in the case of infection with any human immunodeficiency virus, to diagnosis and counselling only and introduce a specific charge for any drug or medicine designed to treat such a virus and supplied to non-exempt overseas visitors as out-patients. Equivalent regulations are being laid for Scotland.

Consultants

Mr. Jack: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services, by specialty and for each regional health authority in England and Wales, what was *(a)* the number of consultants employed on full-time contracts, *(b)* the number of consultants employed on part-time contracts, *(c)* the number of hours worked by full-time consultants and *(d)* the number of hours worked by part-time consultants.

Mr. Newton: I regret that information in the precise form requested is not available, since we do not hold information on hours worked by consultants. However, such information as is readily available is given in two tables which I have placed in the Library. The first shows for each specialty and for each of the English regional health authorities and for Wales, the numbers of consultants at 30 September 1986 in the following categories:

i. Whole-time;
ii. maximum part-time;
iii. other part-time, distinguishing between those with nine sessions, those with less than nine sessions, and those on the doctors' retainer scheme; and
iv. doctors with honorary consultant contracts.

The second gives, again for each specialty and region, the average number of sessions for which consultants are contracted, distinguishing between thos or maximum part-time contracts and part-time or honorary contracts.

Contaminated Blood Prod

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Secre Social Services when he will answer the hon. Member for Birkenhead on 17 concerning the date Ministers were firs dangers of HIV infection from con products and asking for details of pr given to haemophilia centres regarding 1983.

Mr. Newton: I am replying to the ho

Babies (Birthweight)

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Secre Social Services if he will list the numb below 2,500 g for each of the last 10 years this data as a percentage of all births; an the social class of these babies by the c

Mrs. Currie *[holding answer 9*
Information on birthweight from ann DHSS form LHS 27/1 is given in table 1 not identify the social class of baby or

Information on birthweight from the births was first collected by the Offic Censuses and Surveys in 1975. The lev recording rose, and data were first pu when 87 per cent. of live births had a s Table 2, therefore, shows figures for li from 1980 to 1985, the latest year avail

Information on social class for illegiti shown as this is not collected on a compa for legitimate births. The social class d are derived from a sample of live births

Table 1
Number of live and still births of 2,500 grams and under birthweight and percentages of all births. England and W

Year	Livebirths 2,500g and under	Percentage of all livebirths	Stillbirths 2,500g and under	Percentage all stillbirt
1976	37,463	6·4	3,524	62
1977	36,917	6·5	3,462	65
1978	39,146	6·6	3,302	63
1979	43,028	6·7	3,316	65
1980	44,764	6·8	3,152	66
1981	43,079	6·8	2,751	66
1982	42,726	6·8	2,418	62
1983	42,568	6·8	2,282	63
1984	43,132	6·8	2,291	63
1985	44,531	6·8	2,282	63
1986	45,473	6·9	2,225	62

Source: DHSS, annual summaries of LHS 27/1 returns.

Table 2 Legitimate livebirths by birthweight and social class 1980-85
Live births *England and Wales*

Social class	All births	Birthweight (grams) Total stated birthweight	Under 2,500	Percentage under 2,500
1980				
I-V	558,938	480,895	30,330	6·3
I	40,803	35,473	1,882	5·3
II	123,586	107,857	5,680	5·3
IIIN	61,902	52,595	3,025	5·8
IIIM	212,279	181,843	11,991	6·6
IV	87,669	74,946	5,468	7·3
V	32,669	28,181	2,284	8·1
Other	19,924	16,758	1,031	6·2
1981				
I-V	53,376	508,347	31,194	6·1
I	41,064	39,252	2,149	5·5
II	122,249	116,317	5,542	4·8
IIIN	60,394	57,554	3,026	5·3
IIIM	198,234	188,871	12,299	6·5
IV	79,880	76,220	5,639	7·4
V	31,555	30,133	2,539	8·4
Other	20,150	19,267	1,209	6·3
1982				
I-V	516,946	492,446	30,526	6·2
I	40,894	39,022	2,091	5·4
II	118,383	113,148	6,206	5·5
IIIN	58,021	55,289	3,113	5·6
IIIM	189,654	181,087	11,550	6·4
IV	79,278	74,545	5,225	7·0
V	30,716	29,355	2,341	8·0
Other	20,128	19,367	1,151	5·9
1983				
I-V	509,133	508,513	31,135	6·1
I	39,249	39,199	1,951	5·0
II	116,979	116,849	6,393	5·5
IIIN	57,138	57,068	3,071	5·4
IIIM	188,184	187,994	11,536	6·1
IV	76,368	76,258	5,713	7·5
V	31,215	31,145	2,471	7·9
Other	20,150	20,710	1,480	7·1
1984				
I-V	504,190	503,710	32,760	6·5
I	39,640	39,630	2,190	5·5
II	115,180	115,020	6,270	5·5
IIIN	57,610	57,560	3,280	5·7
IIIM	185,480	185,300	12,530	6·8
IV	76,380	76,320	6,080	8·0
V	29,910	29,870	2,420	8·1
Other	22,160	22,010	1,310	6·0
1985				
I-V	504,800	504,140	32,630	6·5
I	40,000	39,930	2,100	5·3
II	118,380	118,240	6,670	5·6
IIIN	56,210	56,140	3,210	5·7
IIIM	184,320	184,120	12,740	6·9
IV	75,380	75,250	5,550	7·4
V	30,520	30,470	2,370	7·8
Other	25,330	25,240	1,650	6·5

Note: Rounded figures may not add exactly to totals.

Legitimate stillbirths by birthweight and social cla
England and Wales
Stillbirths

Social class	All births	Birthweight (grams) Total stated birthweight	Under 2,50
1980			
I-V	3,933	3,363	2,21
I	204	170	11
II	745	621	40
IIIN	387	328	20
IIIM	1,576	1,352	88
IV	708	619	41
V	313	273	19
Other	144	102	6
1981			
I-V	3,364	3,066	1,98
I	190	169	10
II	681	610	39
IIIN	335	308	18
IIIM	1,302	1,196	79
IV	576	529	33
V	280	254	16
Other	146	131	8
1982			
I-V	3,149	2,792	1,73
I	177	158	9
II	599	518	31
IIIN	334	298	18
IIIM	1,200	1,061	68
IV	590	533	31
V	249	224	14
Other	132	122	8
1983			
I-V	2,820	2,777	1,75
I	166	163	9
II	560	552	34
IIIN	279	276	15
IIIM	1,059	1,042	67
IV	535	527	33
V	221	217	14
Other	93	92	5
1984			
I-V	2,699	2,658	1,62
I	157	155	9
II	507	503	30
IIIN	267	260	14
IIIM	997	979	60
IV	515	509	32
V	256	252	15
Other	126	120	6
1985			
I-V	2,618	2,581	1,57
I	162	160	8
II	485	480	29
IIIN	291	288	18
IIIM	982	970	58
IV	477	468	28
V	221	215	14
Other	155	150	9

Hospital Closures

Mr. Lofthouse: To ask the Secretary of Sta
Services if he will list all those hospitals in E

have been *(a)* closed or *(b)* partially closed without having been referred to him, and where local consultation has not taken place:

Mrs. Currie *[holding answer 14 December 1987]:* Provision is made for urgent temporary closures to be implemented without consultation. We do not routinely collect statistics about hospital closures for which statutory consultation has not been necessary.

Medical Records

Mr. Kirkwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services whether he has begun discussions with the medical profession with a view to encouraging greater access by patients to their medical records on a non-statutory basis; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Currie *[holding answer 14 December 1987]:* Medical records are maintained for patient care and are used by doctors, nurses and other health professionals to help them in the diagnosis and treatment of patients. The primary purpose remains to record what is in the best interests of patients. We consider that as a matter of principle patients should have the right to know what has been recorded about them, subject to appropriate safeguards to protect those individuals who might otherwise be harmed by the uncontrolled disclosure of their personal health information.

Discussions have already taken place between officials and representatives of certain medical bodies and meetings with others are being arranged. When these discussions have been completed officials will rep
for achieving substantive and timely
up medical records further on a non-

Breast Cancer

Dr. Glyn: To ask the Secretary
Services what are the latest figures
breast cancer in women.

Mrs. Currie *[holding answer 18 D*
nearest available information on the
is the registration of newly diagnosed
provisional number of registrati
neoplasm of female breast ca
Classification of Diseases 9th revisio
and Wales in 1984 is 21,474; 13,641
disease in 1986 in England and Wale

"You and Your Dent

Mr. Wallace: To ask the Secretar
Services what was the cost of produ
"You and Your Dentist", and whethe
a revised edition.

Mrs. Currie *[holding answer 18*
understand that the copy for the boo
the National Consumer Council w
budget at £3,000. Her Majesty's
published the booklet on its normal
no cost to the council. The revision
matter for the council. (ISBN 0 1
£2·50.)

Written Answers to Questions

Tuesday 12 January 1988

WALES

Public Appointments

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will list the names of all the people appointed to public bodies by his Department who are currently in office, giving for each the office concerned and the date of appointment.

Mr. Wyn Roberts: This information could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Hedgerows

Mr. Geraint Howells: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many miles of hedgerows have been lost in Wales during the last 10 years; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Walker: Information is not available over this time scale. Results from the monitoring landscape change survey conducted by Huntings Technical Services and published in 1986 indicated that hedgerow length in Wales fell from approximately 77,688 miles in 1969 to approximately 70,850 miles in 1985.

Bistre Nursery School, Buckley

Mr. Barry Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what extra funds he will make available to the Clwyd local eduction authority in order that Bistre nursery school, Buckley, Clwyd, neither suffers cuts in its provision to the Buckley community nor faces the prospect of closure.

Mr. Wyn Roberts: It is for the Clwyd local education authority to determine its own priorities within the resources available to it. No statutory proposals for the future of the Bistre nursery school have been published by the authority.

Mr. Barry Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will visit the Bistre nursery school, to meet members of staff, county councillors and parent governors; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Wyn Roberts: We have no plans to visit Bistre nursery school.

Rating Reform

Mr. Barry Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if poll tax will be levied against the sisters of the Poor Clare's monastery, Ty Mam Duw, Aston Hall lane, Hawarden, Deeside, Clwyd; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Walker: The position of members of religious communities in relation to their liability for the community charge is under consideration. A decision will be announced in due course.

Assistance to Industry

Mr. Nicholas Bennett: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will make a statement on his plans for assistance to industry in Wales.

Mr. Peter Walker: I shall publish a statement entitled "Enterprise Wales"/"M and will place copies in the Library of the H describe my plans for increasing expenditur Office on industry in Wales in the next fin will set out changes to the industrial including the ending of regional developm the introduction of a number of new grant s no plans to change the geographical cover areas and regional selective assistance will available in these areas. I shall also be ma resources available for development agenc confident that the new programme w enterprise spirit and achieve significant im the competitiveness of Welsh industry.

PRIME MINISTER

Polish Foreign Minister

Q16. **Mr. Madel:** To ask the Prime matters she discussed with the Polish Forei 8 December; and if she will make a statem

The Prime Minister: My meeting wi Foreign Minister on 8 December was constructive. We discussed bilateral and matters, and the internal situation in Polan recent referendum. As the House kno Orzechowski renewed his authorities' invit visit Poland, which I accepted. I hope the place during the first half of this year.

RAF Greenham Common

Q56. **Mr. Cryer:** To ask the Prime Min next expects to pay an official visit to R Common.

The Prime Minister: I have at present no

Yorkshire

Q112. **Mr. Robert Banks:** To ask the Pr she will pay an official visit to Yorkshire.

The Prime Minister: I have at present no

Registration of Deaths

Mr. Barry Field: To ask the Prime Mi system for registration of deaths in Englan that in Scotland.

The Prime Minister: The death registrat England and Scotland are governed by sep provisions which arise from differences in th of the two countries and from the different f office of coroner and procurator fiscal.

Northern Ireland

Mr. Beggs: To ask the Prime M information she has about regional variatio

wholesale prices charged by major companies, with particular reference to Northern Ireland; what is her estimate of the effect of higher prices in Northern Ireland on the level of public expenditure there; what account is taken of these factors in determining social, employment and other policies in the Province; and if she will make a statement.

The Prime Minister: Price indices are not compiled on a regional basis. The level of public expenditure in Northern Ireland is determined by a wide range of factors which take into account the Province's particular circumstances including, where appropriate, prices and also wider national policies. The needs of Northern Ireland are reflected in the fact that public expenditure per capita on comparable programmes is substantially higher than elsewhere in the United Kingdom. Social, employment and other policies are similarly framed to take all relevant factors into account, including prices where appropriate, within the framework of national policy.

Public Appointments

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Prime Minister if she will list the names of all the people appointed to public bodies by her who are currently in office, giving for each the office concerned and the date of appointment.

The Prime Minister: This information could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Nigeria

Mr. Parry: To ask the Prime Minister if she will make a statement on her recent visit to Nigeria.

The Prime Minister: I paid a visit to Nigeria on 7 and 8 January at the invitation of President Babangida. In the course of this I had a long and very useful talk with the President, which covered all aspects of our bilateral relations as well as regional and international questions. I took the opportunity to express our strong support for Nigeria's economic recovery programme. I also put on record publicly the very positive practical contribution which Britain is making in southern Africa. I believe that the visit has contributed to strengthening our relations. I am particularly grateful for the very warm and friendly welcome which I received from many thousands of ordinary people.

Engagements

Mr. Butler: To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 12 January.

Mr. Harry Greenway: To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 12 January.

Mr. Stern: To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 12 January.

Mr. Atkinson: To ask the Prime Minister if she will li her official engagements for Tuesday 12 January.

The Prime Minister: This morning I had meetings wi ministerial colleagues and others. In additicn to my duti in the House I shall be having further meetings later toda

HOME DEPARTMENT

Metropolitan Police

Mr. Soley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Hon Department (1) what special features and factors are tak into account by the Commissioner of Police of t Metropolis in the staffing allocation formula referred in the annual report for 1986;

(2) what criteria are used by the Commissioner of Poli of the Metropolis as the basis for the formula for t allocation of police amongst the Metropolitan police are referred to in his annual report for 1986.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: I understand from t Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis that t manpower allocation formula is used as a means allocating the number of uniformed police constabl available between the eight areas of the Metropolit police district on an equitable basis. The formula tak account of the general demands on divisions includi calls for police assistance, the level of crime, the deman of crime prevention and traffic control, and the number traffic accidents. It covers also commitments not direct related to local demand such as the need to provide an and divisional support staff, mounted officers, d handlers, courts' staff and coroners' officers, and speci factors such as airports, the Palace of Westminster an major housing estates.

Mr. Soley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Hon Department what indicators are used by t Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis to assess t demand for police staffing levels other than the formu referred to in his annual report for 1986.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: The Commissioner of Police of t Metropolis takes account of a number of factors assessing the manpower requirements of the force. The include specific demands such as reported crime, traff accidents, public order and requests by the public f police assistance; and the extent to which t commissioner considers it necessary to undertake a varie of policing activities including the provision of a visib presence on the streets, involvement in communi projects and measures against, for example, stre robberies and organised crime. Within the framework the programme of annual manpower increases which m right hon. Friend announced in May 1986, manpow requirements are assessed in an annual manpower revie which examines the use being made of existing manpow and future manpower needs.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Public Appointments

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list the names of all the people appointed to public bodies by his Department who are currently in office, giving for each the office concerned and the date of appointment.

Mr. Hurd: This information could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Party Conferences (Policing Costs)

Mr. Pike: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he proposes to make any changes in Government funding for the policing cost of annual party political conferences in 1988.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: We have no plans to do so.

Police Manpower (Leicester)

Mr. Janner: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what representation he has received requesting additional police for Leicester.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: We have not recently received an application by the police authority for an increase in the authorised police establishment of the Leicestershire constabulary. My right hon. Friend will be prepared to consider any such application that may be put to him, in the light of advice from Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary.

Neighbourhood Watch Schemes

Mr. Chapman: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if there are any plans to extend further the number of neighbourhood watch schemes; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. John Patten: There are already over 42,000 neighbourhood watch schemes in England and Wales. They provide clear and welcome evidence of the public's willingness to help the police to prevent crime. We are sure that there is scope for the further development of the neighbourhood watch concept and for the establishment of new schemes. The Home Office is therefore preparing a further guidance note on neighbourhood watch which will draw examples of good practice from across the country to help and encourage those who are thinking of setting up new schemes or of expanding the range of activity within existing ones.

Charities

Mr. Teddy Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many charities have been investigated by the Charities Commission in each of the past three years on the issue of whether the charities concerned were incurring expenditure on non-charitable purposes; and what was the outcome of these inquiries.

Mr. John Patten: Information in the form requested is not available. However, I understand from the Charity Commission that of 1,000 complaints received by the charity commissioners in the 12 months to 31 July 1987 180 arose from allegations of dishonesty or fraud on the part of trustees, their agents or employees, or of trustees benefitting improperly from their trust. A further 80 complaints alleged inadvertant or deliberately improper political activities including the expenditure of charitable monies on such activities. In nine of these latter cases action was taken following investigations. In eight cases advice was given to trustees about campaigning. In the remaining case the commission required the cost of advertisements judged to be political in nature to be repaid to the charity. Similar information is not available for previous years.

Ministerial Visit (North Africa)

Mr. Parry: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on his recent visit to North Africa.

Mr. Hurd: I visited Tunisia from 3-6 January and Morocco from 6-10 January at the invitation of the Ministers of the Interior in both countries. With the object of further strengthening bilateral cooperation, our discussion centred upon combating international terrorism, organised crime and drug trafficking.

A joint communiqué on these matters was issued on 6 January on behalf of the British and Tunisian Governments. The Minister of the Interior of the Government of the Kingdom of Morocco and I signed a memorandum of understanding between our two Governments on 7 January. Texts of both documents will be placed in the Library. During my visit I had the honour to be received by His Majesty King Hassan II of Morocco and by President Zine el Abidene Ben Ali of Tunisia.

I believe that these visits illustrated the increased and specific openings which now exist for reinforcing in practical ways our traditional friendships with Tunisia and Morocco.

Local Radio

Mr. Thurnham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement about split frequency broadcasting on local radio.

Mr. Hurd: As noted in our Green Paper "Radio: Choices and Opportunities", published in February 1987, local radio services normally broadcast the same programme on medium wave and VHF/FM frequencies. Approval has, however, been given from time to time to the broadcasting of separate programmes on the two frequencies for a limited period to meet local needs, and in 1985 the Government approved an experiment in which selected BBC and independent local radio (ILR) stations undertook split frequency broadcasting for up to 10 hours a week. The experiment enabled the stations to address specialist or majority audiences, to provide alternative speech or music services and to offer a different emphasis in their programmes.

The experiment has been successful in achieving these aims, and listeners have welcomed the enhanced range of choice that it allowed. In the light of the experiment, the BBC and IBA have suggested that local radio stations should be able to split frequencies at any time at the discretion of the broadcasting authorities. This approach would be consistent with the proposals in our Green Paper, which were that simulcasting — the automatic

broadcasting of the same programme on two frequencies — should be phased out. I have therefore given my approval to the proposals from the BBC and IBA, and invited them to proceed with split frequency broadcasting.

ENVIRONMENT

Land Disposal

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what guidance his Department issues to local authorities on tendering to get the best price when disposing of land assets.

Mr. Waldegrave: None. Except where special provisions apply, as in the case of disposals pursuant to the right to buy, a local authority may dispose of land held by it in any manner it wishes, but it must obtain the Secretary of State's consent for any disposal for a consideration less than the best that can reasonably be obtained. It is for the local authority to consider what professional advice it should receive when it contemplates the sale of a particular site.

Mr. Pike: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how many times in the last 12 months he has used his powers to direct councils to dispose of any land held by them.

Mr. Chope: Under section 98 of the Local Government, Planning and Land Act 1980, the Secretary of State may direct certain public bodies to dispose of the interest held by them in any land entered on the register, compiled by him under section 95 of that Act. He has used that power 25 times in the past 12 months in respect of land owned by local authorities.

Public Appointments

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list the names of all the people appointed to public bodies by his Department who are currently in office, giving for each the office concerned and the date of appointment.

Mr. Ridley: This information could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

London Docklands Development Corporation

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment whether the undertakings given by the deputy chairman of the London Docklands Development Corporation in his letter to the Docklands Forum of 24 September 1987 still apply, following his removal from office.

Mr. Trippier: Yes.

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment when he expects to announce the name of the new deputy chairman of the London Docklands Development Corporation; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Trippier: Soon.

London City Airport

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) if any discussions have taken place between his Department and the London Dockl Development Corporation on the use of London airport by jet aircraft; and if he will make a statemer

(2) if any consideration is being given by the Aviation Authority or his Department to the use of 146-200 aircraft at London City airport; and if he make a statement.

Mr. Trippier: No proposals have been put to Department about the use of jets at London City airp The Department has, however, on a contingency b sought and received assurances from LDDC that planning applications concerning future uses of the air will be drawn to the Department's attention. The discussions which have taken place have concer safeguarding arrangements.

Departmental Publications

Mr. Andrew MacKay: To ask the Secretary of State the Environment what plans he has to make availabl Department's publications "Grant-Related Expendi 1988-89" and "The Technical Handbook of Gr Related Expenditure 1988-89".

Mr. Chope: My right hon. Friend has today pla copies of these documents in the Library of the Ho Copies have also been sent to every local authorit England, and to the local authority associations.

Rating Reform

Mr. Rooker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment if, pursuant to his answer of 15 Decem *Official Report*, column *458*, and 16 December, *Off Report*, columns *521-22*, he will give details of calculations used to assess the contribution to l services via the grant system from national taxation of 10 per cent. of households with the highest inco compared to that of the 10 per cent. with lowest incor

Mr. Howard *[holding answer 11 January 1988]:* U a sample of households grouped into deciles of g income, the calculations involved the following stages

(i) Calculate the amount of local spending funded national taxation as a multiple of income f domestic rates (less rebates).

(ii) Taking the figure produced by (i), calculate the amo of national taxation accounted for by centrally fun contributions to local taxation.

(iii) Calculate the amount produced by (ii) as a propor of total national taxation.

(iv) Assuming that the proportion at (iii) applied equall all households, estimate the amount of nati taxation paid as a contribution to local autho spending by the top and bottom deciles of househ by income.

Water Industry

Ms. Richardson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment (1) what steps he intends to take to en consumers in the water industry to charge suppliers in event of unsatisfactory service;

(2) what arrangements will be taken to ensure water public limited companies replace and update m in order to minimise flooding, interruptions of supply the potential for pollution;

(3) what powers he plans to seek to ensure that necessary levels of capital expenditure are spent on water and sewage infrastructure in the final years of a water public limited company's licence period;

(4) what legal sanctions will be available against those water public limited companies which fail to provide a wholesome or adequate water supply; who will be able to employ such sanctions; and who will define whether or not a supply is adequate;

(5) what duties there will be on water public limited companies to make interim arrangements for alternative supplies and to provide appropriate information to consumers in the event of mains repairs, bursts or other interruptions of normal supply;

(6) what arrangements will be made to provide compensation for householders for damage arising from faulty or leaking mains in the event of water privatisation;

(7) whether, in the event of privatisation of the water industry, water public limited companies will have a similar duty to that now exercised by the water undertakers to provide, wherever possible, supplies of water for fire-fighting purposes; and whether the existing mains in tall buildings such as tower blocks will be fitted with water meters to assist in fire fighting;

(8) how the privatisation of the water industry will affect the maintaining and regulatory functions of local authorities with regard to water and sewage in pipes and drains, ponds, cesspools, and so on;

(9) what arrangements are being made for the control of rats in sewers and the proper maintenance and repair of sewers in the event of water privatisation.

Mr. Moynihan *[holding answer 11 January 1988]:* The privatised water utility companies will have obligations towards their customers identical in most respects to those of the water authorities at present. However, consultation papers issued in 1986 proposed changes in water and sewerage law and in the law relating to drinking water quality. The legislation to privatise the authorities will take those changes into consideration. Local authority responsibilities in respect of non-mains drainage and drinking water quality will be unchanged. The legislation and the system of regulation will ensure that water utility companies provide an effective service to customers throughout the period of their appointments. The legislation to privatise the water authorities, which will be introduced as soon as possible, will take those changes into consideration.

Housing White Paper

Mr. Soley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment whether he will put copies of the responses to the consultation exercise on the housing White Paper in the Library.

Mr. Waldegrave *[pursuant to his reply, 16 November 1987, c. 419]:* I have today placed in the Library of the House a copy of responses we have so far received to the housing White Paper and related consultation documents from those respondents who have indicated that they are content for their views to be made public.

AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FOOD

Hedgerows

Mr. Cummings: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, pursuant to his reply of 4 November, *Official Report*, column *723*, if he has any proposals to make the 60 per cent. grant for the provision, replacement or improvement of hedgerows available to local authorities; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Donald Thompson: I have no powers to pay grant to local authorities.

Fish

Mr. John D. Taylor: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what is the total tonnage of fish landed in *(a)* Scotland, *(b)* England, *(c)* Wales and *(d)* Northern Ireland in each of the past five years.

Mr. Donald Thompson: The following shows the total tonnage of fish caught by British vessels and landed in Scotland, England, Wales and Northern Ireland over the years 1982 to 1986 (information for 1987 is not yet available).

Country	*1982 tonnes*	*1983 tonnes*	*1984 tonnes*	*1985 tonnes*	*1986 tonnes*
Scotland	498,187	499,121	543,312	592,570	551,290
England	237,130	220,676	163,940	137,891	136,332
Wales	14,040	9,819	7,851	9,005	9,603
Northern Ireland	25,278	18,806	18,549	22,587	20,481

Public Appointments

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will list the names of all the people appointed to public bodies by his Department who are currently in office, giving for each the office concerned and the date of appointment.

Mr. Donald Thompson: This information could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

EC (Free Food)

Sir Hector Monro: To ask the Secretary of State for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food whether he has yet completed his consideration of the implications of the European Community free food scheme; and whether he will make a statement.

Mr. MacGregor: The scheme provides for member states to make available to designated organisations food from intervention stores for distribution to the most needy. The Government continue to believe that such a scheme is an inappropriate way of dealing with the

surpluses, but do not wish to deprive these United Kingdom citizens of having the possibility of arrangements available to consumers in the Community as a whole.

The Government have therefore considered how the scheme could be applied in this country. We have decided to make butter and beef available, subject to Commission authorisation, in response to specific applications received from charitable or non-profit-making organisations which meet appropriate conditions. Quantities made available would be limited to amounts specifically authorised by the European Commission within the finance available. The Commission has said that up to about £10 million worth of product could be authorised for distribution in the United Kingdom in 1988. I am arranging for further details of the arrangements to be sent today to the relevant representative bodies, and I am placing a copy of this information in the Library.

DEFENCE

Geo-magnetism

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what use his Department makes of research conducted in the United Kingdom into problems of geo-magnetism; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Sainsbury: The sea and air charts and land maps produced by MOD show magnetic declination and its annual change. These values come from five-yearly epoch global data sets produced in part by British Geological Survey and part by the United States Naval Oceanographic Office as a joint project. The basic data come from magnetic observations worldwide.

In 1986 MOD commissioned British Geological Survey to produce a regional magnetic model for Europe.

Public Appointments

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list the names of all the people appointed to public bodies by his Department who are currently in office, giving for each the office concerned and the date of appointment.

Mr. Sainsbury: This information could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Air/Sea Rescue Services

Mrs. Margaret Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list in the *Official Report* those organisations his Department has consulted in the evaluation of air/sea rescue services; and if he is yet in a position to make a statement.

Mr. Freeman: The study into proposals put forward by Bristow Helicopters Ltd., suggesting that the search and rescue helicopter service currently provided by the RAF and RN should be put to commercial contract, has been conducted within the Ministry of Defence. A number of external organisations have made representations to my Department, and these are being fully taken into account in our consideration, which is continuing.

International Military Supplies Office, Tehran

Mr. Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to his reply of 16 December, *Official Report*, column *536*, regarding the International Supplies Office in Tehran; what is the purpos office; how many people are employed in Tehra Iranian citizens; and what is the address.

Mr. Sainsbury: IMS (Iran) Ltd. was set up i has its office in Tehran (PO Box 19395/1695). Its before the revolution were limited to mai ministrative arrangements in Iran in support of th contracts between International Military Services the Iranian Government. Following the revol office was kept open with a skeleton staff to processing the negotiation and settlement of contracts. This office remains open, although present it is on a care-and-maintenance basis, one member of staff, an Iranian citizen. The posit office is reviewed by IMS regularly.

Defence Contracts

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of Defence, pursuant to his reply of 26 Novem *Official Report*, column *281*, if he will give deta the eight companies prosecuted since 1979 ove contracts and *(b)* names of the companies s investigation.

Mr. Sainsbury: The eight prosecutions wer individual directors or employees of defence co not the companies.

Chieftain Tank

Mr. John Townend: To ask the Secretary of Defence what are his Department's plans replacement of the Chieftain tank.

Mr. Sainsbury: Following a re-examination developments in future tank technology the M Defence has been considering the time scale in might need to replace the Chieftain tanks whic service in BAOR in the middle and late 1960s. reviewing possible overseas options the M discussing with Vickers Defence Systems possibility of adopting an improved versio Challenger tank. This would be attractive in commonality and interoperability within the Br fleet. No decisions have, however, yet been tak timing of a Chieftain replacement and the M continuing seriously to examine both the Challenger and other possible options.

Service Hospitals

Mr. Jessel: To ask the Secretary of State fo if he will provide in the *Official Report* full lists Royal Navy, Army and Royal Air Force hospita all service establishments which contain in-patien facilities, listing in each case the number established, the number of beds occupied on a convenient date, the nursing establishment and t number of nurses currently employed.

Mr. Freeman *[pursuant to his reply, 17 Decem c. 655]:* The additional information for Military in the United Kingdom is as follows, reflecting th at 1200 on 6 January 1988:

		RNH Haslar	RNH Plymouth	BMH Aldershot	BMH Catterick	BMH Woolwich	RAF(H) Ely	RAF(H) Halton	RAF(H) Wroughton	T
Number of Beds										
Complemented	(1)	305	133	309	150	482	170	170	280	1,
Available	(2)	228	98	261	130	427	170	170	238	1,
Occupied	(3)	194	84	146	67	292	149	116	179	1,
Nurses										
Complement	(4)	338 (156)	172 (52)	240 (21)	114 (21)	382 (60)	170 (28)	149 (0)	226 (25)	1, (3
Available for wards	(5)	185	92	255	64	309	136	127	167	1,
On duty on day or wards	(6)	143	62	131	26	160	68	79	93	

Notes:
1. The figures in brackets at line 4 show the number of trainee posts included in the establishment.
2. Line 5 includes 42 agency staff working 1 shift on the day.
3. Line 6 shows the total nursing staff on the wards in three shifts.
4. At the stated time there were 34 trainees temporarily attached to RNH Haslar and 67 trainees temporarily attached to BMH Alder from overseas hospitals which were additional to the United Kingdom establishments. This is partly reflected in the imbalance of fig for the BMH Aldershot in lines 4 and 5.

ATTORNEY-GENERAL

Public Appointments

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Attorney-General if he will list the names of all the people appointed to public bodies by the Law Officers' Departments who are currently in office, giving for each the office concerned and the date of appointment.

The Attorney-General: I make no appointments to public bodies. A list of the names of those appointed by the Lord Chancellor and his Department could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

EDUCATION AND SCIENCE

Education Expenditure

Mr. Nicholas Bennett: To ask the Secretary of State Education and Science if he will list all local educat authorities in England in rank order of expenditure secondary pupil per year, starting with the hig spending authority, together with their position in table of examination results for school leavers achie five or more O-levels at grades A to C or CSE grade the latest year for which figures are available.

Mrs. Rumbold: The information requested is as follo

Secondary Schools—England 1985-86

	Expenditure[1] Per pupil £	Examination results[2] Percentage of leavers achieving defined results	Ranking
1 ILEA	2,085	16·2	86
2 Haringey	1,710	21·3	61
3 Brent	1,590	17·8	78
4 Waltham Forest	1,540	12·2	95
5 Ealing	1,460	15·9	87
6 Manchester	1,425	17·6	80
7 Croydon	1,355	24·4	39
8 Newcastle-upon-Tyne	1,345	15·4	88
9 Harrow	1,340	43·1	1
10 Barnet	1,330	40·1	3
11 Havering	1,325	24·9	37
12 Kingston-upon-Thames	1,325	41·3	2
13 Knowsley	1,320	12·3	94
14 Hillingdon	1,315	20·7	64
15 Coventry	1,310	21·1	62
16 North Tyneside	1,295	19·4	70
17 Hounslow	1,290	20·7	65
18 Redbridge	1,290	27·3	18
19 Rochdale	1,275	18·2	76
20 Barking	1,260	10·0	96
21 Sheffield	1,260	18·1	77
22 Bromley	1,255	29·8	10
23 South Tyneside	1,255	19·7	68
24 Liverpool	1,250	16·3	85
25 Enfield	1,245	24·0	44
26 Sandwell	1,230	14·5	90
27 Wigan	1,230	29·9	9
28 Wolverhampton	1,225	13·9	92

		Expenditure[1] Per pupil £	Examination results[2] Percentage of leavers achieving defined results	Ranking
29	Nottinghamshire	1,220	18·4	72
30	Leicestershire	1,205	21·6	59
31	Richmond-upon-Thames	1,200	25·2	34
32	Salford	1,200	21·6	60
33	Bexley	1,195	25·5	30
34	Oxfordshire	1,190	23·5	48
35	Walsall	1185	18·3	73
36	Gateshead	1,185	20·1	66
37	Hertfordshire	1,180	29·2	12
38	Birmingham	1,175	17·5	81
39	Bury	1,175	26·6	24
40	Cleveland	1,175	28·1	13
41	Barnsley	1,165	15·0	89
42	Tameside	1,160	24·3	40
43	Avon	1,160	25·5	31
44	St. Helens	1,150	22·0	56
45	Sunderland	1,150	18·3	75
46	Berkshire	1,150	27·3	17
47	Doncaster	1,145	17·2	82
48	Trafford	1,140	32·2	6
49	Bedfordshire	1,140	25·4	32
50	Buckinghamshire	1,140	30·9	8
51	Sutton	1,135	27·7	16
52	Dudley	1,125	20·1	67
53	Sefton	1,125	25·7	29
54	Wirral	1,125	22·0	57
55	Derbyshire	1,125	22·5	58
56	Humberside	1,125	19·4	69
57	Shropshire	1,125	24·3	42
58	Staffordshire	1,125	24·6	38
59	Solihull	1,115	27·2	20
60	Bolton	1,115	23·7	45
61	Stockport	1,115	22·7	53
62	Essex	1,115	26·0	27
63	Calderdale	1,110	22·6	54
64	North Yorkshire	1,110	32·9	5
65	Northamptonshire	1,110	20·9	63
66	Surrey	1,110	34·1	4
67	Oldham	1,095	13·9	91
68	Cumbria	1,095	25·1	35
69	Devon	1,095	23·5	47
70	Durham	1,095	18·9	71
71	Gloucestershire	1,095	28·1	14
72	Lancashire	1,095	25·0	36
73	Norfolk	1,095	23·0	50
74	Wakefield	1,090	17·8	79
75	Cheshire	1,090	27·2	19
76	Bradford	1,085	16·5	84
77	East Sussex	1,085	25·9	28
78	Warwickshire	1,085	27·8	15
79	Northumberland	1,075	29·5	11
80	Rotherham	1,070	18·3	74
81	Hampshire	1,065	26·3	26
82	Leeds	1,060	21·9	58
83	Hereford and Worcester	1,060	26·8	23
84	West Sussex	1,060	31·3	7
85	Kirklees	1,055	25·3	33
86	Wiltshire	1,055	24·3	41
87	Cornwall	1,045	26·4	25
88	Cambridgeshire	1,040	22·9	51
89	Somerset	1,040	23·2	49
90	Dorset	1,030	27·1	21
91	Isle of Wight	1,030	16·7	83
92	Suffolk	1,030	22·9	52
93	Lincolnshire	1,025	24·2	43
94	Kent	1,015	26·9	22

Notes:

[1] The recurrent institutional expenditure per secondary school pupil (1985-86 cash) is based on LEA returns of expenditur of pupil numbers to DES.

[2] The examination results ranking is based on a departmental survey sample of 10 per cent. of all school leavers in each L special school pupils) who have attained the minimum school leaving age. The percentages quoted do not reflect pupils who GCE qualifications after leaving school, or those who achieved vocational or other qualifications either at school or rankings make no allowance for differing socio-economic factors (see DES statistical bulletin 13/84).

[3] Expenditure figures are not available for Merton and Newham, which rank 46th and 93rd respectively on examination res

Public Appointments

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will list the names of all the people appointed to public bodies by his Department who are currently in office, giving for each the office concerned and the date of appointment.

Mrs. Rumbold: This information could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Assessment and Testing (Report)

Mr. Summerson: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will publish the report of the task group on assessment and testing.

Mr. Kenneth Baker: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Wales and I are publishing today the report of the task group on assessment and testing. Copies are being placed in the Library of the House, made available to members of the Committee on the Education Reform Bill, and are available on request from my Department. A shorter version is being prepared for distribution to schools within the next few weeks. I am very grateful to the task group's chairman, Professor Paul Black, and his fellow members for the speed and thoroughness with which they have discharged their task. Their report will make an important contribution to the development of arrangements to underpin the national curriculum in schools, provided for in the Education Reform Bill now before Parliament.

The report recommends a national assessment system, including testing, which incorporates the main features of the Government's proposals. It provides for assessment related to clear objectives at ages 7, 11, 14 and 16 which takes account of differences in ability and maturity; for a balanced mixture of national testing and other assessment by teachers during the course of their work, and for reporting on pupils' attainments in ways which are comprehensible and helpful and which recognise the sensitivities of publishing information about the results of assessment. It lays emphasis on formative assessment of a child's positive achievements in order to help further learning as the basis of a national assessment system. It makes clear that a system along these lines could play a substantial part in the professional development of teachers, in raising standards of teaching and learning, and in improving parental and public confidence in our education system.

My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Wales and I welcome the broad framework proposed in the report and will be considering its detailed recommendations. We shall be happy to receive comments on those recommendations. I am asking the mathematics and science working groups, and the Kingman committee on English, to take this broad framework into account in their work on attainment targets and related assessment arrangements in their subjects. My right hon. Friend and I will be giving similar guidance, subject to refinements which may be needed in the light of comments on the recommendations, to other subject working groups which may be set up.

I am inviting the task group to continue in being for a further period, in order to undertake more detailed study of arrangements for implementing and administering the national assessment system; to discuss, with working groups and others, more specific criteria for asse arrangements in different subjects; and to offer advice as necessary in the light of the public reactio report.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFF

Public Appointments

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for and Commonwealth Affairs if he will list the nam the people appointed to public bodies by his Dep who are currently in office, giving for each th concerned and the date of appointment.

Mrs. Chalker: I regret that this information c provided only at disproportionate cost.

Council of Ministers

Mr. Jacques Arnold: To ask the Secretary of S Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will pu the *Official Report* a statement of forthcoming bu the European Community Council of Ministers.

Mrs. Chalker: The usual forecast was deposite House last week. At present, only two meeting Council of Ministers are planned for January.

The Agriculture Council meets on 18/19 Janu is expected to discuss preparations for the E Council, beef balance sheets and quotas, and the e of Greek national measures for table olives.

The Foreign Affairs Council will meet o January. Discussion will cover the Community's situation and progress made in negotiations with on a trade and co-operation agreement.

Iran (Exports)

Mr. Robertson: To ask the Secretary of S Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he proposals for changes in the guidelines issued t manufacturers to further limit exports to Iran include non-lethal equipment ancillary to lethal equipment; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Mellor: Subject to any United Natio embargo resolution to enforce SCR 598, we have to change the guidelines on the sale of military eq to Iran and Iraq. These already prohibit the exp defence-related equipment that could significa hance the capability of either side to prolong or ex the conflict. We continue to urge other countries similar stringent measures.

Iranian Arms Procurement Agency

Mr. Robertson: To ask the Secretary of S Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many of staff formerly employed by the Irania Procurement Agency at 4 Victoria street, Lond left the United Kingdom since his Department an that it was to be closed.

Mr. Mellor: Following our decision to close th Military Procurement Offices, all 34 Irani previously employed there have left the United K

SCOTLAND

Abortions

Mr. Steel: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many and what proportion of late abortions carried out in Scotland are to women aged under 20 years.

Mr. Rifkind: There is no universally accepted definition of late abortion. The number of notifications of abortions performed under the Abortion Act 1967 on women aged under 20 years resident in Scotland in 1986 carried out at 21 completed weeks gestation and over is five, which represents 20 per cent. of all abortions at this gestational age carried out in Scotland.

Nursery Education

Mrs. Fyfe: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will list, by sex, the number of children in each local education authority in Scotland who receive nursery education.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: The provisional number of children in education authority nursery schools at September 1987 is as follows:

Authority	*Boys*	*Girls*	*Total*
Borders	202	195	397
Central	1,255	1,250	2,505
Dumfries/ Galloway	227	208	435
Fife	2,242	2,037	4,279
Grampian	1,445	1,256	2,701
Highland	348	276	624
Lothian	4,157	3,860	8,017
Strathclyde	9,019	8,711	17,730
Tayside	1,253	1,149	2,402
Orkney	43	42	85
Shetland	54	56	110
Western Isles	—	—	—
All Scotland	20,245	19,040	39,285

Public Appointments

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of St
if he will list the names of all the peopl
public bodies by his Department who a
office, giving for each the office concerned
appointment.

Mr. Rifkind: I have today placed in the
of the letter I have sent to the hon. M
information requested.

Traffic Statistics

Mr. Foulkes: To ask the Secretary of St
what are the latest traffic figures recorded
of the following roads: (i) A74, (ii) A75, (i
and (v) M8.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: Traf
these roads vary at different locations. T
illustrative annual daily averages for differ
1986:

A74 (south) 14,000-20,000
(central) 15,000-30,000
A75 (Dumfries-A74) 8,000-12,000
A76 (Dumfries-New Cumnock) 3,00
(New Cumnock-Kilmarnock) 5,
A77 (Girvan-Maybole) 5,000-7,000
(Maybole-South Ayr) 5,000-10,
(South Ayr-A78) 10,000-20,000
M8 (Newbridge-Newhouse) 25,000-

Road Accident Statistics

Mr. Foulkes: To ask the Secretary of S
what are the figures for all road accidents
serious injury and those involving fatalitie
A75, (iii) A76, (iv) A77 and (v) M8 for eac
to 1986; and what are the monthly figure
available month for 1987.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: T
requested is as follows:

	1979	*1980*	*1981*	*1982*	*1983*	*1984*	*1985*	*1986*
A74								
Total	215	185	163	164	169	180	198	196
Fatal	15	6	13	13	12	10	14	17
Serious	67	70	54	70	60	56	55	64
A75								
Total	129	136	135	110	106	103	112	120
Fatal	14	13	9	4	8	7	8	9
Serious	26	25	37	31	40	36	37	46
A76								
Total	93	87	88	95	78	73	78	95
Fatal	6	5	6	4	9	1	2	2
Serious	36	30	33	25	25	18	20	17
A77								
Total	300	299	302	262	254	288	299	280
Fatal	9	15	13	14	15	8	13	14
Serious	80	80	90	87	76	85	78	64
M8								
Total	182	158	147	158	146	126	151	152
Fatal	5	9	5	9	8	7	4	6
Serious	53	51	49	51	37	38	49	31

1987 (provisional)

	January	February	March	April	May	June
A74						
Total	8	16	9	9	25	12
Fatal	1	2	—	—	—	—
Serious	4	4	3	3	8	2
A75						
Total	5	9	7	2	7	10
Fatal	1	1	—	—	—	1
Serious	3	1	2	1	4	4
A76						
Total	11	3	5	8	8	7
Fatal	—	—	—	—	—	—
Serious	4	1	1	2	2	4
A77						
Total	14	19	15	18	14	19
Fatal	—	—	—	—	1	—
Serious	3	7	7	2	6	7
M8						
Total	8	9	11	11	8	8
Fatal	1	—	—	2	—	1
Serious	1	2	4	3	2	1

Regional Aid

Mr. Gordon Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how much he has paid out in the current year in *(a)* regional development grant and *(b)* regional selective assistance; and how much he expects to pay in 1988-89, 1989-90 and 1990-91.

Mr. Lang *[holding answer 17 December 1987]:* Gross expenditures on regional development grant (RDG) and regional selective assistance (RSA) under section 7 of the Industrial Development Act 1982 in the period April to November 1987 were £40 million and £19 million respectively. As my right hon. and learned Friend has announced, net provision for his industry, energy, trade and employment programme, which includes regional assistance, for 1988-89, 1989-90 and 1990-91 is £266 million, £260 million and £260 million respectively. Further detail will, as usual, be published in the annual "Scottish Commentary" on public expenditure. In addition full details of my right hon. and learned Friend's proposals for 1988-89 will appear in the Supply Estimates.

Cunninghame, North (Grants)

Mr. Wilson: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will give total amounts paid in Cunninghame, North constituency by the Scottish Development Agency and the Highlands and Islands Development Board since 1979 in cash terms and also at 1987 prices.

Mr. Lang *[holding answer 30 October 1987]:* As a result of changes in constituency boundaries the information in respect of the Scottish Development Agency is available only from 1983-84 and relates to all recognised schemes of agency financial assistance. The information is set out in the table.

Scottish Development Agency Expenditure

	Cash Terms £000	Percentage Change	1986-87 Prices £000
1983-84	475	—	542
1984-85	394	−17·1	430
1985-86	438	+11·2	451
1986-87	333	−24·0	333

Highlands and Islands Development Board Expen

	Cash Terms £000	Percentage Change	1986-87 Prices £000
1979	154	—	256
1980	193	+25·3	271
1981	233	+20·7	298
1982	374	+60·5	446
1983	443	+18·4	505
1984	385	−13·1	421
1985	672	+74·5	692
1986	326	−51·5	326

Note: The HIDB operates only in the Arran and Cumb the constituency. The figures, which are only available include approved expenditure by HIDB (net of known on grants, loans and shares for economic projects and and board project expenditure. Board expenditure surveys and publicity is not allocated to geographical a

Aberdeen (Grants)

Mr. Robert Hughes: To ask the Secretary o Scotland if he will publish in the *Official Repo* amount of grant to industrial projects in constituency of Aberdeen, North and *(b)* Aberd Scottish Development Agency or the Depa Trade and Industry for each year since 1979 terms and (ii) real terms in 1986-87 prices, sh percentage changes in payments between years

Mr. Lang *[holding answer 26 October 1987]:* of changes in constituency boundaries the info respect of the Scottish Development Agency i

only from 1983-84 and relates to all recognised schemes of agency financial assistance. The information is set out in the table below:

Scottish Development Agency Expenditure

	Cash terms £ thousand	Percentage change	Real terms £ thousand	Percentage change
Aberdeen North				
1983-84	53	—	60	—
1984-85	261	+392·5	285	+375·0
1985-86	59	−77·4	61	−78·6
1986-87	64	+8·5	64	+4·9
Aberdeen City				
1983-84	146	—	167	—
1984-85	405	+177·4	442	+164·7
1985-86	1,332	+228·9	1,372	+210·4
1986-87	198	−85·1	198	−85·6

Information on expenditure by th Trade and Industry is not available in th

OVERSEAS DEVELOPM

Charitable Bodies

Mr. Teddy Taylor: To ask the Secr Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs charitable bodies which his Departm provide tables showing the amounts de recent five years for which figures are general purposes for which the grants

Mr. Chris Patten: The information

Overseas Development Administration

	1982-83 £'000	1983-84 £'000	1984-85 £'000	1985-86 £'000
(i) Joint Funding Scheme				
OXFAM	1,200	1,200	1,450	1,650
Christian Aid	330	330	700	900
Save the Children Fund	—	—	—	675
CAFOD	100	100	300	375
Other[1]	760	885	1,379	1,281
(ii) Volunteers				
British Volunteer Programme	4,027	5,071	6,045	7,049
British Executive Service Overseas	283	284	259	246
(iii) Other grants to specified charities[2]				
British Red Cross	15	15	20	19
League of Red Cross Societies	50	1,070	2,945	1,707
International Red Cross	1,150	4,225	3,295	5,220
Disasters Emergency Committee	—	—	1,000	—
Christians Abroad	5	6	10	7
Royal Commonwealth Society for the Blind	13	—	—	—
Women's Corona Society	32	49	29	27
Plunkett Foundation	6	7	7	7
Co-operative Union Ltd.	10	—	—	—
Other grants for refugee relief and development projects	167	374	231	810
Diplomatic Wing				
British Atlantic Council[3]	44	45	47	49
British Youth Council[4]	42	44	44	43
United Kingdom Immigrants Advisory Service (Bangladesh)	12	13	13	14

[1] Includes Save the Children Fund figures for 1982-83 to 1984-85.
[2] Excludes disaster relief and food aid channelled through charities.
[3] To assist in the promotion of and knowledge and understanding of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation.
[4] Support for the council's international activities and to enable it to carry out a programme of activities in pursuan the final act (Helsinki 1975) of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Public Appointments

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will list the names of all the people appointed to public bodies by his Department who are currently in office, giving for each the office concerned and the date of appointment.

Mr. Stanley: This information could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Standard Capital Grants

Mr. Charles Wardle: To ask the Se Northern Ireland if he will make a stat of the standard capital grants scheme

Mr. Viggers: This scheme, which is Ireland, provides automatic grant ass rate of 12·5 per cent. on capital expen manufacturing sectors of industry. It creation criteria or conditions.

Recent reviews of the scheme, including a major survey of firms claiming standard capital grant, have shown that it contains substantial deadweight — in most cases the investment would have proceeded without Government financial assistance — and has the effect of distorting competition within Northern Ireland. These and other shortcomings have led me to conclude that the scheme no longer constitutes an effective means of stimulating economic activity in Northern Ireland, nor does it provide good value for public money.

For these reasons the Government have decided to abolish the standard capital grant scheme and to concentrate the industrial development effort on the wide range of selective assistance available from the Industrial Development Board and the local enterprise development unit. I am convinced that available resources should be targeted much more selectively if they are to have the maximum beneficial effect in strengthening the economy. this underlines the Government's policy to encourage enterprising firms in developing quality products, seeking out new markets and improving their competitiveness.

I shall shortly be publishing a proposal for an Order in Council to terminate the scheme in respect of expenditure incurred after 31 March 1988. Applications for such assistance will, however, continue to be accepted by the Department of Economic Development until 31 March 1990.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

British Steel Corporation (Rates)

Mr. Andrew Welsh: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what are *(a)* the rateable values and *(b)* the rates payable for the British Steel Corporation's integrated steelworks; and on what basis they are levied.

Mr. Atkins: The rateable values and rates payable for the British Steel Corporation's integrated steel works are as follows:

Integrated works	*Rateable values* £	*Rates payable* £
England		
Teeside	4,600,000	14,091,640
Scunthorpe	4,078,000	10,884,998
Wales		
Llanwern	3,552,120	8,227,588
Port Talbot	3,292,000	8,757,707
Scotland		
Ravenscraig	7,320,000	5,892,600

These figures relate to the 1987-88 rate year which ends on 31 March 1988. The rates are levied on the rate in the pound adopted for other non-domestic properties in the particular area of the rating authority. The works are assessed in accordance with general rating law and not under any special statutory formula.

Acrylic Yarn

Sir John Farr: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what has been the import in tonnes of acrylic yarn from Turkey in each of the last three years.

Mr. Alan Clark: United Kingdom imports of acrylic yarns from Turkey were: 1984 — 44·7 metric tonnes; 1985 — 611·0 metric tonnes; and 1986 (provisional) — 3,227·4 metric tonnes.

Military Equipment (Exports to Ir

Mr. Robertson: To ask the Chancellor of t Lancaster what exports for non-lethal militar have been authorised for export to Iran since 1987.

Mr. Alan Clark: It has been the practice Governments not to make public information

Imports

Mr. Barry Jones: To ask the Chancellor o of Lancaster what is the value *(a)* by cash tonnage of imports for each year since 1980.

Mr. Alan Clark: Information on imports and so on is not available. For information of imports I refer the hon. Member to t Abstract of Statistics 1986 edition" and "Ov Statistics Annual 1985" and December 19 copies of which are available in the Library.

Mr. Barry Jones: To ask the Chancellor o of Lancaster what is the value of imports of c the EEC, *(b)* Japan, and *(c)* other world sou United Kingdom annually since 1980 giving value and (ii) number of units.

Mr. Alan Clark: The information is g following table:

United Kingdom imports of cars 1980 to 1

	EEC		*Japan*		*Res*
Year	*Value*	*Number*	*Value*	*Number*	
1980	1,647·7	626,785	308·4	187,833	
1981	1,717·3	597,638	343·2	164,403	
1982	2,328·9	706,544	401·8	173,655	
1983	2,968·6	825,669	515·6	186,176	
1984	2,876·7	763,618	619·3	198,904	
1985	3,362·9	813,456	569·6	191,496	
1986	3,765·5	718,780	818·3	214,452	

Notes:
1. Cars defined as Standard International Trade (Revision 2), sub-group 781.0
2. EEC includes all Member States as at 1 throughout.
3. 1986 figures provisional.

Source: Overseas Trade Statistics.

Mr. Barry Jones: To ask the Chancellor o of Lancaster what is the amount by cash, f since 1980, annually of imports of textiles int Kingdom from *(a)* the EEC and *(b)* from th world.

Mr. Alan Clark: The information is g following table:

United Kingdom imports of textiles 1980-1

	EEC
1980	891·8
1981	1,072·6
1982	1,248·8
1983	1,523·5
1984	1,797·0
1985	2,033·1
1986	2,122·5

Source: Overseas Trade Statistics.

Notes:

1. Textiles defined as Standard International Trade Classification (Revision 2) Division 65: Textile yarn, fabrics, made-up articles nes and related products.
2. EEC includes all Member States as at 1 January 1988 throughout.
3. 1986 figures provisonal.

Mr. Barry Jones: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what is *(a)* the cash value and *(b)* the numbers of, aeroplane imports into the United Kingdom from (i) the EEC (ii) the United States of America and, (iii) other world sources, *(c)* annually since 1980.

Mr. Alan Clark: The information is given in the following table:

United Kingdom imports of aeroplanes 1980-1986

Value: £ million

	EEC		USA		Rest of World	
	Value	*Number*	*Value*	*Number*	*Value*	*Number*
1980	279·3	491	633·4	324	470·8	385
1981	49·0	183	121·9	333	15·8	81
1982	44·5	140	124·1	202	79·2	77
1983	12·8	96	290·5	44	68·1	55
1984	106·3	95	378·1	173	101·4	95
1985	19·2	110	701·6	106	146·8	58
1986	50·7	73	166·9	165	145·3	141

Source: Overseas Trade Statistics.

Notes:

1. Aeroplanes are defined as Standard International Trade Classification (Revision 2) sub-groups 792.2, 3 and 4.
2. The EEC includes all Member States as at 1 January 1988 throughout.
3. 1986 figures provisional.

Council of Industry Ministers

Mr. Roger King: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if he will make a report on the outcome of the Council of Industry Ministers' meeting on 22 December 1987.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: Following the meeting of the Council of Industry Ministers on 8 December, on which I reported to the House in my reply on 9 December, at column 163, I attended a further meeting of the Council in Brussels on 22 December. The Council determined arrangements to apply to the steel market following the end of the previous quota arrangements on 31 December 1987. The House of Commons Select Committee on European Legislation recommended these arrangements for debate, but regrettably it was not possible to arrange for parliamentary debate prior to their agreement of the 22 December Council. I shall, of course, make efforts to arrange a debate as soon as practicable.

The Commission reported on the consultations it had undertaken with member states, at the request of the 8 December Council, concerning the reduction of excess capacity in each of the product categories Ia and Ib (hot rolled strip and cold reduced sheet), II (plate) and III (heavy sections). In respect of categories II and III the Commission judged that sufficient indications of willingness to reduce capacity had been obtained for it to seek guaranteed undertakings to reduce capacity in these categories. The Commission proposed that if such undertakings were secured by 10 June 1988, quotas for those categories should continue until the end of 1990. In respect of category I, however, the Commission considered that insufficient indications of willingness to reduce capacity had been received, and accordingly proposed the continuation of quotas in that category only until 30 June 1988.

As at the previous Council considerable discussion took place, particularly concerning the timetable over which quotas for category I products should be removed. Eventually, the following conclusions relating to quotas were agreed unanimously:

"The Council gave its assent, in accordance with Article 58 ECSC, to the Commission proposals relating to the extension of the steel regime beyond 1 January 1988, as follows:

> With regard to categories I *(a)* and *(b)*, the production quota regime will come to an end on 30 June 1988.
>
> With regard to categories II and III, the production quota regime will continue up to 30 June 1988, and should be extended until the end of 1990 if, by 10 June 1988, the Commission has received guaranteed undertakings to reduce production capacity by means of closure by at least 75 per cent. of the surplus the Commission deems to exist. In the case of these conditions not being fulfilled for one of these categories, quotas will end for that category on 30 June 1988.
>
> The Commission will allocate to firms quotas for the second quarter of 1988 some 2·0 per cent. higher than would correspond to a market assessment to prepare for the return to the free market.

The Council notes that there is agreement in the Council to accept a Commission proposal extending the quotas for category I products beyond 30 June 1988 on condition that guaranteed undertakings on reduction of capacity of at least 7·5 million tonnes by means of closure in category Ia are obtained before 10 June 1988.

The Council notes that the Commission is ready to reconsider its present position on category I products provided the conditions of the treaty are fulfilled and the commitments set out above are obtained."

The Commission made no proposals for the continuation of quotas on categories IV and VI (wire rod and merchant bar), so quotas on these categories lapsed on 31 December. Quotas on other categories had been removed previously. The Commission has also raised the production reference levels which determine whether individual producers are subject to quotas. The effect of these changes is that the British Steel Corporation is now the only United Kingdom steel producer subject to production quotas.

The conclusions of the Council provide a clear framework for a steady return to free market conditions. Specific and demanding targets have been set for closure commitments to be obtained by 10 June, and the Council has concluded unanimously that quotas should end on 30 June if such commitments are not forthcoming. I believe these conclusions represent a good outcome for steel

producers and consumers in the United Kingdom, and for the preparations for the privatisation of the British Steel Corporation which I announced on 3 December.

Major Projects

Mr. Favell: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster whether he will make a statement about support for major projects.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: I presented to the House today the White Paper "DTI — the Department for Enterprise". The White Paper announced substantial changes in DTI's role and its policies and programmes. A number of major new initiatives to encourage enterprise are being launched. My statement to the House today outlined these, together with those existing schemes which we believe are less effective and are being closed. The details of the latter are as follows.

From today, a limited number of both research and development projects and investment projects likely to yield exceptional national benefits will be eligible for support under a unified facility — assistance for exceptional projects.

Support for major projects, under which investment projects likely to yield exceptional national benefits have been eligible for assistance, has been closed from 6 pm today (12 January) to further applications as a separate facility.

The automatic regional development grant (RDG) scheme, which currently operates in the development areas, is to be terminated and no new applications will be accepted after 31 March 1988. Legislation is being introduced into the House today to terminate the scheme. New applications for project approval will be considered provided they are received on or before 31 March 1988. The transitional arrangements proposed in the Bill reflect the fact that RDG may be applied for before a project is started, while it is in progress or after it has been completed. Applications for project approval received on or before today, and applications received on or before 31 March in relation to projects started on or before today, will not be affected by the legislation. Applications received after today in relation to projects not yet started will be considered for grant only to the extent that relevant jobs or assets are provided (or, in the case of assets, expenditure is defrayed) within two years of the project application being approved by the Department. Grants will not be payable in relation to such projects unless a claim is received within three years of the project approval, or such shorter period as may be prescribed in an individual case. Further details of the transitional arrangements are available to companies from DTI regional offices and from the Industry Department for Scotland and the Welsh Office Industry Department.

Requests for single company support for innovation and for projects under the microelectronics industry support programme, support for software products and the fibreoptics optoelectronics scheme will be considered against the existing criteria for these schemes provided that formal applications are received by DTI before 6 pm today (12 January).

The major expansion of support for the use of DTI consultancy services by small and medium-sized firms incorporates many existing DTI consultancy services. Except for those business improvement services schemes which still have allocated unused funds, all existing consultancy services will be ended from noon on 14 January 1988. These include the advanced manufacturing technology consultancy scheme, the microelectronics applications consultancy scheme and business and technical advisory services.

Publicity

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what is the latest figure for the number of staff presently employed in the press and public relations office of his Department; and what is the number planned to be employed at this point in 1988.

Mr. Butcher *[holding answer 17 December 1987]:* The latest figures for the number of staff posts in the press and public relations office of my Department are:

at present in 1987-88	*1988-89*
[1]51	[1]51

[1] Including 17 on clerical and other support duties.

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what is the latest figure for the estimated spending in 1987-88 by his Department on *(a)* television advertising, *(b)* radio advertising, *(c)* newspaper advertising and *(d)* other promotional material; and what are the estimated expenditures in each area for 1988-89.

Mr. Butcher *[holding answer 17 December 1987]:* Information is not readily available to distinguish between advertising in newspapers and in the press generally, nor for expenditure other than centrally by my Department.

The estimated media expenditure for 1987-88 by my Department is as follows:

	£
Television advertising	5,342,000
Radio advertising	20,000
Press advertising	2,985,000
Other promotional publicity	3,869,000
Total	12,216,000

Detailed decisions on expenditure by media have not yet been taken for 1988-89.

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what is the latest figure for the estimated expenditure by his Department on press and public relations for *(a)* 1987-88 and *(b)* 1988-89.

Mr. Butcher *[holding answer 17 December 1987]:* The latest estimated expenditure by my Department on press and public relations is as follows:

	£
1987-88	1,123,000
1988-89	1,508,000

EMPLOYMENT

Open Tech

Ms. Mowlam: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will make a statement on the principal achievements of the Open Tech project since its inception;

what is the current operating status of the project; and what are *(a)* the total costs to date, *(b)* the total contributions by employers, *(c)* the total contributions by other organisations, *(d)* the total contributions by local authorities and *(e)* the number of students and trainees enrolled per year, by region, employer, local authority, other organisation, employment status, gender, whether disabled, racial origin and by subject studied.

Mr. Cope: The Manpower Services Commission's Open Tech programme was a four-year developmental programme which concluded on 31 March 1987. An evaluation by the Tavistock Institute will be available shortly and its report will be placed in the Library.

The aims of the programme were to extend the training opportunities available to adults, mainly employed, at technician, supervisory and management levels, to improve access to that training, and to provide an exemplar structure of open learning materials and services. Employers, local authorities, colleges and other training providers, trade unions, industry training boards, and others participated through 140 projects. These were required by their contracts to become self-sustaining.

The principal achievements of the programme include the creation of about 35,000 learning hours of self-study packages and the establishment of a range of producers and suppliers of open learning materials and trainee support services. The packages continue to be available for sale on a commercial basis and almost all the projects are continuing to deliver open learning materials.

Total costs of the programme to the MSC were some £51 million. Additional resources contributed by sponsors during the life of the programme are estimated at £8·8 million in cash and in kind. I regret that it is not possible to allocate this between types of sponsor.

The Open Tech programme did not enrol students directly, but made open learning materials available to organisations and individuals alike. Packages purchased by employers, colleges and others will generally have been made available to several students. An accurate breakdown of the beneficiaries of Open Tech materials and the subjects they studied has not been possible therefore. The MSC's best estimate of the trainees known to have received help from the programme is as follows:

	Number
1983-84	6,000
1984-85	12,000
1985-86	32,000
1986-87	65,000

Public Appointments

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will list the names of all the people appointed to public bodies by his Department who are currently in office, giving for each the office concerned and the date of appointment.

Mr. Lee: This information could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

British Nuclear Fuels, Sellafield

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment (1) if he will make a statement on the report published by the Health and Safety Executive on 14 December on the implementation of safety changes at British Nuclear Fuels Ltd., Sellafield, arising from the Health and Safety Executive safety audit Sellafield, published in December 1986;

(2) if he will make a statement on the implementation of the report of the Health and Safety Executive, published on 14 December, arising from the Health and Safety Executive safety audit on Sellafield published in December 1986; and if he will make a statement on the present state of containment of nuclear wastes at Sellafield and on levels of radiation exposure to workers at the Sellafield site.

Mr. Michael Spicer: I have been asked to reply.

I welcome the HSE's recent report which acknowledges the good progress made by British Nuclear Fuels plc in meeting the requirements specified in the HSE's initial audit report. The company's plans for dealing with waste on site are well advanced and it aims to keep worker dose as low as reasonablly achievable consistent with practice throughout the nuclear industry.

TRANSPORT

Public Appointments

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will list the names of all the people appointed to public bodies by his Department who are currently in office, giving for each the office concerned and the date of appointment.

Mr. Channon: This information could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Chauffeurplan Limited

Mr. John: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment he has made of the implications for his campaigns against drinking and driving of the advertising material from Chauffeurplan Ltd. which offers to provide a chauffeur service for disqualified drivers.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: We view with distaste insurance schemes which provide alternative road transport for those disqualified from driving following conviction for road traffic offences, even though such schemes cannot adequately compensate for loss of entitlement to drive. We shall look again at such insurance schemes in the light of the report of the review of road traffic law, which we expect very shortly.

Companies or department stores considering circulating details of such schemes, may wish to consider carefully the number of complaints which we have received about such proposals.

London Underground (Escalators)

Mr. Gale: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many escalators were, at the latest available date, out of service and undergoing repairs on the London underground system.

Mr. David Mitchell: I understand that on 4 January 1988, 37 of the Underground's 276 escalators were out of service either for repair or planned replacement, including those damaged in the King's Cross fire.

London Couriers (Accidents)

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will give for each year since 1979 the number of accidents in London involving bicycle and motor cycle couriers.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: I regret that the information is not available.

Horne Committee

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when he is planning to implement the recommendations of the Horne committee following its review of the Public Utilities and Street Works Act 1950.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: We recognise the importance of the Horne report particularly for securing better quality reinstatements. The Government's response to the report, published in July 1986, accepted the great majority of its recommendations. The Department is pressing ahead with implementation. We shall continue to look for a suitable opportunity to introduce the necessary primary legislation.

London City Airport

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what is the total cost to the Civil Aviation Authority associated with the operation of the London City airport.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: Air traffic approach control is provided under contract by the Civil Aviation Authority to London City airport. The cost is a commercial matter which is confidential to the airport and the authority. The costs for the provision of en route air traffic services are recovered from aircraft operators through charges. The proportion of these costs attributed to flights using a particular airport are not readily available.

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what charges were made on, or contributed from, public funds for the planning, construction and operation of London City airport.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: London City Airport is owned and financed by the private sector. No contribution has been made from public funds to its planning, construction and operation. Some costs fell on public funds in respect of the planning inquiry and in providing services such as customs and immigration facilities. It is not possible to estimate such costs without disproportionate expenditure.

East London River Crossing

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what changes are being considered to the height of the east London river crossing bridge towers; and what is the reasoning behind the considered change.

Mr. Channon: Representations about the design of the proposed bridge were made at the public inquiry into the east London river crossing. These will be taken into account by myself and my right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for the Environment, in considering the inspector's report on the inquiry which has just been received.

Advisory Committees

Mr. Richard Shepherd: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will list in the *Official Report* the names of his advisory committees, together with an indication of those whose members are required to sign a declaration under, or who have otherwise had drawn to their attention, the provisions of section 2 of the Official Secrets Act.

Mr. Channon *[pursuant to his reply, 18 December 1987, c. 776]:* The list of advisory committees for which I am responsible should also have included the recently formed Street Works Advisory Committee. Its members have their attention drawn to the Official Secrets Act.

ENERGY

British Nuclear Fuels, Sellafield

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy if he will make a statement on the future of Magnox reprocessing at British Nuclear Fuels Ltd., Sellafield, following the publication on 14 December by the Health and Safety Executive of the report on safety revision at Sellafield arising from the Health and Safety Executive safety audit at Sellafield, issued in December 1986.

Mr. Michael Spicer: Reprocessing is a proven and safe technology which keeps open the possibility for recycling valuable uranium and plutonium as fuel.

BNF plc, of course, like any other licensed nuclear operator, must continue to meet the requirements of the independent Health and Safety Executive.

Nuclear Fusion

Mr. Matthew Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what has been the total annual expenditure on the Joint European Torus fusion project by all contributing partners since its inception up to 1987-88, broken down into contributions by individual countries.

Mr. Michael Spicer: The table gives full details of the annual contributions for Euratom and each member country of the JET (Joint European Torus) joint undertaking from its inception in June 1978. There are no figures yet available for the contributions from Spain and Portugal which became members of the undertaking in June 1987.

JET income from Euratom and participating countries in European currency units

	1978	*1979*	*1980*	*1981*	*1982*	*1983*	*1984*	*1985*	*1986*	*Draft budgets for 1987*	*1988*
Euratom	9,600,000	32,000,000	40,712,751	43,464,000	80,993,900	95,000,000	84,505,600	52,500,000	68,250,200	79,859,700	83,201,500
Belgium	21,960	72,160	96,413	105,910	204,990	274,685	295,400	132,800	135,500	139,800	234,000
Denmark	8,640	28,280	37,537	39,100	70,200	75,600	77,000	72,600	93,800	83,300	78,700

	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	Draft budgets 1987	
France	247,320	814,520	912,161	1,040,400	1,935,500	2,168,566	2,107,300	1,846,325	2,095,500	2,297,000	2
Germany	558,600	1,839,640	2,074,192	2,370,700	4,363,800	4,570,441	3,699,200	2,444,175	3,298,200	3,963,300	3
Greece	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	
Ireland	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	
Italy	95,760	315,560	573,881	500,200	844,400	853,211	963,800	770,675	872,900	1,028,000	1
Luxembourg	—	—	—	4,890	6,910	2,300	5,100	4,625	5,600	3,900	
Netherlands	69,360	228,080	215,202	254,800	499,800	702,242	545,600	365,550	426,400	438,200	
Sweden	23,760	78,160	48,728	77,100	134,100	151,185	173,600	98,500	119,600	157,500	
Switzerland	—	48,360	337,468	181,400	311,000	352,528	396,400	343,800	407,900	422,900	
United Kingdom	1,374,600	4,575,240	5,882,605	6,291,500	11,877,700	14,599,242	12,863,000	7,045,950	9,607,200	11,431,000	11
Total	12,000,000	40,000,000	50,890,938	54,330,000	101,242,300	118,750,000	105,632,000	65,625,000	85,312,800	99,824,600	104

Notes:
1. United Kingdom contribution includes 10 per cent. as host.
2. Estimated income from Spain and Portugal is not available.

Mr. Matthew Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy (1) what is the current range of estimates assumed by his Department for *(a)* the likely achievement of a sustained fusion reaction and *(b)* the economic viability of nuclear fusion reactors;

(2) what specific criteria his Department uses to assess the economic viability of nuclear fusion and in particular the Joint European Torus programme; and if he will name any consultants, other than those associated with the United Kingdom Atomic Energy Authority/Joint European Torus programme who have provided advice to his Department on the economic viability of nuclear fusion.

Mr. Michael Spicer: The JET (Joint European Torus) project at Culham is the centrepiece of European investigations into the potential of harnessing the energy released by nuclear fusion. The immediate aim of the programme is to establish the scientific feasibility of fusion power. If successful, this could lead to the demonstration of sustained, controlled fusion reactions in a follow-on NET (Next European Torus) project. The economic viability of fusion power could only be confirmed thereafter by experience with a power generating demonstration reactor. A report by the energy technology support unit (Report R-43 published in February 1987) concluded that extremely demanding materials, engineering, irradiation, fuel injection and waste treatment requirements would need to be satisfied before reaching the point, perhaps by 2050, where commercial power reactors would be a realistic proposition. The economic viability of nuclear fusion is therefore extremely uncertain.

Mr. Matthew Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy (1) what is the proposed annual budget for the research and development of nuclear fusion for the period 1987-88 to 1990-91;

(2) what was the annual expenditure for the research and development of nuclear fusion in the years 1970-71 to 1986-87.

Mr. Michael Spicer: With the exception of the JET project and some minor research in universities, United Kingdom fusion research is carried out entirely by the United Kingdom Atomic Energy Authority. Its expenditure is funded partly by the Department of Energy Vote and, since 1973, partly by Euratom under a contract of association. The cost of fusion research by the United Kingdom Atomic Energy Authority is set out with the contribution from Euratom shown in brackets. United Kingdom Atomic Energy Authority expenditure fu by the Department on the Joint European Torus p (JET), is given separately in my reply today to the Member for Truro.

United Kingdom Atomic Energy Authority fusion researc

	Total £ million	of which Euratom £ million
1970-71	4·1	—
1971-72	4·4	—
1972-73	4·0	—
1973-74	4·3	(1·3)
1974-75	5·8	(1·5)
1975-76	7·7	(2·0)
1976-77	8·5	(1·9)
1977-78	9·6	(2·3)
1978-79	11·5	(3·2)
1979-80	14·6	(4·1)
1980-81	17·9	(6·5)
1981-82	21·5	(4·2)
1982-83	17·8	(5·3)
1983-84	18·9	(4·8)
1984-85	23·2	(4·3)
1985-86	21·7	(5·0)
1986-87	19·6	(5·5)
1987-88	19·5	[1](5·2)

[1] Provisional.

Departmental funding for the years 1988-89 1989-90 has yet to be agreed. Provisional figures, include funding for JET, of £21·45 million and £ million respectively, are published in the "Cabinet 1987 Annual Review of Government-funded R Figures for 1990-91 are not available.

Electricity Disconnections

Mr. Michael Marshall: To ask the Secretary of Sta Energy what information he has recently received re to violations of the code of practice relati disconnections by area electricity boards.

Mr. Michael Spicer: Monitoring of the code of pr on paying electricity bills is a matter for the Elec Consumers' Council. I believe that generally the c operating satisfactorily.

Research and Development

Mr. Darling: To ask the Secretary of State for E if he will list the actual and projectd research

development expenditure from public funds under the heading nuclear in each of the years from 1979-80 to 1989-90, at 1986-87 prices.

Mr. Michael Spicer: The following table gives the Department's expenditure with the UKAEA on nuclear R and D and related programmes (including the decommissioning of old plant and radioactive waste management) during the period 1979-80 to 1989-90. The figures in brackets represent estimated expenditure on nuclear R and D alone. Figures on the same basis for the earlier years are not available.

	£ million (1986-87 prices)
1979-80	242·2
1980-81	261·4
1981-82	262·7
1982-83	256·2
1983-84	232·4
1984-85	214·3
1985-86	195·3
1986-87[1]	183·9 (158)
1987-88[2,3]	165·3 (134)
1988-89[4,5]	165·2 (131)
1989-90[4,5]	159·6 (130)

[1] This figure represents roughly eleven twelfths of the Department's expenditure under the programme letters for 1986-87 following the change to payment monthly in arrears from 1 April 1986. Figures for later years are based on 12 monthly payments.
[2] Estimate.
[3] "Supply Estimates 1987-88", March 1987.
[4] Projected.
[5] "The Government's Expenditure Plans 1987-88 to 1989-90", January 1987. "Cabinet Office Annual Review of Government-funded R and D 1987".

The above figures do not include expenditure on nuclear R and D by other Government departments, the electricity supply industry and BNF plc either within the organisations themselves or with other organisations, including the AEA.

Mr. Darling: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy if he will list the actual and projected research and development expenditure from public funds on energy efficiency in each of the years 1979-80 to 1989-90, at 1986-87 prices.

Mr. Peter Morrison: Research and development expenditure figures for 1979-80 are not readily available, since expenditure in that year was not allocated in a comparable way with subsequent years. Figures for expenditure by my Department on energy efficiency research and development (including Demonstration) for the other years, in pounds million at 1986-87 prices, are as follows:

	£ million
1980-81	1·97
1981-82	5·24
1982-83	8·11
1983-84	7·98
1984-85	7·21
1985-86	8·55
1986-87	9·00
[1]1987-88	11·6
[2]1988-89	12·2
[2]1989-90	11·7

[1] Provision.
[2] Figures for 1988-89 and 1989-90 are taken from the "Government's Expenditure Plans 1987-88 to 1989-90". January 1987.

Mr. Darling: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what is the actual and projected research and development expenditure from public funds on coal technology in each of the years from 1979-80 to 1989-90, at 1986-87 prices.

Mr. Michael Spicer: Research and development expenditure figures for 1979-80 are not readily available, since expenditure in that year was differently categorised. Figures for expenditure by my Department on coal technology for the other years, in pounds million at 1986-87 prices, are as follows:

	£ million
1980-81	3·79
1981-82	5·88
1982-83	3·58
1983-84	3·42
1984-85	0·76
1985-86	0·62
1986-87	1·60
[1]1987-88	1·20
[2]1988-89	1·30
[2]1989-90	1·40

[1] Provision.
[2] Figures for 1988-89 and 1989-90 are taken from the "Government's Expenditure Plans 1987-88 to 1989-90". January 1987.

In addition, British Coal also has a substantial research and development programme. In 1986-87 this programme cost over £24 million.

Mr. Darling: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy if he will list the actual and projected research and development expenditure from public funds on renewable energy sources in each of the years 1979-80 to 1989-90, at 1986-87 prices.

Mr. Michael Spicer: Research and development expenditure figures for 1979-80 are not readily available, since expenditure in that year was differently categorised. Figures for expenditure by my Department on renewable energy sources for the other years, in pounds million at 1986-87 prices, are as follows:

	£ million
1980-81	15·73
1981-82	22·12
1982-83	16·94
1983-84	12·89
1984-85	15·29
1985-86	13·08
1986-87	11·60
[1]1987-88	13·10
[2]1988-89	12·60
[2]1989-90	12·10

[1] Provision.
[2] Figures for 1988-89 and 1989-90 are taken from the "Government's Expenditure Plans 1987/88–1989/90". — [January 1987.] The provision for these years has been revised upwards and will be published in the 1988 public expenditure White Paper.

Public Appointments

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy if he will list the names of all the people appointed to

public bodies by his Department who are currently in office, giving for each the office concerned and the date of appointment.

Mr. Parkinson: The information is as follows:

British Coal Corporation
Sir Robert Haslam—Chairman—September 1986
Sir Kenneth Couzens, KCB—Deputy Chairman—October 1985
Mr. M. H. Butler—Full-time Member—April 1986
Mr. M. J. Edwards, CBE—Full-time Member—April 1986
Mr. K. Moses—Full-time Member—April 1986
Mr. J. H. Northard, CBE—Full-time Member—April 1986
Sir Melvyn Rosser—Non-Executive Member—July 1983
Mr. C. Barker—Non-Executive Member—February 1984
Dr. D. V. Atterton, CBE—Non-Executive Member—September 1986
Dr. T. J. Parker—Non-Executive Member—September 1986

United Kingdom Atomic Energy Authority
Mr. J. G. Collier—Chairman—January 1987
Dr. B. L. Eyre—Full-time Member—August 1987
Dr. G. G. E. Low—Full-time Member—April 1986
Mr. R. N. Simeone, CBE—Full-time Member—April 1987
Mr. J Bullock—Non-Executive Member—November 1981
Professor Sir P. Hirsch—Non-Executive Member—April 1982
Mr. M. J. B. Parker—Non-Executive Member—April 1985
Mr. R. E. J. Roberts, CBE—Non-Executive Member—September 1981
Mr. R. Sanderson, OBE—Non-Executive Member—January 1987

Electricity Council
Sir Philip Jones, CB—Chairman—April 1983
Mr. D. G. Jefferies—Deputy Chairman—February 1986
Mr. R. W. Orson, CBE—Full-time Member—January 1976
Mr. R. A. Farrance, CBE—Full-time Member—November 1979
Dr. D. G. C. Gronow—Full-time Member—October 1985

Central Electricity Generating Board
Lord Marshall of Goring, Kt, CBE—Chairman—July 1982
Mr. G. A. W. Blackman, CBE—Deputy Chairman—April 1986
Mr. J. W. Baker—Full-time Member—September 1980
Mr. D. A. Davis—Full-time Member—June 1984
Mr. F. Ledger, OBE—Full-time Member—April 1986
Mr. R. V. Giordano—Non-Executive Member—July 1982
Mr. W. H. N. Wilkinson—Non-Executive Member—November 1986
Sir Terence Beckett, KBE—Non-Executive Member—January 1987
Mr. D. A. Walker—Non-Executive Member—May 1987

London Electricity Board
Mr. J. J. Wilson—Chairman—March 1986
Mr. K. G. Harvey—Deputy Chairman—May 1984
Mr. C. A. Prendergast, CBE—Non-Executive Member—August 1983
Baroness Garner of Parkes, JP—Non-Executive Member—November 1984
Mr. L. W. G. Priestley—Non-Executive Member—October 1983
Mr. R. J. Horne—Non-Executive Member—May 1980
Mr. M. Young—Non-Executive Member—January 1987
Mr. R. B. Yearsley—Non-Executive Member—September 1984

South Eastern Electricity Board
Mr. G. A. Squair—Chairman—June 1983
Mr. D. A. Lovesey—Deputy Chairman—April 1987
Sir Ian G. McLeod, JP—Non-Executive Member—August 1983
Mr. R. A. Cox, CBE—Non-Executive Member—June 1983
Mr. A. Ferry, MBE—Non-Executive Member—April 1987
Mr. N. J. Hawkins—Non-Executive Member—September 1980
Dame Margaret Weston, DBE—Non-Executive M
February 1981
Mr. M. J. Calvert, JP—Non-Executive Member—
1985

South Western Electricity Board
Mr. A. W. Nicol—Chairman—April 1987
Mr. J. J. Seed—Deputy Chairman—June 1986
Mr. M. E. Kelsey—Non-Executive Member—S
1983
Mr. M. J. L. Sayers—Non-Executive Member—
1978
Mr. J. O. Gough, MBE—Non-Executive M
October 1980
Mr. J. R. W. R. Carew-Pole—Non-Executive M
June 1981
Mr. P. W. Gregory—Non-Executive Member—Ap
Miss V. E. Arrowsmith-Brown—Non-Executive M
May 1986

Eastern Electricity Board
Mr. J. C. Smith—Chairman—C[illegible]ber 1982
Mr. W. Waring—Deputy Chairman—July 1983
Mr. C. T. Muddiman—Non-Executive Member—
1980
Dr. K. W. Humphreys—Non-Executive Membe
1982
Mr. I. D. Coutts, CBE—Non-Executive Membe
1982
Mr. R. C. G. Chesterman, OBE—Non-Executive
—September 1984
Professor R. J. Eden, OBE—Non-Executive M
June 1985
Mr. B. C. Stanley—Non-Executive Member—S
1986

East Midlands Electricity Board
Mr. J. F. Harris—Chairman—October 1982
Mr. D. W. Cowe—Deputy Chairman—November
Mrs. A. Noskwith—Non-Executive Member—July
Mrs. D. J. Parker—Non-Executive Member—July
Mr. W. B. Morgan—Non-Executive Member—July
Mr. G. H. Boyle—Non-Executive Member—June
Mr. G. N. Corah—Non-Executive Member—Marc
Mr. A. G. Schroeder—Non-Executive Member—
1986

Midlands Electricity Board
Mr. B. S. Townsend—Chairman—April 1986
Mr. R. K. Young—Deputy Chairman—July 1987
Mr. P. B. G. Williams—Non-Executive Member—
1984
Dr. Barbara E. Marsh—Non-Executive Member—
1984
Mr. D. F. Harper—Non-Executive Member—June
Mr. F. C. Graves, OBE—Non-Executive Me
October 1980
Dr. M. D. Skillicorn—Non-Executive Member—
1981

South Wales Electricity Board
Mr. J. W. Evans—Chairman—April 1984
Mr. W. Kerss—Deputy Chairman—August 1983
Mr. C. J. Beynon—Non-Executive Member—Se
1983
Mr. E. Rea, OBE—Non-Executive Member—Janua
Dr. B. K. Davison, OBE—Non-Executive Membe
1980
Mr. J. Foley, MBE—Non-Executive Member—
1984
Mr. P. J. Phillips, OBE—Non-Executive Membe
1984
Mr. T. C. A. Horn—Non-Executive Member—Apri
Mrs. V. Pollard—Non-Executive Member—January

Merseyside and North Wales Electricity Board
Mr. B. H. Weston—Chairman—September 1985
Mr. R. T. Gales—Deputy Chairman—March 1978
Mr. D. L. Boult—Non-Executive Member—August
Mr. R. B. de Zouche, OBE—Non-Executive Me

April 1984
Dr. R. H. Cummings, OBE — Non-Executive Member — January 1980
Mr. J. M. Griffiths, OBE, JP — Non-Executive Member — January 1981
Mrs. S. M. N. Garston — Non-Executive Member — March 1981
Mr. J. A. Hooson — Non-Executive Member — August 1984

Southern Electricity Board
Mr. D. A. Ross — Chairman — April 1984
Mr. H. R. Casley — Deputy Chairman — October 1986
Mr. R. W. Gurney — Non-Executive Member — November 1978
Mr. M. H. Vogel — Non-Executive Member — July 1980
Mr. A. G. Stoughton-Harris — Non-Executive Member — February 1981
Mr. R. J. Cowley — Non-Executive Member — December 1986
Mr. R. D. Margesson, JP — Non-Executive Member — May 1986
Mr. N. G. L. Timpson — Non-Executive Member — January 1987

Yorkshire Electricity Board
Mr. J. Porteous — Chairman — November 1984
Mr. J. S. Tysoe — Deputy Chairman — September 1985
Mrs. M. E. L. Wood — Non-Executive Member — September 1983
Mr. J. M. T. Ross — Non-Executive Member — May 1983
Mr. D. B. Clark, CBE — Non-Executive Member — November 1980
Mr. P. A. Smith — Non-Executive Member — June 1981
Mr. J. P. M. Denny — Non-Executive Member — March 1984

North Eastern Electricity Board
Mr. T. Rutherford, CBE — Chairman — May 1977
Mr. J. A. Harmsworth — Deputy Chairman — January 1978
Mr. M. Dumbrell — Non-Executive Member — September 1983
Mrs. A. Matthews — Non-Executive Member — October 1980
Mr. J. R. Holdsworth — Non-Executive Member — April 1981
Mr. R. C. Spoor, RD — Non-Executive Member — April 1981
Professor J. L. J. Machin — Non-Executive Member — June 1984
Mr. P. D. Nicholson — Non-Executive Member — December 1985

North Western Electricity Board
Mr. B. R. Hastings — Chairman — September 1985
Mr. A. Crowder — Deputy Chairman — January 1983
Mr. J. C. Seddon — Non-Executive Member — August 1983
Mr. J. Brown, MBE, JP — Non-Executive Member — February 1984
Mr. J. V. Parsons — Non-Executive Member — January 1984
Mr. N. D. Root — Non-Executive Member — April 1984
Professor G. W. Ashworth, CBE — Non-Executive Member — November 1985

Oil and Pipelines Agency
Mr. G. W. Dunkerley — Chairman (part-time) — December 1985
Mr. K. J. Vaughan — Chief Executive — December 1985
Mr. C. G. Finch — Non-Executive Member — December 1985
Mr. O. H. Heald — Non-Executive Member — December 1985

British Nuclear Fuels plc[2]
Mr. C. G. F. Harding — Chairman (part-time) — April 1986
Mr. L. N. Chamberlain — Chief Executive — April 1986
Dr. W. L. Wilkinson, CBE — Deputy Chief Executive — March 1981
Mr. A. Johnson — Full-time Member — September 1979
Mr. H. E. Bolter — Full-time Member — June 1984
Mr. J. M. Hayles — Full-time Member — September 1981
Mr. R. L. Pilling — Full-time Member — March 1981
Dr. T. N. Marsham, CBE — Non-Executive Member — September 1979
Mr. J. R. Wills, OBE — Non-Executive Member — September 1984
Mr. R. M. Dantzic — Non-Executive Member — April 198
Mrs. J. Denton — Non-Executive Member — May 1987
Dr. N. S. Wooding, CBE — Non-Executive Member — September 1987

Advisory Council on Research and Development for Fuel a Power (ACORD)[3]
Mr. M. A. W. Baker[4] — Member — January 1988
Professor J. I. G. Cadogan — Member — February 1987
Mr. G. Clerehugh[4] — Member — April 1983
Mr. D. A. Davis[5] — Member — July 1986
Dr. B. L. Eyre — Member — September 1987
Dr. A. Fish[4] — Member — July 1986
Dr. C. Gronow[4] — Member — October 1985
Mr. J. Houlder — Member — October 1987
Dr. D. Lindley — Member — November 1986
Prof. S. C. Littlechild — Member — October 1987
Mr. R. J. Margetts — Member — October 1987
Prof. L. Maunder, OBE — Member — May 1981
Prof. E. W. J. Mitchell, CBE[4] — Member — October 1985
Mr. K. Moses[4] — Member — May 1986
Dr. H. Rose, CBE — Member — March 1975
Prof. J. Swithenbank — Member — October 1987
Dr. R. D. Tyler — Member — October 1987
Dr. W. L. Wilkinson[4] — Member — October 1985

Offshore Energy Technology Board (OETB)[3]
Mr. G. C. Band — Member — March 1985
Mr. W. E. Bell — Member — March 1985
Mr. K. A. Bray OBE — Member — September 1986
Mr. C. J. Burnett Jnr. — Member — September 1986
Mr. B. Butler — Member — February 1985
Mr. R. H. Campbell — Member — February 1985
Mr. P. Everett — Member — December 1986
Mr. A. Gormly — Member — February 1985
Mr. J. M. Houlder, CBE — Member — March 1985
Dr. H. W. D. Hughes — Member — March 1985
Mr. R. Kingdon — Member — July 1987
Mr. D. Morris — Member — July 1987
Professor T. Patten, CBE — Member — March 1985
Mr. K. H. Taylor — Member — September 1986
Mr. D. B. Walker — Member — March 1985
Mr. I. C. Wood, CBE — Member — February 1985

Offshore Safety and Technology Board (OSTB)[3]
Mr. D. Lennard — Member — January 1988
Mr. S. Clinton — Member — September 1985
Mr. P. S. Godfrey — Member — September 1985
Professor P. Holmes — Member — September 1985
Mr. D. C. Hurden — Member — September 1985
Mr. P. D. Irwin — Member — September 1985
Dr. C. Jones — Member — September 1985
Mr. N. A. Rendall — Member — September 1985
Mr. A. G. Senior — Member — September 1985
Mr. N. A. Townsend — Member — September 1985
Mr. W. J. Winkworth — Member — September 1985

Renewable Energy Advisory Committee (REAC)[3]
Mr. G. Leach — Member — January 1985
Mr. A. Pearson — Member — January 1985
Dr. P. Surman — Member — December 1986
Mr. A. Tweedale — Member — January 1985
Dr. T. G. Walker — Member — January 1985
Mr. S. Woolley — Member — August 1987
Dr. J. K. Dawson — Member — January 1985

[1] The chairmen of the Electricity Consultative Coun who are appointed by the Secretary of State for Tr and Industry after consulting my Department, are ex-officio members of the area electricity boards.

[2] I approve these appointments which are made by B plc.

[3] The Minister of State chairs OETB. The chairmen of ACORD, OSTB and REAC are members of my Department: these and other Civil Service participants are not included in the above lists.

[4] These members of ACORD sit as representatives of their respective organisations and not in their personal capacities.

Note: In addition to the bodies shown above I invite some 18 organisations, covering a wide variety of oil industry interests, to participate in meetings of the Offshore Industry Liaison Committee.

NATIONAL FINANCE

Trusts

Mr. Neil Hamilton: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will estimate the first year and full year cost of abolishing the additional rate of income tax on trusts.

Mr. Norman Lamont: The direct revenue cost of abolishing the additional rate of income tax on trusts is estimated to be about £10 million in the first year and about £50 million in a full year at forecast 1988-89 levels of income. These estimates do not allow for any possible behavioural effects nor any consequential change in the liability of beneficiaries to tax on distributed income.

National Insurance

Mr. Neil Hamilton: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will estimate the additional yield of class 1 national insurance contributions in 1988-89 if the upper earnings limit on employees' contributions were *(a)* abolished or *(b)* increased to the earnings level at which a single-earner married couple would start to pay income tax at 40 per cent. on the assumptions that the couple had the average amount of investment income, taxable benefits in kind and mortgage interest relief for a single-earner couple at that income level and that there was statutory indexation of the 40 per cent. tax threshold in the 1988 Budget.

Mr. Norman Lamont: The direct revenue yield in a full year at 1988-89 levels of income of *(a)* abolishing the upper earnings limit on employees' national insurance contributions and *(b)* increasing the upper earnings limit to £410 per week is estimated to be about £1,400 million and £500 million respectively. The estimates otherwise assume the national insurance rate structure for 1988-89 set out in chapter 3 of the 1987 Autumn Statement and indexation of the current income tax bands and allowances to 1988-89 levels as in table 4.1 of the Autumn Statement. They make no allowance for possible changes in taxpayers' behaviour.

Earnings

Mr. Watts: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what has been the growth of real take-home pay for a married man on male average earnings since 1978-79.

Mr. Norman Lamont: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the reply which I gave the hon. Member for Surrey, South-West (Mrs. Bottomley), on 18 December 1987, at column 843.

Private Health Insurance

Mr. Butler: To ask the Chancellor of the he will make it his policy to make all con private health insurance allowable against in

Mr. Norman Lamont: I have no plans to

Public Appointments

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Chancellor of th if he will list the names of all the people public bodies by his Department who are office, giving for each the office concerned an appointment.

Mr. Brooke: This information could be p at disproportionate cost.

Trade Balance

Sir Brandon Rhys Williams: To ask the C the Exchequer (1) if he will publish estimates on the trade balance of *(a)* a reduction in the s of income tax to 25 per cent. and *(b)* an upra benefit requiring the same increase in purcha

(2) if he will publish an estimate of the trade balance in a full year of the reduction in rate of income tax to 27 per cent. in 1987-88

Mr. Major: It has not been the practic estimates of the economic effects of chang benefit rates.

EC (Budgetary Regime)

Sir Michael Shaw: To ask the Chanc Exchequer if he will outline the arrangement apply in respect of the European Community expenditure under the provisional twelfth regime.

Mr. Brooke: In the absence of an agreed 1988, the Community has, since 1 January, be under a provisional twelfths budgetary accordance with article 204 of the treaty.

This means that expenditure in each mon to one-twelfth of the total appropriation chapter by chapter, in the previous year's bu Council's draft budget, or, in the absence of a —as is currently the case—the preliminary d whichever is lower. The Council may, acting majority, authorise expenditure of additi provided that the 12-month totals are not ex

As regards revenue, traditional own agricultural levies and customs duties—are Community in the normal way. But member contributions are limited to the amounts pai previous year's budget. In accordance with this Kingdom's monthly VAT payment, after ab 259 million ecu. The corresponding sterling fi month's payment, made on 4 January was £17

Withheld Tax (Conscientious Object

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Chancellor of the with whom during the last 18 months the Inla has discussed the issue of individuals and withhold or divert tax on the grounds of co objection to paying for military expenditure th taxes; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Norman Lamont *[holding answer 11 January 1988]:* There has been correspondence between the Inland Revenue and such individuals and groups.

No part of any individual's taxes can be said to fund a particular item of public expenditure. Thus, the general obligation to pay taxes should not involve an issue of conscience for the individual taxpayer. In any event, parliamentary sovereignty would be undermined if individuals were able to choose whether or not to accept Parliament's decision on the overall public expenditure programme.

Subsidised Meals

Mr. Steen: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is the estimated amount of money lost to the Exchequer each year by tax allowances available to the private and public sectors subsidising meals at staff canteens and restaurants; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Norman Lamont *[holding answer 11 January 1988]:* Costs incurred by employers in running staff canteens and restaurants are allowable in the usual way in computing business profits. Information on which to base an estimate of the effect of this on tax revenue is not available.

Value Added Tax

Ms. Richardson: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether the supply of water, the provision of ancillary equipment such as valve gear and meters, and the maintenance and repair of equipment, machinery and mains will continue to be zero-rated for value added tax purposes.

Mr. Lilley *[holding answer 11 January 1988]:* The zero rating by the United Kingdom of water supplied to industry has been challenged by the Commission of the European Communities before the European Court of Justice. Until the court's judgment is delivered the consequences cannot be assessed.

The provision on their own of the other items referred to, and the repair of equipment, machinery and mains is currently subject to tax at the standard rate.

Mr. Gordon Brown: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what was the average value added tax paid per household on all goods and services in 1979 and in 1986-87, at *(a)* current prices, *(b)* 1979 prices and *(c)* 1987 prices.

Mr. Lilley *[holding answer 18 December 1987]:* The latest year for which information is available is 1985.

Average value added tax paid per household (£ per year)

	1979 £	*1985* £
(a) Current prices	304	651
(b) 1979 prices	304	390
(c) 1987 prices[1]	547	701

[1] June.

Mr. Gordon Brown: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what would be the impact on the retail prices index of imposing value added tax at 15 per cent. on *(a)* rail and bus fares and *(b)* all travel fares including air, bus, coach and rail.

Mr. Lilley *[holding answer 18 December 1987]* impact effect on the retail prices index of imposing added tax at 15 per cent. on rail and bus fares wo to increase the index by 0·2 per cent. Imposing value tax at 15 per cent. on all travel fares including ai coach and rail would also raise the index by 0·2 pe

714 Tax Exemption Certificates

Mr. Rooker: To ask the Chancellor of the Exch what consideration he has given to the diffi encountered by participants in the enterprise allo scheme in obtaining 714 tax exemption certificates; he will make a statement.

Mr. Norman Lamont *[holding answer 11 J 1988]:* The subcontractors scheme was designed to widespread tax evasion in the industry. Its rules hav relaxed over the years to make it easier for those history of unemployment to obtain a certi Participants in the enterprise allowance scheme w not meet the criteria for a full certificate may be e for a limited certificate, or many work under dedu

11 Downing Street (Rates)

Mr. Rooker: To ask the Chancellor of the Exch if domestic rates are payable in respect of any part Downing street.

Mr. Major *[holding answer 11 January 1988]:* the hon. Member to the answer given by my righ Friend the Prime Minister on Monday 11 January column 1.

Uncertified Subcontractors

Mr. Rooker: To ask the Chancellor of the Exch what was the amount of payments to unce subcontractors before deducations on account of tax lastest year for which figures are available.

Mr. Norman Lamont *[holding answer 11 J 1988]:* No record is kept of the total payme contractors to uncertificated subcontractors in resp which deductions have to be made, but it is estimat it amounted to about £1,350 million in the year en March 1987.

BP Shares

Mr. Chris Smith: To ask the Chancellor Exchequer what information he has as to the total n of partly paid BP shares sold back to the Bank of En and what the cost of the purchase has been to the

Mr. Darling: To ask the Chancellor of the Exc if he will indicate the number of British Petroleum purchased by the Bank of England as at 6 Januar under the special arrangements; and if he will m statement.

Mr. Norman Lamont *[holding answer 11 J 1988]:* Approximately 39 million shares, at a cost o £27 million.

Mortgage Interest Tax Relief

Mr. Kirkwood: To ask the Chancellor of the Exc what is the estimated full-year revenue effect of ap

mortgage interest tax relief to the residence rather than the individual; and what is the estimated effect on the mortgage interest tax relief ceiling if the change is revenue-neutral.

Mr. Norman Lamont *[holding answer 17 December 1987]*: The direct revenue yield, in 1987-88, of a restriction in mortgage interest relief to a loan of up to £30,000 per residence is estimated to be about £25 million. If this were combined with an increase of £1,000 in the ceiling for mortgage interest relief, the change would be approximately revenue-neutral. These estimates make no allowance for any consequential changes to the distribution of outstanding mortgages.

Personal Allowances

Mr. Gordon Brown: To ask the C Exchequer what is the estimated full yea and in 1988-89 of replacing the ma allowance on a no-loser basis with *(a)* a personal allowance and *(b)* a half-transf specifying in each case the level of the a

Mr. Norman Lamont *[holding answ 1987]*: The information given in the t projections from the 1984-85 survey of and is therefore provisional.

Replacement of married man's allowance with:	*1987-88*		*1988-89*	
	Cost[1] *£ billion*	*Level of allowance £ per annum*	*Cost*[1] *£ billion*	*Level of allowan £ per annu*
Fully transferable personal allowance	6·0	3,110	6·5	3,2
Half-transferable personal allowance	3·5	3,110	4·0	3,2

[1] Full year cost measured on a no-loser basis.

SOCIAL SERVICES

Nurses

12. **Mr. Ray Powell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he has any plans to review the current level of nurse staffing; and if he will make a statement.

78. **Mr. Nigel Griffiths:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he has any plans to review the current level of nurse staffing; and if he will make a statement.

87. **Ms. Short:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he has any plans to review the current level of nurse staffing; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Moore: Health authority plans for levels of nurse staffing are constantly under review. Nationally the number of nursing and midwifery staff continues to increase. Action is being taken centrally where appropriate to improve the recruitment and retention of such staff.

34. **Mr. Andrew MacKay:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will make a statement on the current and planned levels of nurses' pay.

Mr. Newton: The pay of nurses, midwives and health visitors is determined in the light of recommendations of the independent Review Body for Nursing Staff, Midwives and Health Visitors. The review body is currently taking evidence from the Health Departments, trades unions and professional associations with a view to reporting to the Prime Minister in the spring of this year.

The Government have implemented all four reports of the independent review body since it was established in 1984. As a result, nurses' pay has risen by some 16 per cent. in real terms during this period and by nearly 30 per cent in real terms since 1979.

79. **Mr. Evennett:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what recent representations he has received concerning nursing staff levels in the South East Thames health region.

Mrs. Currie: Concerns about the effects of nursing sraff shortages, particularly in specialist areas and in inner London, are reflected in letters rece Members and members of the public. I chief executive of the NHS Managem representatives of the three inner Londo in South-East Thames region to discuss produced on recruitment and retention of December, at the ministerial review of So region, the availability of nursing and m enable services to be sustained and dev region's proposals to maintain recruitm retention, were key issues during the dis

Severe Weather Payment

13. **Mr. Battle:** To ask the Secretary o Services if he proposes to review the sc weather payments when sufficient ex operation during the current winter is av will make a statement.

15. **Mrs. Beckett:** To ask the Secret Social Services if he will make it his poli operation of the scheme for severe weat the light of the current winter's experienc make a statement.

50. **Mr. Cohen:** To ask the Secretary o Services if he intends to review the operati for severe weather payments in the light its operation during the winter; and if statement.

88. **Mr. Kennedy:** To ask the Secret Social Services if he will make a statement so far during the current winter of the weather payments.

Mr. Portillo: The Social Security provision for help to continue to be given of heating in cold weather from next win details of the new arrangemens will be dec of experience this winter.

Care in the Community

14. **Mr. Colin Shepherd:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what representations he has received about his policy on care in the community.

Mr. Newton: We continue to receive a considerable number of representations from time to time. Those received recently include one from the Herefordshire Society for the Mentally Handicapped. My hon. Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State has written to my hon. Friend today.

Residential Homes

16. **Mr. McLeish:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what is the policy of his Department on the carrying out by police, at the request of local authority social services departments, of checks on owners and managers seeking the registration of residential homes, in the light of the vulnerability of residents of such homes.

Mrs. Currie: We share the hon. Gentleman's concern at possibly unsuitable persons running homes. Arrangements to enable local authorities to obtain information from police about any criminal record of people they propose to employ are being assessed by the Home Office, and we understand consultations are in progress about the possibility of extending the existing arrangements.

Mr. Waller: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services when the results of the study of local authorities' costs on registering and inspecting private residential homes will be announced; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Newton: It is important that the local authorities' duties of monitoring and inspecting private and voluntary residential care homes are properly carried out to ensure that these homes have acceptable standards. When the new arrangements for registering and inspecting residential care homes were introduced in 1985, we made it clear that the fees should cover local authorities' costs on this work. A report by the Department's social services inspectorate and the Welsh Office's social work service shows that fees are not doing this.

The report of the study has been issued today with a covering letter to interested bodies inviting views on proposals for increases in the level of fees for 1988-89 and on certain other proposed changes in the regulations. The study found that significant increases would be required to enable local authorities to meet the full cost of an adequate registration and inspection service from fees, as intended. It suggests various options for achieving this.

The Government's preference is for an increase in the initial registration fee from £550 to £1,000 to cover full costs to the authority, including the cost of dealing with the numerous inquiries which do not result in an application for registration and accompanying fee, and an increase in the annual inspection fee from £15 to £26 per place to meet the cost of adequate inspection arrangements. It is also proposed that the registration fee for a change of owner should in all cases be £500 and the registration fee for a manager should increase from £100 to £150. It is intended that any fee increases decided following consultation should be introduced from 1 April 1988.

Consultation is also taking place on other amendments to the regulations including an increase in the minimum number of times a home must be inspected fr twice every 12 months and that at least one i year is to be without notice. It is proposed to b punishment for children and young people in th in line with the Government's commitment to p use of that form of punishment in residentia ments where children and young pe accommodated. In this context we propose also shortly on draft "Children's Homes (Co Discipline) Regulations."

Resource Allocation Working Party For

17. **Mr. Michael McNair-Wilson:** To ask th of State for Social Services whether he has an revise the resource allocation working party fo

Mr. Newton: The National Health Management Board has been undertaking a re resource allocation working party formula to scope for improving the way in which th measures relative need for health care across th The review's programme of analysis and resea almost complete, and any recommendations emerge will then be carefully considered.

Hospital Closures

18. **Mrs. Mahon:** To ask the Secretary o Social Services what is his latest estimate of the beds in National Health Service hospitals cl permanent or temporary basis since January 1

Mrs. Currie: Figures for 1987 are not yet Information on urgent temporary closures is no centrally.

38. **Mr. Clay:** To ask the Secretary of State Services what is his estimate of the number National Health Service hospitals closed on a or temporary basis since January 1987.

Mrs. Currie: I regret that information on bed closures is not collected centrally.

Figures for permanent bed closures in 1987 available.

Invalid Care Allowance

19. **Ms. Quin:** To ask the Secretary of State Services if there has been any increase in the n his Department's staff involved in processing a for invalid care allowance as a result of the Court judgment against the United Kingd extended the eligibility of invalid care allo married women; and if he will make a stateme

Mr. Scott: The number of staff processing i allowance claims was increased when the allo extended to married women.

In mid-1986, 34 staff were employed in the i allowance unit but during the second half of numbers were built up rapidly so that throughou staff or more were in post. The new complement for the unit is 304 posts.

30. **Ms. Armstrong:** To ask the Secretary o Social Services what support he proposes will b for those caring for sick dependants at home fol passage of the Social Security Bill.

Mr. Scott: The existing provisions for carers within the social security system are not affected by passage of the current Bill. Invalid care allowance, supplementary benefit (income support from April 1988), and home responsibilities protection will continue to be available as at present to those who satisfy the qualifying rules.

Nurses and Midwives

20. **Mr. Key:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services how many nurses and midwives were working in Wessex *(a)* in May 1979 and *(b)* at the latest date for which figures are available.

67. **Mr. Butterfill:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services how many nurses and midwives were working in Wessex *(a)* in 1979 and *(b)* at the latest date for which figures are available.

Mr. Newton: The number of nurses and midwives working in Wessex was 19,660 at 30 September 1979, and 23,060 at 30 September 1986.

Leicestershire

21. **Mr. Latham:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services when he next plans to pay an official visit to Leicestershire to examine National Health Service hospital provision there.

Mrs. Currie: We have no plans to do so in the near future.

Royal Victoria Infirmary, Newcastle

23. **Mr. Ronnie Campbell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services how many doctors in the children's cancer unit at the Royal Victoria infirmary, Newcastle, are paid from funds provided by charities.

Mrs. Currie: I understand that medical charities provide funding for three of the junior doctors who work in this unit. Such co-operation between certain charities and the National Health Service works to their mutual benefit, as the NHS provides opportunities for research which, in turn, brings benefits to patients.

"Child Care and Family Services"

24. **Mrs. Golding:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services when he expects to be in a position to announce a decision on legislation to give effect to the proposals in the White Paper on "Child Care and Family Services."

25. **Ms. Primarolo:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services when he expects to be in a position to announce a decision as to whether he intends to introduce legislation on the proposals in the White Paper on "Child Care and Family Services."

Mr. Newton: I refer the hon. Members to my reply to my hon. Friend, the Member for Surrey, South-West (Mrs. Bottomley) on 28 October at columns *307-8*. I said then that we would review the proposals in the White Paper in the light of recommendations in Mrs. Justice Butler-Sloss's report of the Cleveland inquiry when this is received. Subject to that, we intend to introduce a Bill as soon as parliamentary time is available.

Income-related B

26. **Mr. Jessel:** To ask the Secr Services in what respects he expe income-related benefits to differ fr

Mr. Scott: The main changes supplementary benefit and family i income support and family credit a housing benefit. The new system improve work incentives and will e focused on those in greatest need.

Privatisatio

27. **Mr. David Davis:** To ask th Social Services what proportion of catering services in the northern r to competitive tendering.

32. **Mr. Porter:** To ask the Secre Services what proportion of la catering services in the East Ang subject to competitive tendering.

33. **Mr. David Nicholson:** To ask for Social Services what proportion and catering services in the South W subject to competitive tendering.

55. **Mr. Arbuthnot:** To ask the Social Services what proportion of catering services in North East Th subject to competitive tendering.

70. **Mr. Batiste:** To ask the Secre Services what proportion of lau catering services in the Yorkshire re to competitive tendering.

71. **Mr. Ian Taylor:** To ask the Social Services what proportion of l catering services in the South Wes been subject to competitive tenderin

75. **Mr. Rost:** To ask the Secreta Services what proportion of lau catering services in the Trent regio competitive tendering.

76. **Sir Trevor Skeet:** To ask the Social Services what proportion of l catering services in the North Wes been subject to competitive tenderin

77. **Mr. Simon Coombs:** To ask t for Social Services what proportion and catering services in the Wessex re to competitive tendering.

81. **Mr. Pawsey:** To ask the Se Social Services what proportion of la catering services in the West Midla subject to competitive tendering.

Mr. Newton: The most recen centrally is for the quarter ended Services put out to tender, as a per given in the table.

Region	*Laundry*	*Domesti*
Northern	100	10
Yorkshire	81	8

Region	Laundry	Domestic	Catering	Total
Trent	63	99	83	90
East Anglian	100	100	75	89
North West Thames	91	93	63	81
North East Thames	91	78	37	63
South West Thames	93	93	70	84
Wessex	100	100	100	100
South Western	100	94	62	80
West Midlands	90	98	87	92

Rating Reform

28. **Mr. Wilson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what is the amount of provision for community charge that it is intended to include in income support payments.

46. **Mr. Darling:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what steps he will take to ensure that claimants in receipt of income support and family credit will have access to funds to make their liability to pay a community charge when it becomes eligible.

Mr. Scott: I refer the hon. Members to my reply to my hon. Friend the Member for Cheadle (Mr. Day) and the hon. Member for Copeland (Dr. Cunningham) on 16 December at columns *599-601*.

North-West Region

29. **Mr. Lewis:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services when he last met the chairman of the North Western regional health authority to discuss present and future funding of health services in the north-west.

Mr. Moore: This subject arose as part of general discussions with Sir John Page during my visit to the regional health authority headquarters on 30 October 1987.

Handicapped Children

31. **Mr. Thurnham:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what recent representations he has received about provisions for caring for handicapped children; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Scott: Representations have been received recently on a range of subjects relating to the care of handicapped children of which the major issues raised concern the provision of conductive education and implementation of sections 5 and 6 of the Disabled Persons (Services, Consultation and Representation) Act 1986.

Our position on conductive education was set out in the reply to the right hon. Member for Stoke-on-Trent, South (Mr. Ashley) on 24 November 1987 at columns *180-81* and I announced that implementation of sections 5 and 6 of the 1986 Act would take effect on 1 February 1988 in my reply to the hon. Member for Monklands, West (Mr. Clarke) on 4 November 1987 at column *783*.

Pensioners (Incomes)

37. **Mr. John Marshall:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services how many of those persons retiring now have a second or third income.

Mr. Scott: The latest figures available are for 1985. At that time, over 85 per cent. of recently-retired pensioner households had income from sources benefits—such as occupational pensions earnings.

48. **Mr. Rowe:** To ask the Secretary o Services what increase there has been in a incomes since 1979.

Mr. Scott: The average net income income unit (a single person over pensio where the husband is 65 or more) rose b 2·7 per cent. per year, in real terms betwee twice as fast as that of the population as (Source: Family Expenditure Survey.)

Maternity Allowances

39. **Mr. Holt:** To ask the Secretary of Services what plans he has to amend cu in respect of maternity allowances.

Mr. Portillo: We have no immediate these regulations.

Electricity, Gas and Water (Disco

41. **Mr. Cryer:** To ask the Secretary o Services what steps he takes to ensure tha *(b)* gas and *(c)* water are not cut off from of supplementary benefit.

Mr. Scott: People on supplementary threatened with disconnection of mains may have their fuel paid directly if the adj considers it is in the interests of the famil scheme is the product of an agreement (kn statement of intent on direct payment for f DHSS and the fuel industry. Provided t agrees, deductions are made from supplementary benefit and paid directly t cover both current consumption and to r

Similar direct payment arrangements n water rates to prevent disconnection of addition, the fuel industries' code of practi the supply of gas and electricity to pensi should not be disconnected between 1 March.

Family Credit Scheme

43. **Mr. Summerson:** To ask the Secret Social Services how many more low-inc expects to benefit when the new family introduced.

Mr. Scott: It is estimated that abou families will receive family credit than wou family income supplement had that schem

47. **Mr. William Powell:** To ask the Se for Social Services how much more will new family credit scheme than is currently income supplement and associated benefi

Mr. Scott: On the basis of a case lo 470,000, spending on family credit from A over £200 million more than is currently family income supplement and free schoo welfare foods for family income supplem

Community Care (Physical Abuse)

45. **Mr. Campbell-Savours:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what representations he has received concerning the physical abuse of persons in community care over the last four weeks.

Mrs. Currie: None that we are aware of. If the hon. Member has a particular representation in mind, I should welcome his assistance.

Hospital Building

51. **Mr. Maples:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services how many major hospital building schemes have been started and completed since 1979.

Mrs. Currie: Information held centrally shows that in England some 250 hospital building schemes, each costing over £1 million, have been started and completed since 1979.

Health Authorities (Income Generation)

52. **Mr. Cash:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what estimates his Department has prepared of the amounts which health authorities could raise over the next few years as a result of income generation schemes.

Mr. Newton: Until health authorities have fully evaluated the possibilities for generating income and have drawn up plans, it is difficult to forecast with any precision what amounts they will raise. However, we believe that health authorities should be capable of generating net additional income of £10 million to £20 million in 1988-89, £40 million to £50 million in 1989-90, and £60 million to £70 million in 1990-91.

Attendance Allowance

53. **Mr. Nellist:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what is his estimate of the numbers of under-twos otherwise eligible for attendance allowance but currently excluded by virtue of their age.

Mr. Scott: We estimate that there may be up to 3,000 children under the age of two years who might satisfy the medical criteria for an attendance allowance at either the lower or higher rate.

Missing Girocheques

54. **Mr. Win Griffiths:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services how many claimants in 1986 reported to his Department that they did not receive their Girocheques; and how many received payment to cover their loss.

Mr. Portillo: The information requested is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Deaf People (Specialised Telephone Exchange)

56. **Mr. Cran:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what recent discussions he has had with the Royal National Institute for the Deaf on the subject of financial support for the institute's specialised telephone exchange; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Scott: Discussions have been held involving representatives of the RNID and British Telecom, and officials of the Government Departments concerned. Following these discussions RNID has made a formal application for help, including revised costings, under the Government's concerned technology programme. This application is receiving urgent consideration.

Hospital Beds

57. **Mr. Fatchett:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what is his latest estimate of the number of beds in National Health Services hospitals closed on a permanent or temporary basis since January 1987.

Mrs. Currie: I regret that information for 1987 is not yet available.

Competitive Tendering

60. **Mr. Curry:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what savings have been made to the most recent available date through the implementation of the competitive tendering initiative.

Mr. Newton: As at the end of September 1987 estimated annual savings of some £103 million had been generated. For further information I refer my hon. Friend to my reply to the hon. Member for Holborn and St. Pancras (Mr. Dobson) on 8 December 1987 at column *141*.

Elderly and Disabled Persons (Alarm Systems)

63. **Mr. Bowis:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services whether the community care budget will cover the costs of dispersed alarm systems for the elderly and disabled who live in their own homes; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Currie: Decisions about the priorities for social services and housing provision, including dispersed alarm systems, are for the local authorities concerned to take in the light of local needs, circumstances and plans. The funding of alarm systems is certainly part of the wider question of funding community care. We have drawn this to the attention of Sir Roy Griffiths, who is reviewing the way public funds are used to support community care policy, and we will give further consideration to this issue in the light of his report.

Shropshire District Health Authority

65. **Mr. Grocott:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services whether he has any plans to meet the chairman of the Shropshire district health authority to discuss the state of the authority's finances.

Mr. Newton: I recently met the chairman of Shropshire health authority. No further meetings are currently planned.

Housing Benefit (War Widows)

66. **Mr. Kirkwood:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services whether he has any plans to make special arrangements to enable local authorities to continue to disregard war widow's income in assessing housing benefit entitlement.

Mr. Portillo: The Housing Benefit (General) Regulations 1987 increase the amount of war widows' pensions that all local authorities are required to disregard from £4 to £5. In addition, under the Social Security Act 1986 individual local authorities continue to have

discretion to disregard for housing benefit purposes up to the full amount of any war widow's pension. Any other income which war widows may have is treated in the same way as the income of other claimants.

NHS Expenditure

69. **Mr. Tim Smith:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what proportion of gross domestic product National Health Service expenditure currently represents; and what comparable information he has for France, West Germany and Italy.

Mr. Newton: In 1984 (the latest year for which comparable figures are available), public spending on health care as a percentage of gross domestic product was as follows:

	Percentage
United Kingdom	5·3
France	6·5
Germany	6·4
Italy	6·1

These figures relate to financial inputs. It is more difficult to compare outputs, but, as medical costs are known to vary greatly between different countries, it is likely that the value obtained from public spending on health care also varies. Medical costs are relatively low in the United Kingdom.

AIDS

72. **Mr. Barry Field:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what advice and assistance his Department has given to the Haemophilia Society in administering the special trust fund for haemophiliacs with the AIDS virus.

Mr. Newton: Officials are working closely with officers of the Haemophilia Society on the arrangements to establish a special trust fund from which financial assistance can be given to those haemophiliacs infected with HIV and to their dependants.

I hope that this work will be completed shortly and so enable the Government to pay to the trust fund the £10 million I announced in my statement to the House on 16 November.

Mr. Yeo: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will meet the president of the Royal College of Physicians for the purpose of discussing measurement of the prevalence of HIV infection.

Mr. Newton: We have no plans to do so at the moment.

Mr. Butler: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will give the latest figures for the number of AIDS cases in *(a)* the North West regional health authority and *(b)* the Mersey regional health authority.

Mr. Newton: The number of AIDS cases reported to the communicable disease surveillance centre at the end of December 1987 was published by the Department yesterday. A copy of the figures is in the Library.

Personal Pensions

73. **Mr. Fallon:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what incentives will be provided for people to join a personal pension scheme as a result of the Social Security Act 1986.

Mr. Portillo: From 1 July 1988 it will be possible to contract out of the state earnings-related pension scheme through a personal pension from a scheme approved by the Occupational Pensions Board. Personal pensions will attract minimum contributions paid by the Department. These will be made up of a partial rebate of national insurance contributions and, until April 1993, a special incentive payment. In most cases the payments by the Department will include tax relief on the employee's share of the minimum contribution. People taking out a personal pension before 6 April 1989 will be able to backdate membership to 6 April 1987 and claim an extra year's minimum contributions, including the incentive.

NHS (Revenue)

74. **Mr. Chapman:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what is his estimate for 1988-89 of the total revenue of the National Health Service which will come from the various charges for services; and how this figure compares with five and 10 years before.

Mrs. Currie: Estimated revenue from charges for National Health Service services in England is as follows:

£ million

	Cash	*At 1987-88 prices*
1978-79	144	292
1983-84	394	468
1988-89	[1]520	498

[1] As estimated in "The Government's Expenditure Plans 1987-88 to 1989-90" January 1987 (Cm. 56-II).

Unemployment and Poverty Traps

82. **Mr. Hayward:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what measures he intends to take to reduce the effect of the unemployment and poverty traps.

Mr. Scott: I refer my hon. Friend to my reply to my hon. Friend the Member for Mid-Kent (Mr. Rowe) on 30 June 1987 at column *76*.

Child Abuse

84. **Mrs. Virginia Bottomley:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what action he plans to combat child abuse.

Mr. Newton: In my reply to my hon. Friend on 27 October, at columns *243-44*, I referred to the programme of work that the Government had in hand. This includes the new guidance and circular on multi-agency working which was issued in draft last year; the special training initiative for professional staff, of which two stages have already begun and plans for a third stage are in hand; and the preparation of practice guidelines for social workers and for nurses and of guidance for doctors on the clinical diagnosis of sexual abuse. All this work will be published when we have considered the report from Mrs. Justice Butler-Sloss on Cleveland.

Paediatric Nursing

85. **Mr. Budgen:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services how many nurses are trained in paediatric intensive care now; and how many were so trained in 1979.

Mr. Newton: A post-basic course for paediatric intensive care nursing was introduced in England in the year ended March 1987. Prior to that there was a post-basic course for special and intensive care of the newborn which was introduced in 1983. The numbers entering that training during the years ended March 1985, 1986 and 1987 were:

	Number
1985	287
1986	278
1987	393

Blood Glucose Testing Strips

86. **Mr. Patrick Thompson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services when he now expects to be able to make blood glucose testing strips available on prescription to diabetics.

Mr. Newton: I refer my hon. Friend to my reply to my hon. Friend the Member for Exeter (Mr. Hannam) on 24 November 1987 at column *174*. Discussions with manufacturers about supply arrangements and price will take place during January and February.

Community Care Services

89. **Mr. Andrew Smith:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what additional resources he proposes to make available to enable the care in the community strategy to work effectively.

Mr. Newton: I refer the hon. Member to my reply to the hon. Members for Monklands, West (Mr. Clarke) and for Dundee, East (Mr. McAllion) on 24 November 1987 at columns *160-61*.

Royal College of Nursing

Mr. Wray: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services when he last met representatives of the Royal College of Nursing.

Mrs. Currie: My right hon. Friend met the general secretary of the Royal College of Nursing on 21 July.

Family Doctors

35. **Mr. Bellingham:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what measures he intends to take to increase competition between family doctors.

64. **Mr. Riddick:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what effect the proposals in the White Paper "Promoting Better Health" will have on competition in the family practitioner services.

Mr. Newton: The proposals in the White Paper "Promoting Better Health" (Cm. 249) will stimulate competition within the family practitioner services in a number of ways. These include plans to increase the proportion of a doctor's income which is derived from capitation fees in order to encourage doctors to practise in ways which meet patients' needs. We will seek to relate doctors' pay more closely to individual performance and to the range of services they provide to patients, for example through incentive payments for reaching targets in preventive medicine. Procedures for changing doctor will be simplified. The Government will also be discussing with the dental profession the possibilities for change in the general dental practitioners' remuneration system with a view to introducing new incentives both for high efficiency and high standards of care.

The White Paper set out measures to improve information to patients so that they are able to make an informed choice of family doctor and dentists. Family practitioner committees will be required to improve information about local practitioners on their lists and to make the lists more widely available. Practices will be encouraged to provide informative leaflets to their patients. Among the proposals for a revised contract for general dental practitioners recently put to the profession was a requirement for dentists to explain proposed treatment plans and their probable cost to patients.

The Government will be discussing the reduction of restraints on advertising by doctors with the General Medical Council and welcome the steps taken by the Director General of Fair Trading to consult interested organisations on the terms of a proposal to refer the restrictions on dental advertising to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission.

In respect of opticians, the principle of greater competition which already applies for the sale of spectacles will be extended to the provision of sight tests.

Family Practitioner Services

36. **Mr. Jack:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what proposals he has to make family practitioner services more responsive to the consumer.

Mr. Newton: The proposals in the White Paper "Promoting Better Health" (Cm. 249) to extend and increase competition in the family practitioner services, to provide more information about services and to simplify the complaints procedures will make services more responsive to the needs and wishes of consumers. Tighter qualifications for the receipt of basic practice allowance will encourage a greater basic commitment from family doctors to work in general practice. An increase in the proportion of their income which is derived from capitation fees will encourage doctors to practise in ways which meet patients' needs.

A number of further measures, for example incentives to reach targets in preventive medicine, seek to relate doctors' pay more closely to their performance. Proposals for a revised contract intended to improve the quality and availability of NHS dental services and to secure a greater contractual commitment have also recently been put to the dental profession.

The Government will further be discussing with the medical and dental professions amendment to their contracts to clarify the role of general medical and dental practitioners in prevention and health promotion, thus helping to meet the growing demand from consumers for advice and information on this important aspect of health care. Some of the additional resources released by the changes proposed in the White Paper will be devoted to training dentists in ways of making their practices more attractive to those who do not attend the dentist regularly. We will also make available funds to assist in the provision of health promotion material for display in pharmacies and will encourage an extended use of pharmacists' skills.

In order that consumers should become better informed about services in their areas the Government will require

family practitioner committees to provide more information on their lists published of local practitioners, and will encourage the wide dissemination of practice leaflets. The Government will be discussing the reduction of restraints on advertising by doctors with the General Medical Council and welcome the steps taken by the Director General of Fair Trading to consult interested organisations on the terms of a proposal to refer the restrictions on dental advertising to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission. As further steps to improving standards and consumer choice in the general medical services, we shall be making it easier for patients to change doctor and will be requiring family practitioner committees to carry out consumer surveys in their areas and to act on the results.

With regard to the general ophthalmic services the Government have already taken a number of steps to increase competition while retaining adequate safeguards to protect consumers. We are now seeking powers through the Health and Medicines Bill to extend the principle of increased competition to sight testing while protecting the consumer's freedom to purchase spectacles where they choose.

Benefits (Disabled Claimants)

40. **Mr. McKelvey:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what further protection he proposes for disabled claimants who will have a reduced entitlement in April.

44. **Mr. Hannam:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services when he expects to announce the provision of a further top-up benefit for those severely disabled after April 1988 when the new income support system comes into effect.

68. **Mr. Eastham:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what further protection he proposes for disabled claimants who will have a reduced entitlement in April.

83. **Mr. Allen McKay:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what further protection he proposes for disabled claimants who will have a reduced entitlement in April.

Mr. Scott: I refer the hon. Members and my hon. Friend to my reply to the hon. Member for Liverpool, West Derby (Mr. Wareing) earlier today.

Drugs (Research)

42. **Mr. Galbraith:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will estimate the annual cost to the National Health Service of the additional investigations and extra time spent by patients in hospitals for research carried out on behalf of drug companies.

Mr. Newton: The level of research activity varies widely between health authorities and it is not possible to estimate the overall cost to the National Health Service.

NHS Patients (Private Care)

49. **Mr. Flannery:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services how many people in the area of the Sheffield district health authority have had operations in private hospitals under the scheme to cut down waiting lists for operations in National Health Service hospitals since the scheme's inception.

Mr. Newton: As at 31 December 1987, 20 patients from NHS waiting lists had had operations in private hospitals as part of the waiting list initiative, at a cost of £20,000. It is likely that this number will increase by some 100 by the end of the financial year. The Sheffield health district's initial waiting list fund allocation of £411,700 is planned to treat over 1,900 additional in-patients and some 2,660 extra out-patients in 1987-88.

General Practitioners

58. **Mr. Boswell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what was the average annual increase in the number of general practitioners between *(a)* 1973 and 1978 and *(b)* 1978 and 1986.

Mr. Newton: The average annual increase in the number of general medical practitioners (unrestricted principals) in England between 1973 and 1978 was 209 compared with 428 between 1978 and 1986.

NHS (Charges)

Mr. Canavan: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what representations he has received on the proposals for additional charges for National Health Service patients.

59. **Mrs. Wise:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services how many representations he has received in support of his proposals to introduce charges for eye tests and dental examinations; and how many he has received expressing opposition.

61. **Mr. Bill Michie:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services how many representations he has received in support of his proposals to introduce charges for eye tests and dental examinations; and how many he has received expressing opposition.

62. **Mr. Michael:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services how many representations he has received in support of his proposals to introduce charges for eye tests and dental examinations; and how many he has received expressing opposition.

Mr. Newton: I refer the hon. Members to my reply to the hon. Member for Liverpool, West Derby (Mr. Wareing) on 11 January.

Regional Health Authorities (Staff)

80. **Mr. Hayes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what is the change in the number of administrative staff employed by regional health authorities since 1979 by region.

Mr. Newton: The numbers of whole-time equivalent administrative and clerical staff employed by regional health authorities in September 1979 and September 1986 were as follows:

Regional Health Authorities	*1979*	*1986*
Northern	510	450
Yorkshire	630	510
Trent	720	940
East Anglian	300	330
North West Thames	370	290
North East Thames	430	540
South East Thames	450	590

Regional Health Authorities	1979	1986
South West Thames	450	550
Wessex	460	310
Oxford	370	530
South Western	520	430
West Midlands	1,050	1,060
Mersey	510	490
North Western	830	790
Total	7,610	7,820

The figures given for each RHA are not necessarily comparable, since the effects of developments since 1979, including the NHS reorganisation of 1982 and centralisation in such areas as supplies and stores, have varied between regions. The figures are rounded to the nearest 10 whole-time equivalents.

Reform

Mr. Baldry: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services how much extra will be spent on low-income families as a result of the changes to income-related benefits in April 1988.

Mr. Scott: Comparisons between the new income-related benefit schemes and what might have happened under the old schemes must be hypothetical. However, on an annual basis, and using the assumptions underlying the structural tables in "Impact of the Reformed Structure of Income Related Benefits" (published at the time of the uprating statement on 27 October), the disposable incomes of all those receiving income-related benefits and caring for dependent children will be some £200 million higher once housing costs have been met.

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will list the number of claimants, together with the number of dependants, who will not receive any increase in benefit when income support comes into effect; and if he will subdivided these data according to whether the claimant is *(a)* a pensioner, *(b)* sick or disabled, *(c)* unemployed, and *(d)* a single parent.

Mr. Scott: Using the assumptions underlying table 1A of the "Impact of the Reformed Structure of Income-Related Benefits" (published at the time of the uprating statement on 27 October) the information is as follows:

	Number of claimants (thousands)	Number of dependants (thousands)
a. Pensioners	820	185
b. Sick or disabled	80	30
c. Unemployed and others	790	325
d. Single parents	230	390
Total	1,920	930

General Practitioners (New Technology)

Mr. Butler: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will further review his policies with regard to the use of new technology by general practitioners.

Mr. Newton: The Government continue to support such developments in general practice and recently announced in the White Paper "Promoting Better Health" that they will encourage the continued development of information and communication technology and puterisation in primary care, especially with reg health promotion and prevention of ill health.

Mobility and Attendance Allowances

Mr. Stern: To ask the Secretary of State for Services what is the average length of time that between an application for mobility or atter allowance, and its final decision by him after all appeal procedures have been exhausted.

Mr. Scott: Decisions, including the final decisio claims for attendance allowance and mobility allo are made by independent adjudicating authorities. I that information is not kept in a form from whi average time for claims to go fully through the a procedures can be calculated.

Information Technology Staff

Mr. Michael Marshall: To ask the Secretary of Sta Social Services what proportion of the profes information technology staff in his Department, incl programmers, systems analysts and managers, is ba London and the south-east.

Mr. Portillo: Of those civil servants in DHSS v employed on information technology tasks (as speci Treasury—Central Computer and Telecommunica Agency guidelines) in grades from executive offic unified grade 7, 26 per cent. work in London an south-east.

Mr. Michael Marshall: To ask the Secretary of Sta Social Services how many professional level inform technology staff are employed by his Depart including programmers, systems analysts and mana and how many trainees there are for such posts.

Mr. Portillo: I regret that information is not ava in the form requested. The Department does not mai separate statistics for programmers, systems ana managers or trainees and such detailed information be provided only at disproportionate cost. Howeve total number of civil servants in the DHSS, w employed on information technology tasks (as specif Treasury—Central Computer and Telecommunica Agency guidelines) in grades from executive offic unified grade 7 is 1,494.

Hospices

Mr. Harry Greenway: To ask the Secretary of Sta Social Services what support his Department gives t hospice movement; in what form it is given; and if h make a statement.

Mrs. Currie: The level and form of support individual hospices is a matter for local health autho who were given detailed guidance on this earlier in the in circular HC (87)4, a copy of which is in the Library. stated:

"Where a voluntary group provides a service represents an essential element in a health authority's ov plans for terminal care, the health authority should agree them a contribution to the costs of that service".

Patients in independent hospices may be eligibl supplementary benefit to help with charges up to £23

week. Specialist in-patient, home care and hospital support services for the terminally ill are also provided directly by a number of health authorities.

The Department has approved direct grants of £600,000 to the London Lighthouse which is building the first hospice specifically for people with AIDS, and £200,000 to the Mildmay Mission hospital towards the cost of adapting one ward into a unit to provide hospice care for people terminally ill with AIDS.

Operations (Costs)

Mr. Nicholas Bennett: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what information he has as to the relative costs of operations and other treatments in different district health authorities; and if he will make a statement on any research currently being undertaken.

Mrs. Currie: Information on the costs of specific operations and other treatments in district health authorities is not routinely collected. The Department is not currently funding research as such on this subject. However, as part of the resource management initiative, information systems are being developed which, used in conjunction with patient classification systems, will enable comparisons to be made of resources used to treat patients suffering from similar types of illness or requiring similar treatment procedures. We hope to have the first results of the new system available in April.

Young Claimants

Mr. McAllion: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what representations he has received about his policy towards 17-year-olds who are not still in education and also choose to remain on social security rather than take a job, or accept a training place.

Mr. Scott: Up to 8 January we have received a total of 53 letters concerning the Government's proposal to withdraw the general entitlement to income support from 16 and 17-year-olds. Most of these expressed concern about particular groups such as the disabled and the homeless and the representations made will be fully considered when the regulations exempting certain groups from the general provision are framed.

Cancer Screening

Ms. Harman: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services whether all district health authorities are still expected to meet the target of 31 March 1988 for the introduction of cervical cancer screening; and whether this screening will cover all women at risk.

Mrs. Currie: The team led by Sir Roy Griffiths is monitoring progress and present indications are that all district health authorities should meet the target date for the introduction of computerised call and recall systems for cervical cancer screening.

All women aged 20-64 will be invited for screening within five years of implementation of the system, unless their general practitioners have indicated that they should be excluded.

Revised guidance to health authorities and family practitioner committees on the organisation of cervical cancer screening services has been issued today and copies placed in the Library.

Health Education Authority (Publicity)

Mr. Michael Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will list in the *Official Report* the advertising, marketing and public relations consultants currently retained by the Health Education Authority and the criteria by which these consultants are chosen and their performance assessed.

Mrs. Currie: The Health Education Authority currently retains two advertising agencies—Abbott Mead Vickers and TBWA. In appointing and assessing the performance of such agencies, the authority employs the criteria normally used by public and commercial bodies.

Fish Oils

Mr. Butler: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services whether he will make it his policy to promote the consumption of the fish oils containing docosohexaenoic and eicosapentaenoic acids in the prevention of coronary disease; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Currie: We have no plans to do so. The Government are concerned that people should eat healthy, balanced diets, which can be done without promoting the consumption of any particular food or food component.

Maxepa capsules and liquid, which contain eicosopentaenoic acid and docosohexaenoic acid, are available for prescription under the National Health Service, but their licensed indication is

"the reduction of plasma triglycerides in patients with severe hypertriglyceridaemia, and who are judged to be at special risk of ischaemic heart disease and/or pancreatis".

They are not licensed for general use in the prevention of coronary heart disease.

Perinatal Mortality

Mr. Butler: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what is the percentage change in perinatal mortality between 1978 and the latest available year in *(a)* the north-west region and *(b)* England as a whole.

Mrs. Currie: The information is given in the table.

Perinatal mortality rates for England and North West Standard Region 1978 and 1986; percentage decrease from 1978 to 1986

Area of usual residence	[1]Perinatal mortality rates 1978	1986	Percentage decrease 1978-86
England	15·45	9·53	38·3
North West Standard Region	17·00	9·95	41·5

[1] Still births and deaths under one week per 1,000 total live and still births.

Dentists (Compensation)

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if, pursuant to his reply of 7 December, *Official Report*, column *34*, he will make a statement on his discussions with the British Dental Association, on compensation for dentists who may be obliged to sell their businesses at depressed prices as a result of proposals in the Health and Medicines Bill.

Mr. Newton: Officials of the Department held the first of a series of meetings with the British Dental Association

on 8 January, to discuss the proposals in the Bill relating to the retirement of dentists. No conclusions have yet been reached.

Public Appointments

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will list the names of all the people appointed to public bodies by his Department who are currently in office, giving for each the office concerned and the date of appointment.

Mr. Portillo: I regret this information could be provided only at disproportionate cost, since the Department is responsible for 133 public bodies with appointments totalling over 10,000.

Social Work Diploma

Mrs. Margaret Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services whether his Department is yet in a position to make a statement on funding for the proposed diploma of qualification in social work, in the light of the training recommendations of the recent Blom-Cooper report.

Mr. Newton: The Government are currently considering the proposals for the qualifying diploma in social work and hope to make an announcement shortly.

Drug Damage Compensation

Mr. Ashley: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) if he will start preparing legislation to establish a no-fault scheme for drug damage compensation which would provide for appropriate and prompt payments to be made by the pharmaceutical industry to established victims;

(2) what estimates are known to his Department of the cost of providing a no-fault compensation scheme for drug-damaged victims.

Mr. Newton: The Government have no plans to introduce legislation to establish a no-fault scheme of this kind and have no reliable estimates of the costs involved. From 1 March 1988 when the relevant provisions of the Consumer Protection Act 1987 come into force, people who can establish that they have suffered damage from using a defective medicinal product will no longer have also to prove negligence before they can establish liability.

Mr. Ashley: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what representations he has received about establishing a no-fault compensation payment scheme for victims of drug damage; and what was the thrust of the views expressed.

Mr. Newton: None, other than those put forward in the House by the right hon. Member himself.

Mr. Ashley: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what information he has of the amount pharmaceutical companies now pay for insurance cover against drug damage compensation payments.

Mr. Newton: I regret that information of the kind referred to is not held by the Department.

Broadmoor (Outside Visits)

Mr. Greg Knight: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he has any proposals to alter the procedures operating over the past 12 months at Broadmoor relating to outside visits for shoppi purposes for convicted prisoners; and if he statement.

Mrs. Currie: Officials from the Departme Home Office are currently reviewing the ar under which special hospital patients, inclu transferred to the hospitals from prisons, are go on outings into the community. It is our i issue updated guidance to all the special hosp

Mr. Greg Knight: To ask the Secretary c Social Services how many convicted persons h from Broadmoor whilst taking part in expeditions or public house visits during t months; what criteria are applied to permissi visits; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Currie: One patient absconded durin from the hospital during the 12-month perio November 1987. He had not been transfe hospital from prison. Before a special hospit allowed to go on an outing, approval must be or her responsible medical officer, the clinical t medical director. In the case of patients restrictions under sections 41 or 49 of the Me Act 1983 the consent of the Home Secret required. The arrangements in relation to the ing staff must be approved by a senior nurse the hospital.

Mr. Greg Knight: To ask the Secretary c Social Services on how many occasions durin months inmates of Broadmoor have been allo public houses; and of these how many wer prisoners.

Mrs. Currie: I regret that such records are

Mr. Greg Knight: To ask the Secretary c Social Services on how many occasions durin months inmates of Broadmoor have been allo part in shopping expeditions; and of these how convicted prisoners.

Mrs. Currie: During the 12-month perio November 1987, 26 male patients and 14 fem took part in 40 and 30 shopping expeditions r some patients were involved in more than on Two of the male patients had been transfe hospital from prison.

Worth House Children's Home

Mr. Gale: To ask the Secretary of State Services when he expects to receive the report c services inspector into allegations of further poor supervision at the Worth house childr Herne Bay; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Currie: I have now received from services inspectorate a report on Worth Ho children's home, Herne Bay. The inspection standards of care at Worth House were adequate. The Department will continue to d the London boroughs' children's regiona committee the wider issue of the placement of accommodation which is, as far as practicab their home area.

London Couriers (Accidents)

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will give for each year since 1979 the cost to the National Health Service in London of treatment to victims of accidents involving bicycle and motor cycle couriers.

Mrs. Currie: I regret that the information requested is not available.

Recovery of Benefits

Mr. Thurnham: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what action he is taking to pursue the recommendations made by the Public Accounts Committee in its report of 19 November 1987 that the Department should recover social security benefits when awards of damages in tort are made; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Scott: Following consideration of the report, we have appointed management consultants Touche Ross to establish how much would be recoverable to DHSS if 100 per cent. of social security benefits were recovered from awards paid in consequence of an injury. The consultants will also assess the administrative implications of an effective recovery scheme for insurance companies and DHSS. We expect a report in April 1988 and will consider its findings before deciding whether and, if so, how to proceed with a recovery scheme.

Public Health Laboratory Service

Mrs. Margaret Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what is the revenue cost of the public health laboratory service in each of the last five years.

Mr. Newton *[holding answer 11 January 1988]* revenue expenditure of the public health laboratory in each of the last five years was:

	£ million
1982-83	28·6
1983-84	30·8
1984-85	32·3
1985-86	35·9
1986-87	38·7

These figures are taken from the board's annual acc

NHS (Youth Training Scheme)

Mr. Wareing: To ask the Secretary of State for Services if he will list the organisations he inte consult about the proposal to employ young peo YTS schemes within the National Health Service.

Mr. Newton *[holding answer 11 January 1988]* recently published feasibility study on the extended youth training schemes in the National Health Se currently being considered by the four bodies sponsored it—the Department, the Manpower S Commission, the United Kingdom Central Coun Nursing, Midwifery and Health Visiting and the Training Authority. If certain ideas in the study w be pursued—such as a national framework for t outcomes from YTS—there will need to be co tions with the staff side (to which copies of the repo already been sent) and others. The many health auth which already run YTS programmes are subject normal YTS rules regarding consultation; local co tion will continue to be required for any new progra in line with MSC requirements.

Written Answers to Questions

Wednesday 13 January 1988

HOME DEPARTMENT

Data Protection Act

Mr. Hanley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what is his estimate of the number and percentage of firms who should have registered under the Data Protection Act and have not yet done so.

Mr. Renton: The Data Protection Registrar originally estimated that approximately 300,000 applications should be received from those required to register under the Data Protection Act. By 31 December 1987 there were 135,149 entries on the register and some 18,000 applications were still being processed. The registrar now considers that the original estimate was on the high side and that the current shortfall in registrations is no more than 100,000. He is continuing his drive to secure more registrations.

Road Accidents (Sentences)

Mr. Galloway: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will establish an inquiry into the range of sentences available to the courts in cases relating to road accidents and into the legal rights of victims' families in such cases.

Mr. John Patten: A review of offences and penalties in road traffic law, under the chairmanship of Dr. Peter North, is nearing completion. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Transport expects to receive the report shortly.

The rights of victims' families, which are outside the review's remit, include a right to damages recoverable in civil proceedings, and normally paid by the offender's insurers or the Motor Insurers Bureau; and in England and Wales the same right as other citizens to bring prosecutions for criminal offences. The Government are doing much to assist victims of crime in general and their families—for example, through the financial help we are giving to victim support schemes — in England and Wales, £9 million over three years from 1987-88. I have no plans for a separate inquiry in relation to victims of road traffic offences.

Crown Properties (Fire Services)

Mr. Sims: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what is the current establishment of the Fire Services Inspectorate covering Crown properties in England and Wales; how many of these posts are at present occupied; when the occupants are due to retire; and what arrangements are being made to fill vacancies caused by retirement.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: The complement of Crown inspectors in the premises and inspection group of the fire service inspectorate is one grade II inspector and 10 assistant inspectors; two posts are presently occupied; the grade II inspector is due to retire at the end of Vacancies are being advertised in the national press 21 January.

Sexual Equality

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State fo Home Department what representations he has rec from the chairman of the Equal Opportu Commission on amending the Sex Discrmination A place a duty on local authorities *(a)* to eliminate unl discrimination between the sexes and *(b)* to pro equality of opportunity between the sexes.

Mr. John Patten: In 1986 the Equal Opportu Commission published a consultative docu "Legislating for Change?" which proposed that a du imposed on all bodies carrying out a servic undertaking of a public nature to work towards elimination of discrimination on grounds of se marriage and to promote equality of opportunity bet men and women generally. The commission's proposals for amending the Sex Discrimination Act are expected shortly.

Departmental Staff (Ethnic Groups)

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State fo Home Department what positive action he has take increase the proportion of employees of his Depart who are drawn from ethnic minority groups; and if he make a statement.

Mr. Hurd: We are committed to equal opportuniti employment, and keen to attract ethnic minority rec into the Home Office. A number of measures have taken to encourage suitable applications for those gr recruited directly by the Department. Advertisem emphasise our commitment to equal opportunities have, where it is likely to be productive, been placed i ethnic minority press or in local papers in areas with ethnic minority populations. Links have been establi with some local communities. In addition, all membe departmental recruitment boards receive training desi to ensure that all candidates, of whatever ethnic group treated fairly.

About 10 per cent. of respondents to a recent surv new entrants to the Department stated that they were f ethnic minorities. But these groups are under represe in certain areas of work, and particular attention is b paid to possible ways of remedying this. For example prison service aptitude tests have been revised and designed to ensure that they are free from cultural bias departmental recruitment schemes are now subjec ethnic monitoring, and we shall be using the informa gathered to consider what further action may be nee

Citizen Registration Fee

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State fo Home Department what representation he has rece from the Association of London Authorities regarding citizen registration fee; whether he intends to reply; if he will make a statement.

Mr. Renton: My right hon. Friend received a l dated 4 November 1987, from the association's race po adviser, asking that the £60 fee for registration under

British Nationality Act 1981 should be waived and seeking a meeting. His private secretary replied on 8 December explaining that there is no power to waive the fee, and in consequence a meeting to discuss the request was not considered useful.

Metropolitan Police

Mr. Wheeler: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will publish the statement by the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis on his strategy for the coming year.

Mr. Hurd: I am today placing copies of the commissioner's strategy statement for 1988 in the Library. I am also sending a copy to all right hon. and hon. Members whose constituencies fall wholly or partly within the Metropolitan police district. I hope to meet London Members soon to discuss the statement.

I have discussed the commissioner's statement with him. The force goal for 1988 is to continue to improve the quality of service to the public by:

(a) The reduction of criminal opportunity through crime prevention, public contact, involvement and co-operation.

(b) (i) The enhanced detection of specific criminal offences (for example, robbery, burglary, drug misuse, racial attacks, sexual offences against women and vandalism) in accordance with locally or centrally identified priorities.

(ii) A concerted attack on organised crime and the elimination of resulting profits.

(c) The enhanced support, care and concern for victims of crime including the victims of domestic violence.

(d) Improved effectiveness both in the preservation of public tranquility through closer community-police relations and in the policing of public disorder through better tactical control, communications, equipment and training.

OVERSEAS DEVELOPMENT

Wildlife Conservation

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will give details of the financial and technical assistance given by Her Majesty's Government each year since 1979 to countries and organisations for the purpose of wildlife conservation.

Mr. Chris Patten: Aid statistics are not collated on a basis which would enable us to identify aid for wildlife conservation. The Overseas Development Administration is currently co-funding under the joint funding scheme with the World Wildlife Fund and other non-governmental organisations a number of projects which include wildlife conservation amongst their aims. It also supports other activities under the bilateral aid programme, such as a communal areas wildlife monitoring unit in Zimbabwe.

Sugar Producers (Diversification)

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what funds have been allocated by his Department to sugar producing countries in each of the past five years to assist them to diversify into the production of other foodstuffs; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Chris Patten: I refer the hon. M answer I gave the hon. Member for Bi Field) on 24 November at column *118*.

WALES

Arts Council of Wales

Mr. Barry Jones: To ask the Secretar Wales if he will list the income in real ter Council of Wales for each of the years from extra allocations of cash he will make to T Mold; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Wyn Roberts: The information is a

Year	*£ mi*
1979-80	8
1980-81	7
1981-82	7
1982-83	8
1983-84	7
1984-85	8
1985-86	7
1986-87	8
1987-88	8

The Department does not directly pr Clwyd, Mold with any financial assistance

EMPLOYMENT

Nuclear Installations Inspector

Mr. Matthew Taylor: To ask the Secreta Employment what is the current breakdo Installations Inspectorate staffing in the f areas: long-term safety reviews of Mag Sizewell B and Hinckley C, spent fuel currently operating Magnox reactors, curre advanced gas-cooled reactors, other nuclea radioactive waste and other areas.

Mr. Nicholls: Information currently avai that the approximate amount of time spent nuclear installations inspectors on different is as follows:

Long-term safety review of magnox reactors
Sizewell B and Hinckley Point C
Spent fuel reprocessing
Operational magnox reactors
Operational advanced gas-cooled reactors
Other nuclear installations
Radioactive waste
Other work

Nuclear Installations, Factory and Ag Inspectorates

Mr. Frank Cook: To ask the Secretary Employment what are the current staffing Nuclear Installations Inspectorate, Factory and Agricultural Inspectorate; and what are levels for 1988-89 and 1989-90.

Mr. Nicholls: On 1 January 1988 the inspectors in each inspectorate was as follo

	Number
Nuclear Installations Inspectorate	114
Factory Inspectorate	554
Agricultural Inspectorate	150

Following an increase in the provision for 1988-89, the Health and Safety Executive plans to increase during 1988-89 the number of nuclear installations inspectors to 120, the number of factory inspectors to about 585 and the number of agricultural inspectors to about 160. Final decisions on staffing levels for later years have not yet been taken.

Labour Statistics

Mr. Meacher: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what has been the number of persons unemployed for less than six months, six mo year, over one year, over two years, over thre over five years in each year since 1979; and latest estimates.

Mr. Cope: Direct comparisons of unemp duration since 1979 are not possible because the method of compilation. The following is information. Table A shows the average unemployed registrants in the United Kingd year from 1979 to 1982, who had been unempl durations requested, except for those unem five years, for which figures were not separate Table B shows the average number of claiman been unemployed for all durations requested from 1983 to 1987, and table C shows the n October 1987, the latest date for which available.

Table A
Average number of unemployed registrants in the United Kingdom

	Unemployed less than 6 months	*Unemployed 6 months to 1 year*	*Unemployed over 1 year*	*Unemployed over 2 years*	*Unemployed over 3 years*
1979	810,099	237,121	359,651	n/a	n/a
1980	1,085,364	284,233	368,651	190,233	116,177
1981	1,369,155	619,856	595,708	234,964	137,660
1982	1,424,433	681,917	1,034,891	377,101	173,464

Table B
Average number of unemployed claimants in the United Kingdom

	Unemployed less than 6 months	*Unemployed 6 months to 1 year*	*Unemployed over 1 year*	*Unemployed over 2 years*	*Unemployed over 3 years*	*Unemployed over 5 years*
1983	1,348,688	639,082	1,110,898	521,559	324,513	n/a
1984	1,318,098	610,779	1,229,378	671,596	396,149	90,097
1985	1,341,881	607,263	1,332,260	793,514	494,469	149,180
1986	1,352,052	606,079	1,354,252	845,019	570,050	227,656
1987	1,206,243	549,276	1,260,030	796,948	562,964	272,087

Table C
Number of unemployed claimants in the United Kingdom—October 1987

Unemployed less than 6 months	*Unemployed 6 months to 1 year*	*Unemployed over 1 year*	*Unemployed over 2 years*	*Unemployed over 3 years*	*Unemployed over 5 years*
1,136,008	443,140	1,172,236	756,238	537,865	276,454

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Wheelchair Users

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Lord President of the Council what arrangements currently exist for members of the public who are wheelchair users who wish to lobby hon. Members or attend the business of the House; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Wakeham: The arrangements which exist within the Palace of Westminster for the assistance of wheelchair users are set out in the leaflet "Visits of Disabled Persons" obtainable from the Serjeant at Arms. I am arranging for a copy to be sent to the hon. Member. In the event of mass lobbies by disabled persons it is usual for special arrangements for the reception of wheelchair users to be made. These arrangements vary depending upon the size of the lobby.

Turtle Soup and Veal

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Lord Presi Council if he will take steps to exclude turtle so from restaurant menus within the Palace of W and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Wakeham: Turtle soup is not avail House of Commons restaurants and cafeterias turtle soup is served. Veal will continue to be all veal supplied to the House is humanely ki

ATTORNEY-GENERAL

Crown Prosecution Service

Mr. John Morris: To ask the Attorney-Gen he will make a statement on the Crown Service proposal to use civil servants wit

qualifications to review charge and evidence in order to determine whether a case will be prosecuted after police investigation; and whether there will be any cases that will not go before a legally qualified person before determination.

The Attorney-General: The Crown Prosecution Service has for some time relied upon certain members of its staff who may have no legal qualifications to carry out an initial screening of a range of less serious cases referred to the CPS by the police, and it is intended that this practice should continue.

Those concerned have all received a period of relevant training and work under the supervision of a Crown prosecutor. The screening which they conduct is for the purpose of ensuring that there are no deficiencies in the evidence or other matters arising, including matters which may be relevant to questions of public interest, which might prevent the case proceedings to a first hearing before a magistrates' court. If their screening discloses no such obstacle, then that prosecution will proceed to its first hearing, where it will be presented before the court by a qualified lawyer. Should the defendant then plead guilty, that case will thus be disposed of. But should he not do so, so that the case is adjourned to a later date, then it will be referred to a Crown prosecutor who will conduct his or her own review.

If, on the other hand, on the initial screening it should appear that the case cannot or should not proceed, then again it will be referred to a Crown prosecutor for further consideration. In particular, no proceedings may be discontinued by a member of staff who is not a Crown prosecutor and at all times it is the Crown prosecutor who is responsible for the process of review.

The Crown Prosecution Service regards this system as a useful and efficient deployment of its staff which presents no risk whatsoever to the interests of justice; and considers that it does not represent any failure by the service to fulfil the responsibilities imposed on it by the Prosecution of Offences Act 1985.

Compensation Settlements

Mr. Ashley: To ask the Attorney-General if he will initiate legislation, in consultation with the Law Society, to prevent companies from making it a condition of a compensation settlement that the solicitors involved do not act for other claimants.

The Attorney-General: The Government do not at present consider that legislation would be appropriate. The Law Society is giving consideration to the matter as a question of professional practice, and the Government will await the outcome of its deliberations.

EDUCATION AND SCIENCE

Departmental Responsibility (Scotland)

Mr. Kirkwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will list in the *Official Report* those areas of his departmental responsibility which extend to Scotland.

Mr. Robert Jackson: The Education (Fees and Awards) Act 1983 extends to Scotland; the regulations made under it by the Secretary of State for E apply so far as universities are con well as to England and Wales.

My right hon. Friend also make eight Scottish universities on the ad Grants Committee.

My right hon. Friend has respons of research through the science b expenditure by the research council

City Technology Co

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary and Science what steps he will take t have equal chances of a place at a ci

Mrs. Rumbold: CTCs, as indep come under section 22 of the Sex Di will be required as a condition o balanced intake of boys and girls. T funding agreements which those run into, on an annual basis, with my rig opportunity provision is a firm obje

AIDS

Mr. Butler: To ask the Secretary and Science if the Medical Research to fund research into HIV2; and statement.

Mr. Jackson: The Medical Resear supporting studies of HIV-2 infectio supported through the Tropical Board, a joint board of the MR Development Administration. I unde laboratories in The Gambia are wor in close collaboration with the Gambi council is also aware of a proposal to spread of HIV-2 to the United King

Corporal Punishm

Mr. Key: To ask the Secretary of and Science whether he will seek p corporal punishment will be illega colleges; and if he will make a state

Mrs. Rumbold: The provisions (No. 2) Act 1986 covering corporal p may be applied under section 47(5) independent schools which are main a Minister of the Crown. My right h lay regulations before Parliament to colleges within the scope of this sect

Education Refor

Mr. Simon Hughes: To ask the S Education and Science what recent re received concerning the proposals Reform Bill to enable London bor Inner London education authority c

Mr. Dunn: My right hon. Frien receive representations on this matte of organisations and from many me Copies of responses, other than tho have been placed in the Libraries of

School Meals

Mr. McAllion: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what information he has as to how many local education authorities charge more than 60p for school meals.

Mr. Dunn: In June 1987, which is the latest date for which figures are available, 58 of the 97 local education authorities in England charged more than 60p for school meals.

Assisted Places Scheme

Mr. Straw: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if, in respect of the assisted places scheme, he will publish in the *Official Report* a table showing for each year since the inception of the scheme *(a)* the number of pupils for whom fees have been paid and *(b)* the mean and median amounts of these fees, per pupil, and for the latest available year (i) the lowest and highest fees paid and (ii) the number of pupils who have had fees paid in each band of £100.

Mr. Kenneth Baker: This information is either not available in the form requested or could only be produced at disproportionate cost. I will write to the hon. Member with available data.

Teachers

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what information his Department has on the numbers of teachers recruited by local education authorities, in the latest period for which he has information, in the Greater London area, who obtained their qualifications *(a)* in the United Kingdom but not in England and Wales and *(b)* in overseas countries; and whether he has any plans for revising the arrangements for granting recognition of such qualifications.

Mrs. Rumbold: The number of full-time qualified teachers appointed to maintained nursery, primary or secondary schools in Greater London, excluding those teachers from other public sector posts, during the year ending 31 March 1986 was as follows:

	Number
Trained in United Kingdom but not in England and Wales	99
Trained in overseas countries	76

My right hon. Friend has no plans to alter the principle that those who apply for qualified teacher status in England and Wales on the basis of a course completed elsewhere should be awarded that status only if their course is comparable with courses approved in England and Wales.

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what research his Department has conducted, commissioned or otherwise supported on the subject of the relationships between schools, local education authorities and teacher training establishments in so far as they affect trainee teachers on training practice and the subsequent recruitment of such trainees; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Rumbold: The Department has commissioned a number of research projects on various aspects of teaching practice within initial teacher training c have not investigated subsequent recrui Teaching practice experience is just on factors relevant to a qualified teacher's to seek a post.

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secre Education and Science whether, i responsibilities for the training and supp is seeking to redress shortages in Lond make a statement.

Mrs. Rumbold: The Department t Teaching as a Career Unit has a sub publicity programme aimed at boostin initial teacher training and entry t programme is already having some succe the 13 per cent. increase in recruitment training courses this academic year. programme is directed towards recruit and the south-east. As a special measur and TASC are planning to mount a caree aimed at attracting more people into teac in the shortage areas, in London and th are in close touch with both the associations and with individual auth about the specific recruitment probl London.

Minority Groups (Teaching Pr

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secre Education and Science what action hi taking to encourage members of ethnic m enter the teaching profession.

Mrs. Rumbold: The Department is acti the development of a number of ne training courses specially designed students from the ethnic minorities. This Department's teacher recruitment public the remit of the Teaching as a Career U up in April 1987. The collection by authorities of statistics on the ethnic teachers, announced by my right hon. Fr a question from my hon. Friend the Me North (Mr. Greenway) on 28 October, at help us monitor progress.

Universities (Academic Free

Mr. Galloway: To ask the Secreta Education and Science what steps the Go taking prior to the current Education Ref the statute book to ensure that indivi statutes give sufficient protection to aca

Mr. Jackson: We believe that the Ed Bill will ensure that individual universi protection to academic freedom in the fo

i. by specifying the grounds on whi to provide for dismissal; namely, good cause;
ii. by requiring the commissioners t appeals machinery for staff who a should ensure that all academi effective measure of protecti victimisation by their colleagues o views;
iii. by requiring the commissioners t modifications to, amongst othe

representing the staff concerned, affording such organisations an opportunity to make representations on those modifications, and to take those representations into account;

iv. by providing for all instruments made by the commissioners to be subject to the approval of Her Majesty in Council who may remit them to the commissioners for reconsideration. It will be for the Privy Council, in considering whether to recommend to Her Majesty that amendments to university statutes put forward by the commissioner should be confirmed, to satisfy itself that the Government's objective of protecting academic freedom has been properly met.

In addition, the Bill requires the commissioners, in exercising their functions, to have regard to the need to apply the principles of justice and fairness. Further, the Bill will strengthen the protection academic staff have in another important respect: it will remove the exclusive jurisdiction of the visitor in cases of the dismissal of academic staff, and so will enable staff to bring actions in the courts for wrongful dismissal, which they cannot now do. This right of access to the courts will be in addition to the access that academic staff like other employees already have to industrial tribunals over claims for unfair dismissal.

PRIME MINISTER

Government Data Network

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Prime Minister (1) if she is satisfied with the co-ordination between the Home Office, the Department of Health and Social Security, the Treasury, the Inland Revenue, Her Majesty's Customs and Excise and the development of the Government data network;

(2) what plans Her Majesty's Government has for handling tax, national insurance, passports, criminal records, value added tax returns, and welfare benefits on a computer network; and if she will make a statement.

The Prime Minister: I am satisfied with the co-ordination between Departments, who on 11 January finalised memoranda of agreement with the consortia who will be invited to tender for the provision of the Government data network. The memoranda are based on plans for some of the data used for tax, national insurance and welfare benefits, but not currently for passports or criminal records, to be carried on the network. There are no plans to set up a central computing capability to link any of these applications; the proposed Government data network is intended to support each Department in meeting its own business needs for data transmission.

Honesty in Government

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Prime Minister what action she is taking to maintain and promote standards of honesty in Government; and if she will make a statement.

The Prime Minister: There are rules governing the general principles of conduct by Ministers and civil servants.

Public Record Office Documents

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Prime Minister for what reasons the sealed envelope and papers headed "Leader of the Opposition," the existence of which in the Public Record Office became known on 1 January have been subjected to a 75-year rule; and if she will make a statement.

The Prime Minister: A file from my office dating from 1957, listed in the Public Record Office under the heading "Leader of the Opposition", has been closed for 75 years under section 5(1) of the Public Records Act 1958. The file was closed in accordance with the criteria set out in paragraphs 26-27 of the White Paper "Modern Public Records", Cmnd 8531, March 1982.

Rating Reform

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Prime Minister what she estimates would be the uniform business rates payable on the following Government buildings compared with the commercial rates in 1987-88 *(a)* the Department of the Environment, *(b)* the Treasury, *(c)* No. 10 Downing street, *(d)* the Foreign Office, *(e)* the Department of Trade and Industry, *(f)* the Scottish Office, *(g)* the Welsh Office, *(h)* the Ministry of Defence and *(i)* the Ministry of Agriculture.

The Prime Minister: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the reply that I gave to the hon. Member for Birmingham, Perry Barr (Mr. Rooker) on 11 January at column *1*. Information on the contributions in lieu of rates made by the Treasury, and the effects of the introduction of the uniform business rate on those contributions, is not readily available and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

"Inside Intelligence"

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Prime Minister on what date the book "Inside Intelligence" by Anthony Cavendish was referred to the D Notice Committee; on what date the committee cleared the book; whether any alterations or deletions were requested by the committee; and if she will make a statement.

The Prime Minister: Discussions between the Defence Press and Broadcasting Committee and the press, broadcasting authorities and publishers are regarded as having taken place in confidence. It is not our policy to comment on discussions on individual books.

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Prime Minister why Sir Philip Woodfield, the security services counsellor, refused a request from Anthony Cavendish for an interview about his proposed book "Inside Intelligence"; and if she will make a statement.

The Prime Minister: The responsibilities of Sir Philip Woodfield as staff counsellor for the security and intelligence services were set out in my reply of 2 November 1987, column *512*, to my hon. Friend the Member for Wycombe (Mr. Whitney). I do not propose to comment on the details of how Sir Philip Woodfield discharges those responsibilities.

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Prime Minister what steps were taken by her Press Secretary on 1 January to publicise the fact that an injunction had been granted to Her Majesty's Government against the *Sunday Times* and *The Observer* newspapers restraining publication of extracts from the book "Inside Intelligence" by Anthony Cavendish; what

is the general practice with regard to the timing, source and scope of Government briefings on such subjects; and if she will make a statement.

The Prime Minister: The No. 10 Press Office informed the Press Association of the injunction obtained on 1 January. The practice with regard to timing, source and scope of such briefings varies according to the circumstances.

Nature Reserves

Mr. Hardy: To ask the Prime Minister if she will meet representatives of voluntary bodies concerned with conservation to discuss the disposal of nationally owned nature reserves.

The Prime Minister: The Nature Conservancy Council is considering this matter as part of its current review of national nature reserves. There are regular opportunities for the voluntary bodies to discuss issues which concern them at meetings with the NCC and with Ministers.

"The Secret Servant"

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Prime Minister whether Sir Patrick Reilly sought the approval of Her Majesty's Government to be interviewed by Mr. Anthony Cave-Brown during preparation of his book "The Secret Servant" a biography of Sir Stewart Menzies; and if she will make a statement.

The Prime Minister: We have no record of approval being sought for such an interview.

ENVIRONMENT

Nitrate Protection Zones

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment, pursuant to his reply, *Official Report*, 2 December 1987, column 916, if he has completed his consideration of the creation of nitrate protection zones; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Moynihan: My right hon. Friend has not yet completed his consideration of this subject.

Hedgerows

Mr. Geraint Howells: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how many miles of hedgerows have been lost in England during the last 10 years; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Moynihan: The current rate of hedgerow removal is not easy to establish and information is not available over this particular time scale. Results from the monitoring landscape change survey published in 1986 and conducted by Huntings Technical Services Ltd. for the Countryside Commission and this Department (a copy of which is in the Library of the House), indicated that hedgerow length in England fell from approximately 359,000 miles in 1969 to approximately 315,000 miles in 1985. However, figures produced by a MAFF survey show an average loss of 500 miles per year in England and Wales between 1981 and 1985. Work is continuing to enable us to improve our information on both the rate of removal and the extent of new planting, so that the position can be kept under review.

Local Council Borrowing

Mr. Beith: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what representations he has received about local council borrowing from the National Association of Local Councils; and what response he has given.

Mr. Chope: The association has sought an increase of 26 per cent. in the overall annual borrowing allocation for parish councils. It has been invited to submit further information in support of its request.

Storm Damage

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will give details by local authority of *(a)* original bids and *(b)* final allocations of funds from the Countryside Commission's "Task Force Trees for Replanting" following damage sustained in the inclement weather of 16 October 1987.

Mr. Moynihan: The following information relates to the special allocations made by the Countryside Commission for 1987-88.

£000

	Gross Bid	*Net Bid*	*Allocation*
Bedfordshire			
Bedfordshire CC	10	10	3
Berkshire	340	306	93
Berkshire CC	310	279	80
Reading BC	30	27	13
Buckinghamshire			
Buckinghamshire CC	58	51	20
Cambridgeshire	53	49	21
Cambridgeshire CC	37	35	14
Cambridge City	16	14	7
Dorset	23	22	9
Dorset CC	9	9	3
Bournemouth BC	6	6	3
Poole BC	8	7	3
East Sussex	1,094	907	293
East Sussex CC	648	521	200
Brighton BC	41	35	18
Eastbourne BC	81	68	25
Hove BC	93	80	25
Hastings BC	231	203	25
Essex	998	882	151
Essex CC	845	756	120
Lee Valley Park	13	12	6
Braintree DC	140	114	25
Hampshire	1,261	1,080	204
Hampshire CC	1,000	855	120
Eastleigh BC	51	44	22
Hart DC	65	58	25
Portsmouth BC	27	24	12
Southampton City	118	99	25
Hertfordshire			
Hertfordshire CC	82	82	33
Isle of Wight			
Isle of Wight CC	151	136	55
Kent	1,374	1,253	350
Kent CC	520	520	200
Canterbury City	114	97	25
Dover DC	187	160	25

	Gross Bid	Net Bid	Allocation
Maidstone BC	100	90	25
Sevenoaks DC	370	312	50
Swale DC	83	74	25
London	3,556	2,631	880
Barnet	100	84	42
Bexley	50	45	22
Brent	10	9	5
Bromley	293	293	50
Camden	64	57	28
City	200	90	45
Ealing	115	104	50
Enfield	45	38	19
Greenwich	48	44	22
Hammersmith and Fulham	46	34	17
Haringey	136	81	40
Harrow	60	49	24
Havering	55	43	21
Hillingdon	35	30	15
Hounslow	179	161	50
ILEA	8	7	4
Islington	72	65	32
Kensington and Chelsea	37	33	16
Lambeth	167	150	50
Lewisham	60	54	27
LRB	5	5	3
Merton	231	208	50
Newham	277	240	50
Southwark	118	106	50
Sutton	255	230	50
Tower Hamlets	18	16	8
Wandsworth	312	274	50
Westminster	100	81	40
Norfolk	80	80	34
Norfolk CC	60	60	24
Norwich City	20	20	10
Oxfordshire			
Oxfordshire CC	25	20	6
Southern Water	12	11	6
Suffolk	276	276	139
Suffolk CC	228	228	115
Ipswich BC	48	48	24
Surrey	130	113	56
Surrey CC	75	65	32
Waverley BC	55	48	24
West Sussex	678	513	206
West Sussex CC	133	111	67
Adur DC	150	62	25
Arun DC	153	122	25
Chichester DC	35	29	15
Crawley BC	30	27	14
Horsham DC	93	84	25
Mid Sussex DC	63	59	25
Worthing BC	21	19	10

The Countryside Commission arrived at the figures for net bids by deducting costs which were ineligible under the terms of the special scheme; and, where this was separately identified, by deducting the contribution which the local authority itself proposed to make.

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what funds have been *(a)* paid out and *(b)* allocated to the London borough of Newham for damage sustained during the inclement weather on 16 October 1987.

Mr. Chope: No payments have yet been made to the London borough of Newham under the scheme of special financial assistance for dealing with the storm damage on 16 October. My Department has not yet received a claim from the borough. No specific sum has been budgeted for Newham, nor any other authority under the scheme. Payments will be made on the basis of eligible expenditure in each authority's claim.

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will give his Department's latest estimate of the costs to local authorities arising from the damage caused by inclement weather on 16 October 1987.

Mr. Chope: In advance of receiving local authorities' claims for special financial assistance the Department does not have sufficiently reliable information available to provide such an estimate.

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what is the amount his Department has *(a)* paid out and *(b)* budgeted for damages arising from the consequences of inclement weather on 16 October 1987.

Mr. Chope: Up to 12 January only four claims have been received, and no payments have yet been made under the scheme of special financial assistance for dealing with storm damage on 16 October 1987. My Department has initially budgeted £25 million in 1987-88. This estimate is provisional and will be amended as necessary in the light of claims received. Provision will also be made in Main Estimates for 1988-89 for such payments.

Mr. Jacques Arnold: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment whether he is in a position to respond to the request from Kent county council for special financial assistance in respect of the severe weather during the 1986-87 winter.

Mr. Ridley: I have today written to the leader of Kent county council indicating that we have concluded that the weather conditions experienced in the county last winter were such as to justify invoking a scheme of special financial assistance under the Bellwin arrangements, and an exclusion from total expenditure.

In reaching this decision we have had particularly in mind the exceptionally severe weather conditions experienced by Kent compared with normal winter weather for the county and that, as a direct result of these conditions, communities were put at risk and suffered severe hardship and inconvenience which required immediate relief.

My officials have written to Kent with full details of the scheme. It will provide for grant to be paid at a rate of 75 per cent. on emergency-related expenditure above a threshold. This threshold will be the same as that used in relation to the storm emergency last October: the product of a 1p exclusive rate for the county council and 0·15p rate for non-metropolitan district councils.

I am also consulting local authority interests about an exclusion from total expenditure in respect of authorities' 25 per cent. share of eligible expenditure above the threshold and have asked that those wishing to comment on this proposal should do so by 5 February 1988.

It is open to other authorities who believe that they qualify for assistance under the terms of this scheme to make a case to the Department, and if it is accepted, to make a claim for special financial assistance.

The responsibility for dealing with such emergencies remains with local authorities. The Government regard special financial assistance as an exceptional measure. They will decide each case on its merits.

Rate Rebates

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what proportion of households with below average incomes but above average reateable values are in receipt of rate rebate.

Mr. Howard: 41 per cent. of homes with above average rateable values are occupied by households with below average incomes. Information on the proportions of such households receiving rate rebates at present is not available.

London Residuary Body

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what information he has about the current number of residential mortgages remaining with the London Residuary Body.

Mr. Waldegrave: At the end of December, 31,446 residential mortgages remained with the LRB.

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will give details by boroughs of the amounts distributed by the London Residuary Body since the commencement of the current financial year.

Mr. Chope: Firm figures in respect of the amount distributed by the London Residuary Body since the commencement of the current financial year will not be available until LRB's 1987-88 accounts have been audited and certified. However, LRB's latest estimate, as set out in its 1987-88 budget, of distributable revenue balances during the year is shown at table A.

Table A
Distribution of Estimated Revenue Balances 1987-88

	Balances £
Inner London	
City of London	28,938
Inner Temple	615
Middle Temple	591
Camden	1,066,273
Greenwich	1,277,872
Hackney	1,108,238
Hammersmith & Fulham	891,910
Islington	992,390
Kensington and Chelsea	813,299
Lambeth	1,439,232
Lewisham	1,373,624
Southwark	1,276,099
Tower Hamlets	869,449
Wandsworth	1,529,664
Westminster	1,058,589
Total Inner London	13,726,783
Outer London	
Barking and Dagenham	878,315
Barnet	1,780,273
Bexley	1,291,467
Brent	1,506,612
Bromley	1,760,768
Croydon	1,885,482
Ealing	1,728,260
Enfield	1,566,310
Haringey	1,165,571
Harrow	1,192,168
Havering	1,409,679
Hillingdon	1,373,033
Hounslow	1,156,114
Kingston upon Thames	791,430
Merton	972,294
Newham	1,232,952
Redbridge	1,347,617
Richmond upon Thames	954,562
Sutton	1,002,438
Waltham Forest	1,277,872
Total Outer London	26,273,217
Total All Boroughs	40,000,000

In accordance with the Local Government Reorganisation (Capital Money) (Greater London) Order 1987 (SI 1987/118), LRB notified all boroughs on 17 December 1987 of revised estimates of distributable capital receipts and associated spending power during 1987-88. These are set out at tables B and C respectively.

Table B
Distribution of estimated capital receipts cash 1987-88

	Total borough distribution £
Inner London	
City of London	110,000
Camden	5,985,000
Greenwich	4,985,000
Hackney	6,391,000
Hammersmith and Fulham	4,005,000
Islington	5,746,000
Kensington and Chelsea	3,519,000
Lambeth	7,871,000
Lewisham	5,987,000
Southwark	7,004,000
Tower Hamlets	4,032,000
Wandsworth	5,614,000
Westminster	4,109,000
Total Inner London	65,358,000
Outer London	
Barking and Dagenham	2,477,000
Barnet	4,516,000
Bexley	3,236,000
Brent	5,936,000
Bromley	4,447,000
Croydon	4,847,000
Ealing	5,227,000
Enfield	4,035,000
Haringey	5,633,000
Harrow	3,078,000
Havering	3,580,000
Hillingdon	3,707,000
Hounslow	3,481,000
Kingston upon Thames	1,902,000
Merton	2,664,000
Newham	5,182,000
Redbridge	3,425,000
Richmond upon Thames	2,483,000
Sutton	2,474,000
Waltham Forest	3,773,000
Total Outer London	76,103,000
Total all boroughs	141,461,000

Table C
Distribution of estimated spending power 1987-88

	Total borough distribution £
Inner London	
City of London	137,000
Camden	7,697,000
Greenwich	6,195,000
Hackney	8,237,000
Hammersmith and Fulham	5,052,000
Islington	7,408,000
Kensington and Chelsea	4,422,000
Lambeth	10,102,000
Lewisham	7,529,000
Southwark	8,992,000
Tower Hamlets	5,102,000
Wandsworth	6,927,000
Westminster	5,105,000
Total Inner London	82,905,000
Outer London	
Barking and Dagenham	2,944,000
Barnet	5,266,000
Bexley	3,764,000
Brent	7,386,000
Bromley	5,180,000
Croydon	5,666,000
Ealing	6,280,000
Enfield	4,719,000
Haringey	7,155,000
Harrow	3,603,000
Havering	4,176,000
Hillingdon	4,371,000
Hounslow	4,180,000
Kingston upon Thames	2,195,000
Merton	3,150,000
Newham	6,494,000
Redbridge	3,996,000
Richmond upon Thames	2,909,000
Sutton	2,870,000
Waltham Forest	4,517,000
Total Outer London	90,821,000
Total all boroughs	173,726,000

These figures reflect the substantial progress already made by LRB in disposing of surplus land and property previously held by the Greater London council, to the benefit of the ratepayers of London.

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if all moneys owed to the London Residuary Body by Government Departments have now been paid; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Chope: I refer the hon. Member to my answer to him of 22 October 1987. Discussions between the LRB and the Department are continuing, as are investigations by the district auditors.

London Docklands Development Corporation

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if any compensation has been paid to MEPC plc during the period of Mr. Christopher Benson's chairmanship of the London Docklands Development Corporation; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Trippier: No.

Competitive Tendering

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment (1) how many responses his Departm received to the consultation document Competition in Provision of Local Authority Services issued in 1985 these responses, how many were from local authorit including the Inner London education authority and lo authority associations; and of the responses from th authorities how many supported the introduction compulsory competitive tendering into the provisio local authority services;

(2) how many of those responses received by Government to the consultation document "Competit in the Provision of Local Authority Services," issue 1985, were from employers' associations or any ot organisations representing actual or potential contract for local authority services; and of the responses fr those organisations, how many were in favour of introduction of compulsory competitive tendering into provision of local authority services and how many w in favour of introducing competition over a period of a years.

Mr. Chope: Over 450 responses to the consultat paper were received and a list of respondents was pla in the Library on 30 October 1985. Some 240 were fr local authorities or local authority associations, and so 60 from private contractors or associations representa of their interests. It is not easy to summarise the views forward on this complex subject, but the hon. Gentlem is free to ask consultees what they said.

Rating Reform

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment what proportion of households with be average incomes live in properties the rateable valu which is more than the average domestic rateable value the authority in which they are situated.

Mr. Howard: The information requested is available.

Mr. Forth: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment whether he is yet in a position to update estimates of the impact of the community charge individual households.

Mr. Howard: I have today placed in the Library a r which updates the principal exemplifications of the imp of the community charge, originally contained in Green Paper "Paying for Local Government" (Cm 9714).

These later figures confirm that:

domestic rates are very badly related to ability to p For the lowest income group (those with an income o to £50 pw) rates amount to 4·1 per cent. of net income. community charge amounts to 3·4 per cent.;

community charges on average will be less than dom rates at all income levels up to £150 pw;

many poorer people pay more in rates than those are better off even in the same local authority area. Th because 41 per cent. of households living in homes above average rateable values have below average incor 40 per cent. of those with above average incomes liv homes with below average rateable values;

80 per cent. of single pensioner households and 75 cent. of other single adult households will gain from t proposals;

when fully implemented 53 per cent. of households (9·8 million) will gain from the introduction of the community charge.

These figures demonstrate that domestic rates do not reflect ability to pay, that the poorest households stand to gain from the community charge, and that, contrary to recent opinions reflected in a recent poll, the majority of households will in fact gain from these proposals.

Mr. Rooker: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will give the numbers of single pensioners to whom his reference of 69 per cent., *Official Report*, column *1325*, 17 December, represents in respect of the poll tax.

Mr. Howard: I have today placed in the Library updated estimates which show that overall some 2¼ million single pensioners (66 per cent.), in England, would benefit from the full implementation of the community charge and nearly 2 million (80 per cent.) of single pensioner households would do so.

Water Supplies

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) what is his latest estimate of the cost to the water industry of complying with the EEC recommendations about the levels of water pollution;

(2) what time scale is now envisaged by his Department to allow water authorities to bring their domestic water supplies into conformity with EEC regulations regarding acceptable levels of pollution.

Mr. Moynihan: I refer the hon. Member to my replies to the hon. Member for Bridgend (Mr. Griffiths) of 2 December 1987, at column 622, and 15 December 1987, at column 460 on the subject of drinking water quality.

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will identify the areas containing the majority of the 900,000 people who receive drinking water containing nitrate in excess of the EEC's recommended levels.

Mr. Moynihan: The areas are in Staffordshire, Warwickshire, Nottinghamshire, Lincolnshire, Norfolk and Cambridgeshire.

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will identify by *(a)* the pollutant and *(b)* the level over the EEC recommendation the areas where domestic drinking water supplies do not comply with the latest EEC requirements.

Mr. Moynihan: I shall write to the hon. Member shortly.

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what information he has as to the levels of pollutant contained in the domestic water supply in the London borough of Newham above those recommended by the EEC.

Mr. Moynihan: I am not aware of any pollutants exceeding the EC drinking water directive limits in the London borough of Newham.

Ms. Richardson: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) what provisions will be made for home dialysis users, in the event of water privatisation, with regard to *(a)* setting levels of charges, and *(b)* disconnecting supplies for non-payment; and what representations he has received on this matter;

(2) whether there will be a code of practice for water public limited companies to deal with possible termination of supply in cases where general health might be at risk.

Mr. Moynihan *[holding answer 11 January 1988]:* Water authorities at present operate a code of practice in relation to payment of bills and disconnection of water supplies. Privatised water utility companies will be required to operate a similar code. Present arrangements to protect dialysis patients in respect of loss of supply and quality of supply will continue.

Ms. Richardson: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what steps will be taken to ensure that water public limited companies comply in all respects within the EEC directive on water quality; and whether he intends to seek amendments to the directive.

Mr. Moynihan *[holding answer 11 January 1988]:* The legislation to privatise the water authorities will give the EEC drinking water directive the force of law in the United Kingdom. The Commission is itself considering the process by which directives on water matters may be reviewed.

Virus Research (Waste)

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what form of monitoring is applied to the discharge of waste from the animal virus research centre at Pirbright; and what waste matters are involved.

Mr. Moynihan: Discharges of small quantities of low-level radioactive waste from the Animal Virus Research Institute are authorised under the Radioactive Substances Act 1960. The institute is inspected by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Pollution to check that the discharges are within authorised limits. The inspectorate also monitors levels of radioactivity in the environment resulting from these discharges.

Radioactive Waste

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if any licence applications have been made by *(a)* Lilly research centre, *(b)* Serono Diagnostics, *(c)* Mercia Diagnostics and *(d)* the central veterinary research laboratory for the discharge of radioactive waste; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Moynihan: Lilly Research Centre Ltd., Serono Diagnostics Ltd., Mercia Diagnostics Ltd., and the Central Veterinary Research Laboratory are all authorised under the Radioactive Substances Act 1960 to discharge small quantities of low-level radioactive waste. The authorisations are issued by my Department and the organisations are inspected under the 1960 Act by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Pollution to check that any discharges of radioactive waste are within authorised limits.

Threatened Species

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what efforts are being made by the Government to protect the species in the United Kingdom identified by the World Wildlife Fund as being threatened with extinction.

Mr. Moynihan: I understand that the report recently published by the World Wildlife Fund listing threatened

species did not identify any United Kingdom species. Nevertheless, the Government will be studying the report carefully.

Nature Reserves

Dr. Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what are his statutory duties with respect to England's national nature reserves.

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what proposals he has for the privatisation of nature reserves.

Mr. Hardy: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what is the policy of Her Majesty's Government towards the preparation for sale of national nature reserves.

Mr. Ridley: I am responsible (with the approval of the Treasury) for determining the public funds made available to the Nature Conservancy Council via an annual grant-in-aid for the performance of its functions, including the establishment, maintenance and management of national nature reserves. Several of the conditions of the grant-in-aid affect NNRs, particularly those which reserve the right to myself to decide in certain circumstances whether the NCC should incur expenditure on the acquisition of land, or on payments under management agreements, needed to establish specific Reserves.

I am also responsible for authorising any proposal by the NCC under its powers to acquire land compulsorily to establish a reserve, although these powers have only been exercised very rarely; my authority is also required to confirm byelaws for the protection of reserves.

In addition, I also have discretionary powers to give the NCC directions concerning the discharge of any of its functions.

Dr. Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) if he will make a statement on his policy on the future ownership, control and management of Britain's national nature reserves;

(2) if he has asked the Nature Conservancy Council to examine ways of selling the national nature reserves in their ownerships and control.

Mr. Ridley: The National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 provided the framework almost 40 years ago for a policy under which nature reserves are normally established and protected by agreement between private landowners and the Nature Conservancy Council, without the need for public ownership. Successive Governments have operated that policy. Of the 160,000 ha of reserves declared by 31 March 1987, only 43,000 ha (27 per cent.) are publicly owned by the NCC. Many of the most outstanding reserves — including several in the Norfolk Broads, upper Teesdale, Avon gorge, the Gower peninsula and the Scottish highlands — have been successfully protected for many years in private ownership.

In line with my general policy that all non-departmental public bodies should be asked to keep their land holdings to the minimum necessary for their functions, I have asked them, including the NCC, to examine their portfolio and consider whether there is greater scope for both existing and future reserves to be kept in private ownership with appropriate conservation safeguards. The review will consider also the size of the NNR network, methods of further improving reserve management and the of generating more income (for example from vi could be ploughed back into conservation. I receive a report on these matters from the NC year when they have fully considered the positi

King's Cross (Fire)

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of St Environment what additional funds have been a the London borough of Camden for costs arisi out of the King's Cross fire disaster.

Mr. Chope: None.

Local Government Reform

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of St Environment what progress has been made in c between his Department and the London resid about the payment of outstanding Government which provision has been made in the Greate Council's 1985-86 closing accounts.

Mr. Chope: The Department and the LR operating with the district auditor to clari entitlement to certain Government grants.

Manor House, Millbank

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of St Environment what plans his Department has the use of Manor house, Millbank; at what cost, what form of tenure.

Mr. Chope: I am not aware of any building o known as Manor house.

Ozone Layer (Convention)

Mr. Carrington: To ask the Secretary of St Environment why agreement to Community si the Montreal protocol to the Vienna conventi protection of the ozone layer was giv parliamentary scrutiny procedures were compl he will make a statement.

Mr. Ridley: When international negotiat approaching their conclusion the Commission Council's agreement to Community signatu protocol to the Vienna convention by means of 8335/87 dated 11 September 1987. The authorisation was given by means of urge procedure in time for a conference on plenipot Montreal at which the protocol on substances t the ozone layer was adopted on 16 Septe Community (and the United Kingdom) protocol on the same day.

The House was in recess at the time and possible for the normal scrutiny procedures to out. The Government did, however, keep informed of developments, at column 319 on 27 1986, at column 134 on 24 March 1987, and at c on 23 July 1987, and have since reported on th of the diplomatic conference, at column 277 on 1987. The Select Committee on European Legi recommended that this subject should b considered by the House when the Commission proposals for common rules for the Com

contemplated in the protocol. The text of the protocol will be published shortly as a Command Paper and laid before the House before ratification, in accordance with the usual practice.

TRANSPORT

Tolls

Mr. Butler: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what is his policy with regard to the level of toll charges on esturial crossings.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: Government policy is that toll revenue should be sufficient to recover the cost of each undertaking in accordance with its enabling legislation, but that account needs to be taken of local circumstances. Decisions on particular applications for the revision of tolls are taken in the light of all the evidence available at the time.

Mr. Butler: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what his estimate is of the debt of the Mersey road tunnels which can be recovered by tolls at a realistic level.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: One of the objectives of current discussions with the Merseyside passenger transport authority is to arrive at a joint assessment of the proportion of debt which the undertaking can service and repay. That assessment has only just begun and I cannot anticipate the outcome.

Plutonium Nitrate

Mr. Frank Cook: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he intends to carry out full destructive testing of air transport and packaging options proposed for the movement of plutonium nitrate; and what standards or safety guidelines are currently used for the design and operations of such air transport options.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: There are no plans to transport plutonium nitrate by air.

British Nuclear Fuels plc is examining options for the return of reprocessed plutonium oxide to Japan in the 1990s. A programme to develop and test a suitable package for air transport is currently being undertaken. The Department is being kept informed of progress and in due course the design will be submitted for approval. The package is being designed to the standards prescribed by the United States Government. The International Atomic Energy Agency is currently reviewing the international regulations covering these matters.

Breath Tests

Mr. Boyes: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many *(a)* casualties, *(b)* deaths, *(c)* breath tests, and *(d)* positive breath tests there were during the Christmas period for each year from 1979 to 1987, by police authority.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: I shall write to the hon. Member.

Cars (Headlights)

Mr. Boyes: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he intends to monitor the experiment in Canada of cars driving at all times with headlights lit; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: The Canadian authorities said that they will monitor the effect of their recent which requires all new motor vehicles to be fitted daytime running lights. These lights may be in se forms, but they are required to light up automati whenever the engine is running. We will be interested i results.

Accident Remedial Schemes

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State Transport whether he will make it his policy to accep accident remedial schemes on highways as eligible transport supplementary grant; and if he will ma statement.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: No.

Transport supplementary grant (TSG) is pai support of expenditure on roads of more than importance, such as roads forming part of the prin route network (PRN), designated roads in Lon bypasses and other roads that relieve communitie longer-distance through traffic, and links to the PRN motorways. Expenditure on accident remedial scheme all such roads may be accepted for TSG. There ar plans to change the scope of TSG, which represents national taxpayer's interest in local roads. Scheme purely local significance are funded by local autho from the other sources of finance available to them.

Public Transport (London)

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State Transport how many proposals for investment in pu transport in London since 1984 have been assessed cost-benefit basis.

Mr. David Mitchell: Major investment proposal London Regional Transport which require spe approvals are appraised on a financial and cost-be basis. Since 1984, in addition to projects for which t was clear financial justification, we have received approved in every case six LRT proposals which depe upon non-financial benefits. In the same period, an the proposals submitted by British Rail two approval additional rolling stock were justified in part by the to meet agreed service quality targets.

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State Transport how much money his Department provide intends to provide, either directly through the Lon Docklands Development Corporation or through tr port supplementary grant, for investment in new roa docklands and for public transport in docklands.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: The Department is suppo £1·884 million of expenditure with transport supple tary grant (TSG). We will consider further scheme support with TSG if proposed by the boroughs. We funded half the initial cost of £77 million of the Dockl light railway through London Regional Transport an shall be meeting some £83 million of the estimated million cost of the Bank extension, the remainder b contributed by the Canary Wharf Development Comp Trunk road schemes giving access to docklands w £175 million have been completed or are u construction and a further £360 million of expenditu planned.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Wildlife Conservation

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what efforts are being made by Her Majesty's Government to prevent the importation into Hong Kong of rare and endangered species of wildlife for use as restaurant food.

Mr. Eggar: Hong Kong is a party to the convention on international trade in endangered species of wild fauna and flora (CITES).

The import, export and possession of rare and endangered species of animals and plants are controlled by law in Hong Kong, and their import for use as food is prohibited there.

Checks are made at all entry points into Hong Kong to prevent the illegal importation of such animals and plants: in 1987, 136 seizures were made and offenders prosecuted.

Inspections are also conducted at local restaurants and markets to ensure that no such animals are offered for sale as food. In 1987, 80 visits were made resulting in 14 seizures and prosecutions.

Hong Kong

Mr. David Howell: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when the annual report on Hong Kong will be laid before Parliament.

Mr. Eggar: The report has been laid before Parliament today. It is also being published today, and copies will be placed in the Library of the House.

Human Rights

Mr. Maples: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on progress in the implementation by the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and Eastern European countries of the provisions of the Helsinki Final Act during the last six months.

Mr. Mellor: During the last six months to 31 December 1987, Soviet and East European implementation of their Helsinki commitments continued to carry special significance in the light of the third CSCE follow-up meeting currently under way in Vienna. Overall, compliance with CSCE commitments continued to be unsatisfactory, with persistent breaches of the provisions relating to human rights and fundamental freedoms, although the record varied from country to country.

Security in Europe: Principles regarding relations between participating states; confidence-building measures and certain aspects of security and disarmament (basket I).

Violation of human rights and fundamental freedoms covered by principle VII, including freedom of thought, conscience, religion or belief continued.

In the Soviet Union there was little significant change in practice towards principle VII. Performance over the last six months was disappointing in some areas, when compared with the more encouraging rate of change up to July. Some hundreds of people are still known to be detained for political reasons, including the Estonian Helsinki monitor, Mart Niklus, whose case has been raised by Her Majesty's Government on a number of occasions. A formal amnesty, published in June in conn the 70th anniversary of the October revoluti benefit as many political prisoners as had bee did not cover inmates of mental hospital treatment for political reasons, although som this category have been released recently. virtually no new criminal prosecutions o grounds were known to have occurred—on being the case of Ivan Pankratchenko, give sentence in October for "anti-Soviet agi propaganda" — some activists were subjec extensive range of harassment. Several old attacks on individuals were published. Sovi legislation, including some of the articles most used to sentence political or religious activists, to be under review. It was officially suggested 190/1 of the RSFSR criminal code in (slandering the Soviet state) might be abolished 70 revised. But no amendments have yet been

The theoretical freedom of religion enshr Soviet constitution has remained a dead letter those wishing to profess their religion wit subject to petty controls and harassment from state organs. Many believers such as the Orth Vladimir Rusak, remain imprisoned for although the Baptist, Anna Chertkova, released from psychiatric hospital in Decem long campaign in the United Kingdom to However, there were articles in several defending believers' rights and criticising the for infringing them.

The welcome and steady increase in the Jews, Armenians and Germans allowed to em the Soviet Union noted in the first half continued. Some long-standing Jewish refus given permission to leave, including Ida Nude Slepak, Alexander Ioffe, Pavel Abramovich, and Viktor Brailovsky. Analysis of Jewish shows that in practice the "first degree" rule, in January, permitting emigration only by c members, was waived in some cases and t security objections were dropped in others. departmental review commission was esta examine refusals; however, the initial experi working has been discouraging. The proc arbitrary and subject to local differences something of a break with past practice, forme (mainly Jewish) were allowed to return to th some numbers—and even to leave again, in cases. But others were unable to return, h stripped of their citizenship when they first emi such case is that of Mrs. Inna Budanova, curren in the United Kingdom.

In non-Russian areas of the Soviet Un intellectuals expressed outspoken demands linguistic and cultural rights. Some demonst national groups with grievances (Jews, Balt Tartars) were permitted; others, particularly witnessed by Western journalists, were sometimes with force.

The record of Bulgarian CSCE implements last six months showed little change from tha periods. Principle VII continued to be widely fl for ethnic Bulgarians and ethnic Turks. Religio for all non-orthodox denominations remaine Although the appointment of a new Catholic

Plovdiv was allowed, the functioning of the Catholic church was closely circumscribed. The Muslim community continued to receive the worst treatment. There was strict supervision of Turkish populated areas during a Muslim festival in August to prevent traditional rituals. The use of the Turkish language in public remained banned. There were also reports of harassment of ethnic Turks by the Bulgarian militia.

There was no significant improvement in Czechoslovakia's implementation of CSCE provisions. While freedom of religion is constitutionally guaranteed, the freedom of religious practice continued to be strictly limited and regimented by the state. But harassment of religious activists appears to have been limited recently to temporary detention, surveillance and interrogation. Among the positive developments was the release of all but one of the members of the Jazz Section imprisoned earlier in the year. Karel Srp remained in detention. Harassment of other dissidents and members of unofficial groups continued at a relatively low level. To our knowledge no Charter 77 activists were charged in the last six months, although some were detained and interrogated. In September police refrained for the first time from breaking up a public Charter meeting, but since then groups gathering in private have been disrupted by the authorities on spurious grounds.

The overall implementation of the final act by the GDR remained unsatisfactory despite certain positive aspects. The Evangelical and Roman Catholic churches held large gatherings at which church views were clearly expressed. For the first time in over two decades, a rabbi was appointed for the Jewish community. There was the first ever non-state organised peace demonstration in September, but in November the authorities took action, including the arrest of a number of people, to suppress the activities of an environment library attached to a Protestant church in East Berlin. The death penalty was abolished and a general amnesty was announced. The order to shoot those attempting to flee the country continued in force, though there have been few reported incidents of shots having been fired.

Hungary continued to be the most open of the Eastern European countries with a fairly good, but not flawless, record of compliance with CSCE commitments. Church-state relations remained harmonious. The role of dissidents took on a slightly higher profile, which provoked some harassment of minor samizdat publications. Several conscientious objectors to military service remained in gaol.

Polish implementation of the human rights provisions of the final act improved during the last six months. No custodial sentences for political prisoners were imposed, although heavy fines were handed down for activities such as the distribution of illegal literature. There was a high degree of religious tolerance, although limits continued to be placed on publications by churches and other religious bodies.

Over the last six months, the Romanian regime distinguished itself by its ugly repressiveness. Unlike its Eastern European neighbours, Romania's CSCE implementation record continued to deteriorate in all aspects of human rights. Although no information on political trials became available, prisoners of conscience continued to be detained. Religious toleration existed only in so far as it did not conflict with official policy. Romania continued to pay lip service to promoting the effective exerci human rights and freedoms, while repressing population through the maintenance of a climate of

Confidence and security building measures

Warsaw pact countries continued to comply st with the commitments entered into in September 198 the adoption of the Stockholm document. In the la months four observable Warsaw pact exercises and observable NATO exercises took place, including involving United Kingdom troops. British obs participated in a Soviet-GDR exercise in Septe Hungary notified "as an act of good will" one ex (Bazalt-87) held in October, even though it fell belo notifiable level. Observers from six Warsaw pact cou (all except Romania) attended the Purple Warrior ex in the United Kingdom in November.

Co-operation in the field of Economics, of Scienc Technology, and of the Environment (Basket II)

There were some interesting new developments, th the resulting practical benefits were few. In the S Union a relaxation of the visa regime for participa joint ventures was announced. The Soviet joint ve legislation was amended in September but its terms re too restrictive to attract many companies. So far or ventures — with medium or small firms — have concluded, although the Soviet Union may be consid further amendments to make the ventures more attra Both Hungary and Poland have implemented eco and financial measures of interest to Western busines in general there was virtually no improvement i conditions for business men from the West; (a Romania conditions remained particularly unsatisfac Throughout the Eastern countries housing, hotel r and office facilities continued to be generally inade and expensive. Telecommunications facilities wer poor. Economic and commercial information rem inadequate and unreliable.

Environmental problems drew an increasing amo public comment, both from Eastern Government of and citizens. The Hungarians appointed an Enviro Minister in December; the first in Eastern Eu Additional resources have been promised, especially USSR, but it seems that attention to pollution is sti a major priority.

Co-operation in Humanitarian and Other Fields (Baske

In most Eastern countries, there was little improve in opportunities for outside contact. In the Soviet U there was a gradual improvement in the processing o visas and a significant increase in the number of exit granted for temporary family visits. But it was still th that only a fortunate few were able to travel abroad Soviet press itself carried critical comment on bureaucratic obstacles to travel still in place. As al noted, emigration levels rose significantly for some gr but decisions on applications remained arbitrary or s to dubious state security restrictions. The substantia welcome increase in GDR citizens under pensionab allowed to visit the West continued, though the proce for granting visas remained inconsistent and the nu of those allowed to emigrate remained at a low level Hungarians announced that liberalised travel rules w be introduced in 1988. Poland introduced a more re passport policy and Czechoslovakia made ma

improvements in its travel regime, but Bulgaria and Romania continued to resist changes to facilitate human contacts.

The official Soviet media continued to be relatively open under the policy of glasnost, with a measure of debate on a wide range of sensitive issues, such as Soviet history, psychiatric abuse, and legal institutions. However, differences of emphasis about the scope of the policy emerged from the speeches of Soviet leaders. In any case, it became clear that the policy was not intended to apply to some of the most critical samizdat publications, such as glasnost. Radio Liberty, Radio Free Europe, Deutsche Welle and Israel Radio remained jammed. So too did the BBC Polish service on shortwave, apparently from within the Soviet Union, though we have been promised by the Poles that this will cease from 1 January. Some of the many new informal groups began to be attacked in the press and leading members were harassed. Attempts were made in December to disrupt an unofficial humanitarian seminar in Moscow. There were some small positive developments in Eastern Europe; for example, difficult subjects, like AIDS, and major accidents began to be treated more openly in Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia and the GDR. In Poland the appearance of the first legal "independent" press organ, *Res Publica* was an important step. But overall access to information remained severely restricted. Availability of Western publications was generally poor (partly as a result of financial constraints) and conditions for journalists remained difficult or, in the case of Romania, became worse.

Co-operation and Exchanges in the field of Culture and Education

There were no major new developments in these fields.

Over the last six months cultural co-operation with the Soviet Union increased following the signing earlier in the year of United Kingdom-Soviet memorandum of understanding covering information, culture and education. The Kirov ballet toured Britain, the Royal ballet visited some Soviet cities and Soviet culture was strongly represented at this year's Edinburgh festival. A cultural agreement also came into effect with Hungary in July and the British Council resources in Hungary were increased to cover new activities.

Visits and stays by research workers or academics were largely governed by an increasing number of bilateral agreements. These generally worked well, although the East remained keen to ensure that educational exchanges focused on scientific and technical areas which corresponded to state requirements. Exchanges with Romania were hampered because nominees frequently failed to get permission to travel.

Malaysia

Mr. Fraser: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether he has had any discussions with the Government of Malaysia about the breach of human rights in Malaysia.

Mr. Eggar: We have made no formal representations to the Malaysian Government about the recent detentions under the Internal Security Act. But we are naturally monitoring the situation closely in consultation with our European partners.

AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AN

Nephrops Tails

Mr. John D. Taylor: To ask the Minister Fisheries and Food whether the recent Fi meeting considered the European Commission's proposal to reduce the size o to 31 mm in the Irish sea; whether the proposal has his support; and if he will ma

Mr. MacGregor: I have at this stage no the written reply given to the hon. Membe and Berwickshire (Mr. Kirkwood) by my ri the Minister of State on 18 December last

Intervention Stocks

Mr. Butler: To ask the Minister o Fisheries and Food what is the cur intervention stocks held within the Unite product.

Mr. MacGregor: A note setting our intervention stocks in the United Kingdo available dates, broken down by commodi in the Library of the House and is update

Irish Sea (Fish Stocks)

Mr. John D. Taylor: To ask the Minister Fisheries and Food what are the implic stocks in the Irish sea of the presence of nuclear submarines; what assessment he h radioactivity risk to fish stocks; and if h statement.

Mr. Donald Thompson: My Departme extensive monitoring for radioactivity i environment, including fish stocks, arou Isles, and the results are published annually the Library of the House. These surveys indi of radioactivity in the Irish sea, from wh pose no risk to fish stocks.

Alternative Energy

Mr. Frank Cook: To ask the Minister Fisheries and Food what grants or incentive available to farmers who wish to utilise hydro-power and biomass energy; and if he proposals for grants or incentives.

Mr. Donald Thompson: Under th improvement scheme, grants are available per cent. in the less-favoured areas and elsewhere for wind and water powered pum utilisation of biomass energy.

Grants are also available at the same rate other forms of permanent and durable agricultural investments and for therm vapour sealing or gas sealing for th temperature or atmosphere in buildings agricultural use.

The rates of grant for thermal insulati glasshouses is up to 50 per cent.

I am keeping these grants under review.

Sugar Beet

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what information he has about the current amount of sugar beet in storage within the EEC.

Mr. Donald Thompson: Sugar beet is not normally stored except for a short period between harvesting and processing into sugar. According to the Commission's latest estimates, total sugar stocks at the end of September 1987, including normal commercial stocks for use within the Community, totalled 2·8 million tonnes. There is no sugar currently in public intervention storage.

Chile

Mr. Foulkes: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food when his right hon. Friend the Minister of State will be visiting Chile; what is the purpose of the visit; and whom he will be meeting.

Mr. MacGregor: My right hon. Friend the Minister of State is visiting Chile from 11 to 17 January. The purpose of this visit is trade promotion and he plans to have meetings with the Minister of Agriculture, the Minister of External Relations, the Minister of the Economy, the President of the Sociedad Nacional de Agricultura, and the Director General of Pro Chile (the governmental export promotion organisation). He will also be attending a lunch with the British/Chilean chamber of commerce and is meeting various British business men. In addition, he expects to have dinner with representatives of the Chilean opposition.

SCOTLAND

Women Teachers

Mrs. Fyfe: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what proportion of teachers qualified to teach mathematics, physics and craft design and technology in Scotland are women; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: The proportions in 1984 were: mathematics 0·30, physics 0·15, technical 0·002. Craft design and technology is not a recognised subject description in Scotland.

The Government's aim is to bring about an increase in the proportion of girls gaining qualifications relevant to careers in science and technology.

Education Reform

Mrs. Fyfe: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what representations he has received with regard to the proposed national core curriculum and the promotion of equal opportunities for girls and boys in schools and colleges in Scotland.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: None.

Academic Staff

Mrs. Fyfe: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will take steps to increase the proportion of academic staff in each of the following categories *(a)* women, *(b)* blacks, and *(c)* those from a working-class background; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: The recruitment of academic staff is a matter for the appropriate employing authorities.

BMA (Ministerial Meeting)

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Secretary of State if he will make a statement on the meeting Under-Secretary of State, the hon. Member (Mr. Forsyth), the British Medical Associat royal colleges on 23 December 1987.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: I have placed in th copy of the agreed statement which was is conclusion of the meeting.

Nature Reserves

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Secretary of State what proposals he has for the privatisatio reserves in Scotland for which he has respon

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: Natio reserves throughout Great Britain are the resp the Nature Conservancy Council which is f Great Britain basis by my right hon. Friend t of State for the Environment, and I refer the h to the reply given to him today on my right h behalf. Local nature reserves are the responsib authorities.

Salmon Net Fishing

Mr. Andrew Welsh: To ask the Secretary Scotland (1) what advice he has received fro water fisheries laboratory at Pitlochry regardi of weekly close time for salmon net fishing reference was made to conservation as a gro advice;

(2) what advice he has received from laboratory in Torrie regarding the extensio close time for salmon net fishing; and what re made to conservation as a ground for that ac

Mr. Michael Forsyth: The scientific evid conclusive in this matter and was only one of considerations taken into account by Mini reaching a decision to increase the close time

Parole

Sir Hector Monro: To ask the Secretary Scotland if he is in a position to announce the of the review of parole policy and related ma is to be chaired by Lord Kincraig.

Mr. Rifkind: The membership of the review follows:

Mr. J. M. Brownlee (Governor, HM Prison Edi
Mr. G. Esson (Deputy Chief Constable, Gramp
Mr. A. C. M. Johnston, QC (Advocate).
Dr. H. Kirk (Forensic Psychiatrist, Tayside Hea
Mr. R. Lander (Businessman, Scotlander PLC).
Dr. J. McManus (Lecturer in Jurisprudenc University).
Sheriff C. G. B. Nicholson, QC (Member of S Commission).
Mr. T. B. Skinner (Member of Parole Board).
Mr. B. Williams (Lecturer in Social Wo University: Vice-chairman of council Association for the Care and Resettlement of

I am delighted that persons of such calibr able to accept my invitation to serve on Lord review group.

Any person wishing to submit views should secretary, Review Group on Parole and Relat St. Andrew's house, Regent road, Edinburgh

Items in Lieu of Tax

Mr. Allan Stewart: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if any further items have been accepted in lieu of tax in the current financial year.

Mr. Rifkind: I am pleased to announce that the following items have been accepted in lieu of tax:

Item	*Amount of Tax Satisfied*
A series of 20 watercolour illustrations by J. M. W. Turner for Thomas Campbell's "Poetical Works" published 1837	£233,750

The illustrations have been allocated to the national galleries of Scotland in accordance with the condition upon which they were offered.

Blood Transfusion Service

Mrs. Margaret Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what proportion of the blood or blood products of the Scottish national blood transfusion service is sent to England, Wales, Northern Ireland and abroad.

Mr. Michael Forsyth *[holding answer 11 January 1988]:* In the most recent accounting period for which figures are available (1 April 1987 to 30 September 1987), 3·94 per cent. of Scottish production of whole blood and red cell products was sent to England. No whole blood or red cell products were sent to Wales, Northern I
In the same period, 0·6 per cent. of Scot
plasma products was sent to England;
were sent to Wales or abroad. The Scott
transfusion service processes plasma coll
Ireland and returns the plasma products
in that country: no other plasma prod
Northern Ireland.

The Scottish national blood transf
stands ready, in response to a particu
send blood and blood products to o
United Kingdom, and abroad (althou
normally involved are relatively small). T
was at the time of the King's Cross un

Life Expectancy

Mrs. Margaret Ewing: To ask the Sec
Scotland what information he has for m
expectancy at age (i) 60 years, (ii) 65 year
for *(a)* Scotland, *(b)* England, *(c)*
member states, *(e)* Norway, *(f)* Sweden
(h) Finland.

Mr. Michael Forsyth *[holding ans
1987]:* The information is not available
basis. The information which is readi
follows:

Male and female life expectancy at age 60, 65 and 70 years

	Age				
	60		*65*		
Country	*Male*	*Female*	*Male*	*Female*	*M*
Scotland[1]	15·7	20·0	12·6	16·4	
England	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n
Wales[2]	16·2	20·9	12·9	17·0	1
England and Wales[2]	16·8	21·4	13·4	17·5	1

[1] 1984-86 based.
[2] 1983-85 based.

I understand that figures for some other countries are given in "World Health Statistics Annual 1986".

NATIONAL FINANCE

Manufacturing

Mr. Fearn: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement on the implications for the economy of the current state of British manufacturing industry.

Mr. Major: The current state of British manufacturing industry is excellent, with strong growth in output, productivity and exports in 1987. We expect further healthy expansion in 1988.

Value Added Tax

Mr. Teddy Taylor: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) if he has yet received from the European Court of Justice its decision on the case initiated by the EEC Commission arguing that the United Kingdom should levy value added tax on industrial and commercial buildings and on the supply of gas, electricity, water, sewerage and protective clothing and footwear to industry and commerce; and if he will make a statement;

(2) when he expects to receive the decision of the European Court of Justice on the case raised by the Commission under the sixth directive relating to value added tax on gas, electricity, water, sewage and protective clothing supplied to industry and commerce and the building of shops, offices and factories; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Lilley: The European Court of Justice has not yet delivered its judgment; it is expected to do so in the early months of this year.

Mr. Teddy Taylor: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer when he expects to receive the decision of the European Court of Justice on the case raised by the Commission on the levying of value added tax on spectacles; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Lilley: The judgment of the European Court is expected fairly soon.

Occupational Pensioners

Mrs. Mahon: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if people with occupational pensions, such as teachers, who are not working but not yet on a retirement pension, will receive a backdated sum uprating their pensions in line with those on state retirement pensions and benefits who are due to receive a backdated sum due to a miscalculation in the benefit uprating of April 1987.

Mr. Brooke: No. I refer the hon. Member to my reply of 18 December to my hon. Friend the Member for Croydon, South (Sir W. Clark) at columns *845-46*.

Commemorative Coins

Mr. Nelson: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if Her Majesty's Government have plans to issue any new commemorative coins.

Mr. Lawson: Her Majesty the Queen has been graciously pleased to approve my recommendation that a special £2 coin be issued to commemorate the tercentenary of the Bill of Rights in 1989. There will be a r of the coin issued at face value, and collec in precious metal and base metal, issued at

NORTHERN IRELAND

Area Health Boards

Mr. Beggs: To ask the Secretary of State Ireland if he will make it his policy to ensur health boards in Northern Ireland provide and quality of acute medical services distribution of resources to them reflects th if he will make a statement.

Mr. Needham *[holding answer 11 Januar* level of services required to meet the population of each health and social service is not necessarily the same since there are dif age and sex structures of the population ar morbidity and social deprivation, all of w the need for hospital care.

My aim is to endeavour to relate the d resources to provide an adequate and reliab this end a review of the procedures for alloca is currently being carried out in consulta boards, and is expected to be completed in of the year.

ENERGY

Nuclear Safety

Mr. Matthew Taylor: To ask the Secreta Energy what is the current timetable for the the long-term safety reviews by the nuclea inspectorate of the following reactors: Berkeley, Oldbury, Trawsfynydd, and Hinc

Mr. Michael Spicer: The Nuclear Inspectorate of the Health and Safety Exec nuclear power station operators to carry ou term reviews of safety of Magnox stations years of operation and submit these to publishes its findings of these assessments.

The CEGB has completed its review of the NII's findings on this review will be publ According to the current timetable, the C complete reviews of the other stations listed The NII's findings on each review will thereafter.

Alternative Sources of Energy

Mr. Frank Cook: To ask the Secretary Energy what estimate he has of the cont renewable sources of energy to *(a)* electrica *(b)* overall energy supply in the years (i) 200

Mr. Michael Spicer: Hydro power co equivalent of about 2 million tonnes of coal the United Kingdom energy supply per quantities of electricity are also generate power and landfill gas. In addition, some h renewables have now become established as attractive and are beginning to make a sm contribution. This overall position is not change significantly by 2000; the contributio

beyond is unpredictable since it will depend upon economic circumstances and the success of the research and development we are currently conducting.

The appraisal of a wide range of energy technologies considered to be relevant for the United Kingdom was published in July as Energy Paper 54. The background papers prepared by ETSU for this study have also been published as ETSU R43: these contain estimates of both the technical potential and the potential contribution for all the renewable technologies. Copies of both publications are in the Libraries of the House.

Mr. Frank Cook: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what proposals he has for encouraging the commercialisation of biomass energy; and if he has any plans for joint initiatives with the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food.

Mr. Michael Spicer: My Department has research, development and demonstration programmes on biomass energy. These programmes embrace a range of projects from assessment studies to design, development and field trials. Where biofuels are already being developed and exploited by industry, no Government support is envisaged. Some biofuels, though considered to be economic now, are not yet being used to a significant extent; these are being demonstrated through my Department's energy efficiency demonstration scheme. Support is also being given under the biofuels programme for work which would not otherwise be undertaken; for example, to improve equipment and techniques for biomass use so that these can become economic and commercially acceptable.

No joint initiatives are planned with other Government Departments, although we shall continue to consult them and industry through advisory committees and other means as appropriate.

Mr. Frank Cook: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what are his proposals for encouraging the commercialisation of wind energy; and if he plans any joint initiatives with the Department of Trade and Industry and Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food.

Mr. Michael Spicer: My Department is continuing to press ahead with its research and development programme on wind energy which is intended to provide a basis for commercial exploitation of this resource by the late 1990s.

The programme is being carried out in collaboration with the generating boards and with a number of major British companies active in the wind energy field, which have already established significant export opportunities for their products.

No joint initiatives are planned with other Government Departments, although we shall continue to consult them through advisory committees and other means as appropriate.

Mr. Frank Cook: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what grants or incentives are currently available to members of the public who wish to utilise wind energy, hydro power, passive solar heating and biomass energy; and if he has any proposals for further grants or incentives.

Mr. Michael Spicer: My Department is supporting comprehensive research, development and demonstration programmes aimed at exploiting the United Kingdom's significant renewable energy sources. The Department's programmes are aimed at producing economically competitive and environmentally acceptable renewable technologies which can compete in the market. There are no grants currently available to members of the public who may wish to utilise renewable energy and we have no plans to introduce grant aid for renewable sources. The renewable technologies would not be best served in the long term by distorting the market by grant aid or other subsidies for their use.

Mr. Frank Cook: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what grants or incentives are currently available to industrial concerns which wish to utilise wind energy, hydro power, passive solar heating and biomass energy; and if he has any proposals for further grants or incentives.

Mr. Michael Spicer: My Department is supporting comprehensive research, development and demonstration programmes aimed at exploiting the United Kingdom's significant renewable energy sources. The Department's programmes are aimed at producing economically competitive and environmentally acceptable renewable technologies which can compete in the market. The Department of Trade and Industry, through its support for innovation scheme, makes funds available to industry for highly innovative research and development projects in this area. The European Commission offers grants for research and development and for demonstration projects for the renewable technologies. There are no grants available to industrial concerns which may wish to use renewable energy and we have no plans to introduce such measures.

Mr. Frank Cook: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what proposals he has for the commercialisation of passive solar heating in buildings; and if he plans any joint initiatives with the Department of Trade and Industry.

Mr. Michael Spicer: My Department supports a comprehensive research and development programme on passive solar heating and lighting in both domestic and non-domestic buildings. Its aim is to encourage the commercial integration of passive solar design into the United Kingdom energy economy by the early 1990s. To do this, the programme gathers information on the benefits of passive solar design which, when incorporated with other energy efficient design techniques, can significantly reduce the energy requirements of buildings. This information is obtained from a series of design studies, field trials and studies of the relevant markets for the technology.

Increased emphasis will be given over the next few years to technical transfer, with the results of our programme put in a form that it is intended will influence building designers, developers and users. Over the next three years a wide range of design handbooks, housing layout guides, books and technical reports will be published. In addition we are examining a number of innovative technical transfer techniques which will further promote the take-up of this technology.

No joint initiatives are planned with the Department of Trade and Industry, but we shall continue to consult it, and other Government Departments, through advisory committees and other means as appropriate.

Departmental Staff

Mr. Frank Cook: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what percentage of staff employed in his

Department are engaged in work related to *(a)* energy efficiency, *(b)* renewable sources of energy, *(c)* nuclear fusion, *(d)* the fast breeder reactor and *(e)* other nuclear issues.

Mr. Parkinson: Staff directly employed on energy efficiency are some 6 per cent. of total staff, those on renewables are between 1 and 2 per cent., and those on nuclear some 5 per cent. The figure for nuclear represents staff in atomic energy division. It would be misleading to break down this percentage into time spent on individual projects, since this varies significantly over time.

UKCS (Drilling)

Mr. Patnick: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy if he will make a statement on the current levels of drilling activity on the United Kingdom continental shelf.

Mr. Peter Morrison: The total number of well starts during 1987 was 298. This is 12 per cent. above the level of 1986 when 266 wells were drilled.

A breakdown of these figures is as follows:

	1986	*1987*
Offshore		
Exploration	73	69
Appraisal	40	63
Total	113	132
Onshore		
Exploration	37	31
Appraisal	18	7
Total	55	38
Development		
Offshore	85	126
Onshore	13	2
Total	98	128

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Computers

1. **Ms. Abbott:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster by how much Britain's share of world trade in computers changed between 1979 and 1986; and what was the comparable figure in the average, best and worst performing Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development country.

Mr. Butcher: Between 1979 and 1986 Britain's share of all OECD countries' exports of computers fell by about half from 13·5 per cent. to 6·5 per cent.

This was against a background of a fivefold increase in Japan's share and substantial falls in the shares of other major exporters such as the United States and France.

Nevertheless, our exports of computers are worth over £1,000 million each year and we are the fourth largest exporter among OECD countries.

27. **Mr. Flynn:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster by how much the trade balance in computers changed between the second quarter of 1979 and the second quarter of 1987; and what was the comparable figure in the average, best and worst performing Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development country.

Mr. Butcher: Britain's trade balance in computers, as measured by the ratio of our exports to our imports fell by about 40 per cent. between 1979 and 1986. Japan's ratio rose by over 800 per cent. and that of the United States fell by 80 per cent. Excluding Japan, the ratio for OECD countries as a whole fell by 27 per cent.

53. **Mr. McFall:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster by how much the percentage of Britain's domestic market met by imports of computers changed between 1979 and June 1987; and what are the comparable figures in the average, best and worst performing Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development country.

Mr. Butcher: Data for international comparisons are not available. For the United Kingdom information is available only up to 31 March 1987. The ratio of the value of imports to home demand was 89 per cent. in 1979 and 101 per cent. in the year ending March 1987. The value of imports is distorted by the inclusion of imports for re-export.

Regional Aid

9. **Mr. Kennedy:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster when he expects to publish his White Paper on regional aid; and if he will make a statement.

26. **Mr. Steinberg:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if he will make a statement on his Department's review of regional policy.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: We published yesterday a White Paper following a review of my Department's activities, including regional policy.

21. **Mr. Beith:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what representations he has received about his plans for regional development.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: Changes in regional industrial policy were announced yesterday. I have no doubt that we shall receive a number of representations about them.

Treeton Enterprise Centre

13. **Mr. Barron:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what number of jobs is likely to be created at the Treeton enterprise centre he visited in December 1987; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Atkins: The Treeton enterprise centre comprises 14 workshop units, employing 40 people to date. Fifty-five people are likely to be employed there by 1989.

Electronics

17. **Mr. Meale:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster by how much the trade balance in electronics changed between the second quarter of 1979 and the second quarter of 1987; and what are the comparable figures in the average, best and worst performing Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development country.

Mr. Butcher: Britain's trade balance in electronic goods, measured by the ratio of exports to imports, fell by 17 per cent. between 1979 and 1986.

Among the top 10 OECD exporters of electronic goods, Japan saw an increase of more than 60 per cent. in its export-import ratio, and the United States a fall of more than 40 per cent. over the period.

Excluding Japan, the largest exporter in this category, the average for the OECD countries was a fall of 25 per cent.

58. **Dr. Moonie:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster by how much Britain's share of world trade in electronics changed between 1979 and 1986; and what was the comparable figure in the average, best and worst performing Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development country.

Mr. Butcher: Data on world trade are not readily available. Information on OECD countries' shares of total OECD exports are in the table.

OECD Countries Exports of Electronic Goods[1]

	Exports		*Per cent. of total*		*Change in share per cent.*
	United States $ million				
	1979	*1986*	*1979*	*1986*	
Australia	97	121	0·2	0·1	−42
Austria	807	1,640	1·3	1·2	−6
Belgium/Luxembourg	1,789	2,690	2·8	1·9	−30
Canada	1,652	3,667	2·6	2·6	3
Denmark	659	1,004	1·0	0·7	−29
Finland	270	710	0·4	0·5	22
France	4,597	7,420	7·2	5·4	−25
Germany	9,467	15,718	14·8	11·3	−23
Greece	22	18	0·0	0·0	−61
Ireland	582	2,894	0·9	2·1	130
Italy	2,455	4,770	3·8	3·4	−10
Japan	14,133	45,021	22·0	32·5	47
Netherlands	3,523	5,117	5·5	3·7	−33
New Zealand	9	26	0·0	0·0	30
Norway	217	537	0·3	0·4	15
Portugal	161	330	0·3	0·2	−5
Spain	422	923	0·7	0·7	1
Sweden	1,955	3,171	3·0	2·3	−25
Switzerland	1,245	2,195	1·9	1·6	−18
Turkey	3	17	0·0	0·0	135
United States	14,751	31,280	23·0	22·6	−2
United Kingdom	5,350	9,427	8·3	6·8	−18
OECD less Iceland	64,166	138,696			

[1] Standard International Trade Classification, divisions 75 (part) 76 77 (part) 79 (part) 87 (part) and 89 (part).
Note: Because the amount of trade varies widely among these countries, changes in the ratio of exports to imports provide a more reliable measure than changes in the balances.
Source: OECD.

Monopolies and Mergers Commission

18. **Mr. Malcolm Bruce:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if he is yet in a position to make a statement on the future role of the Monopolies and Mergers Commission.

Mr. Maude: My right hon. and noble Friend the Secretary of State yesterday announced the conclusions of a review of some aspects of competition policy, including some aspects of the MMC's work. The MMC will retain its current role, but the Government expect that it will be possible to make further progress in cutting the length of time taken by merger investigations.

South Korea

19. **Mr. Butterfill:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what is the current value of exports to South Korea; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Alan Clark: The latest figures available show that for the 10 months January to October 1987, our exports to South Korea amounted to £350 million, an increase of 50 per cent. over the corresponding period in 1986.

Mechanical Engineering

23. **Mr. McCartney:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster by how much the trade balance in mechanical engineering changed between the second quarter of 1979 and the second quarter of 1987; and what was the comparable figure in the average, best and worst performing Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development country.

Mr. Atkins: Britain's trade balance in mechanical engineering goods, as measured by the ratio of our exports to our imports fell by 25 per cent. between 1970 and 1986. The average fall among OECD countries was 16 per cent. Among the top 10 OECD exporters of mechanical engineering goods, Japan saw an increase of nearly 40 per cent. in its export-import ratio and the United States saw a fall of nearly 60 per cent.

34. **Dr. Reid:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster by how much the percentage of Britain's domestic market met by imports of mechanical engineering changed between 1979 and June 1987; and what was the comparable figure in the average, best and worst performing Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development country.

Mr. Atkins: Information on OECD countries' import penetration in mechanical engineering goods is in the table.

Import Penetration in Mechanical Engineering Products[1]

	1979			1985			Import Penetration		Percentage change
	Production	Imports	Exports	Production	Imports	Exports	1979	1985	1985-89
	US$ Billion						Per cent.	Per cent.	Per cent.
Australia	4·7	2·5	0·4	4·1	4·4	0·3	37	54	45
Austria	3·3	2·3	2·1	4·2	2·6	2·6	66	61	−7
Bel/Lux	4·8	4·0	3·3	3·2	3·9	3·1	73	97	33
Canada	6·9	8·1	4·0	12·2	10·7	5·5	73	62	−16
Denmark	2·9	1·8	2·0	2·6	2·1	2·1	66	80	22
Finland	1·9	1·3	0·9	2·7	1·8	1·5	56	59	4
France	34·5	9·5	11·3	29·9	11·0	10·5	29	36	24
Germany	53·1	10·5	31·6	43·2	13·1	32·2	33	54	65
Greece	0·5	1·1	—	0·3	0·8	—	70	69	−1
Ireland	0·8	1·3	0·7	0·9	1·8	2·4	93	811	771
Italy	19·3	4·9	12·3	18·4	7·0	14·4	41	64	54
Japan	73·0	2·9	14·2	100·6	4·0	28·9	5	5	13
Netherlands	4·2	4·6	3·7	2·8	6·2	4·9	89	153	71
New Zealand	0·6	0·6	0·1	0·7	1·0	0·1	53	62	18
Norway	1·4	1·6	0·6	2·5	2·4	0·8	67	59	−12
Portugal	0·3	0·8	0·2	0·4	0·7	0·3	87	94	8
Spain	5·7	2·2	1·7	4·8	3·0	2·0	36	51	45
Sweden	7·7	3·1	4·7	6·4	3·9	5·1	51	74	46
United States	161·1	12·8	30·1	219·5	32·2	38·8	9	15	70
United Kingdom	30·6	9·6	13·4	26·6	13·6	14·6	36	53	47
Total OECD[2]	416·9	85·5	137·1	485·9	125·9	170·2	23	28	22

Notes:
[1] International Standard Industrial Classification Major Group 382.
[2] Excluding Iceland, Switzerland and Turkey.
'—' Value less than half the final digit shown.
Overseas trade figures include imports for re-export and exports for re-import. For a number of countries this entrepot trade is substantial and import penetration ratios are distorted.
Source: OECD.

43. **Mr. George Howarth:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster by how much Britain's share of world trade in mechanical engineering changed between 1979 and 1986; and what was the comparable figure in the average, best and worst performing Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development country.

Mr. Atkins: Data on world trade are not readily available. Information on OECD countries' shares of total OECD exports are in the following table.

OECD countries exports of mechanical engineering

	Exports		Percentage of total		Change in share
	1979 US $ billion	1986 US $ billion	1979 per cent.	1986 per cent.	per cent.
Australia	0	0	0·3	0·2	−18
Austria	2	4	1·6	2·2	38
Belgium/Luxembourg	3	4	2·5	2·1	−18
Canada	4	5	2·9	3·0	5
Denmark	2	3	1·5	1·5	1
Finland	1	2	0·7	1·0	42
France	11	12	8·3	6·7	−19
Germany	31	42	23·6	23·5	0
Greece	0	0	0·0	0·0	21
Ireland	0	1	0·2	0·3	32
Italy	10	16	7·5	9·0	21
Japan	13	27	9·9	15·5	56
Netherlands	3	5	2·5	2·6	5
New Zealand	0	0	0·0	0·1	24
Norway	1	1	0·4	0·4	−10
Portugal	0	0	0·1	0·2	174
Spain	2	2	1·2	1·1	−8
Sweden	4	6	3·2	3·2	0
Switzerland	6	8	4·2	4·5	9
Turkey	0	0	0·0	0·1	1
United States	26	26	19·6	14·9	−24

	Exports		Percentage of total		Change in share
	1979 US $ billion	1986 US $ billion	1979 per cent.	1986 per cent.	per cent.
United Kingdom	13	14	9·9	7·9	−20
OECD less Iceland	133	177			

[1] Not meaningful.

Notes:

1. Standard International Trade Classification divisions 71 (part), 72, 73, 74.
2. Because the amount of trade varies widely among these countries, changes in the ratio of exports to imports provide a more reliable mea than changes in the balances.

Source: OECD.

Car Imports

24. **Mrs. Golding:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster by how much the percentage of Britain's domestic market met by imports of motor cars changed between 1979 andd June 1987; an what are the comparable figures in the average, best and worst performing Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development country.

Mr. Atkins: Data on import penetration for OECD countries are incomplete and not available beyond 1985. In the United Kingdom, imports accounted for 51 per cent. of the value of sales of motor vehicles in 1985, compared with 41 per cent. in 1979, a proportionate increase of 23 per cent. Among those OECD countries for which data are available, including most major producers, there was an average proportionate increase of 29 per cent., ranging from 72 per cent. in the United States to a fall of 20 per cent. in Italy.

Accountancy Firms

25. **Mr. Hanley:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if he has any plans to introduce legislation to enable accountancy firms to incorporate; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Maude: Yes. We intend to remove the existing statutory prohibition on the audit of companies by corporate bodies when we implement the EC eighth company law directive. I placed a note giving further details in the Library on 10 December last year, in response to a question from my hon. Friend the Member for Hertfordshire, South-West (Mr. Page).

Civil Research and Development

28. **Mr. Ingram:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if he has any plans to increase the level of research and development spending by Government and industry.

Mr. Butcher: It is my Department's intention to increase its support for its total research and development programme, including its support for EC research and development programmes.

My Department has recently undertaken a review of innovation policy and its conclusions were announced by my right hon. and learned Friend the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster on 12 January. The review concluded that the balance of existing innovation policy should be altered and that greater emphasis should be placed on encouragement of collaborative programmes and technology transfer. It also noted that the general scheme for providing innovation grant assistance to indivi companies should be ended, although small technology companies should continue to be encoura

We are encouraging United Kingdom industry increase its funding of research and development, but not for Government to plan what industry should sp

Electricity Prices

29. **Miss Mowlam:** To ask the Chancellor of the Du of Lancaster what representations he has received on impact of electricity price increases on *(a)* British S Teesside and *(b)* ICI Wilton.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: British Steel and ICI have sent letters to my Department expressing concern a the proposed increases.

Manufacturing Industry

30. **Mr. Quentin Davies:** To ask the Chancellor of Duchy of Lancaster what information he has on outlook for manufacturers costs.

Mr. Butcher: In his Autumn Statement my right Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer forecast manufacturers' total cost per unit of output would ris 2 per cent. in 1988.

Mr. Teddy Taylor: To ask the Chancellor of the Du of Lancaster what was the deficit or surplus which United Kingdom experienced in manufactured trade *(a)* the EEC and *(b)* the rest of the world, in the r recent 12-month period for which figures are availa and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Alan Clark: The information is in the table:

United Kingdom balance of trade in manufactures[1]

	Balance of payment basis		Overseas trade statistics basis	
Twelve months ending	European Community	Rest of World	European Community	Re W
September 1987	−9·9	3·5	−10·8	
November 1987	..	..	−11·0	

[1] Standard International Trade Classification sections 5 Figures on a balance of payments basis are avilable only quat On the overseas trade statistics basis imports, but not exports, inc the cost of insurance and freight charges.

.. Not available.

Source: United Kingdom Overseas Trade Statistics Department of Trade and Industry.

36. **Mr. Pike:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duch Lancaster what effect he forecasts on the export manufacturing industries in 1988 arising from cur exchange rates.

Mr. Alan Clark: Exports depend on many factors in addition to exchange rates. My right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer will be making a new forecast at Budget time.

Textiles

31. **Mr. Wall:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster by how much the percentage of Britain's domestic market met by imports of textiles changed between 1979 and June 1987; and what is the comparable figure in the average, best and worst performing Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development country.

Mr. Atkins: The latest available data refer to 1985, when the level of import penetration in the United Kingdom was 42 per cent., compared with 28 per cent. in 1979, a proportionate increase of about 48 per cent. The average proportionate increase among the OECD countries was 2 per cent., ranging from an increase of about 60 per cent. recorded by the USA, on a very low level of penetration, to a fall of 9 per cent. recorded by Canada.

51. **Mr. Kirkwood:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if he will make a statement on the prospects for the textile industry in the calendar year 1988.

Mr. Atkins: Provided that United Kingdom textile firms remain competitive, the prospects for 1988 should be good.

60. **Mr. Haynes:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster by how much the trade balance in textiles changed between the second quarter of 1979 and the second quarter of 1987; and what was the comparable figure in the average, best and worst performing Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development country.

Mr. Atkins: Data are not readily available on a quarterly basis. Information relating to OECD countries' trade in textiles is in the table.

OECD countries trade in textiles[1]

US $ billion

	Exports		*Imports*		*Export/import ratio per cent.*		*Change in export/import ratio per cent.*
	1979	*1986*	*1979*	*1986*	*1979*	*1986*	
Australia	0·1	0·1	1·0	1·2	11	12	13
Austria	1·0	1·2	1·0	1·2	92	99	8
Belgium/Luxembourg	3·2	3·9	2·1	2·2	152	175	16
Canada	0·2	0·4	1·4	1·8	18	22	24
Denmark	0·4	0·5	0·7	0·8	53	57	8
Finland	0·2	0·2	0·5	0·6	28	30	8
France	3·4	3·9	3·9	4·7	88	83	−6
Germany	6·1	8·2	6·5	6·8	94	120	28
Greece	0·4	0·5	0·2	0·6	195	95	−51
Ireland	0·4	0·4	0·5	0·4	86	89	4
Italy	4·2	6·0	2·6	3·6	163	167	2
Japan	4·0	5·5	2·1	2·3	190	243	28
Netherlands	2·2	2·5	2·1	2·4	104	103	−1
New Zealand	0·1	0·1	0·3	0·4	22	38	68
Norway	0·1	0·1	0·4	0·5	25	22	−12
Portugal	0·6	0·8	0·2	0·5	310	147	−52
Spain	0·6	0·8	0·3	0·6	189	137	−28
Sweden	0·4	0·5	0·9	0·9	41	54	32
Switzerland	1·4	1·9	1·0	1·3	135	144	7
Turkey	0·3	0·9	0·0	0·2	704	587	n/m
United States	3·2	2·6	2·3	5·8	139	44	−68
United Kingdom	2·8	2·5	3·6	4·6	79	54	−32
OECD less Iceland	35·3	43·6	33·8	43·6	104	100	−4

[1] Standard International Trade Classification division 65.
Note: Because the amount of trade varies widely among these countries, changes in the ratio of exports to imports provide a more reliable measure than changes in the balances.
Source: OECD.

Small Firms (Audits)

32. **Mrs. Gillian Shephard:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what plans he has to change the need for full auditing requirements for small companies.

Mr. Maude: I have nothing to add to the statement made by my hon. and learned Friend the Member for Folkestone and Hythe (Mr. Howard) on 22 May 1986.

Direct Selling Association

33. **Mr. Ian Bruce:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if he will give assistance to the Direct Selling Association in its implementation of the voluntary code of practice recently agreed with the Office of Fair Trading; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Maude: The Government welcome the Direct Selling Association's revised code of practice. Responsibility for enforcing and publicising the code lies with the association and its member companies. However my Department and the Office of Fair Trading will draw attention to the benefits of the code as suitable opportunities arise.

Mobile Telephones

35. **Mr. Conway:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what information he has regarding the introduction of a common European standard to the telecommunications industry enabling mobile telephones to be functional throughout the European Community.

Mr. Butcher: An agreement was reached in May 1987 in the European Conference of Posts and Telecommunications (CEPT) on the technology to be used for a Europewide mobile telephone network.

In parallel with this, a joint effort between operators and manufacturers is under way in the special mobile group of CEPT to define the detail of the technical standard.

It is planned that a Europewide mobile telephone service will be introduced in 1991.

Stokes and Poises (Metrication)

37. **Mr. Fraser:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if he will introduce legislation to metricate stokes and poises; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Butcher: It is already the case, since 1 January 1986, that these two units may be used only as supplementary indications. In accordance with Council directive 80/181/EEC on units of measurement, dynamic and kinematic viscosities are now stated in terms of pascal seconds and metres squared per second respectively which are metric units.

Engineering Industry

38. **Mr. Ron Brown:** To ask the Chancellor Duchy of Lancaster if he has received representatio Northern Engineering Industries about incent exporters; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Alan Clark: No. I have received no represe from Northern Engineering Industries on this sub

Inner-city Policy

39. **Mr. Simon Hughes:** To ask the Chancello Duchy of Lancaster if he will make a further st about his responsibilities for inner-city regenerati

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: The Prime Minister has a to assist her in the co-ordination of Government ac inner cities, and its presentation.

While there will be no change in the depar responsibilities of Ministers with programmes inv inner city regeneration, I will in particular be avai an initial point of contact in Government for privat companies wanting to offer their support for our ac cities.

World Trade

40. **Mr. Morgan:** To ask the Chancellor of the of Lancaster by how much Britain's share of wor declined between 1979 and 1986; and what inform has as to whether that decline was greater in an Organisation for Economic Co-operation Development country.

Mr. Alan Clark: Changes in OECD countries' s world trade, measured according to their expo proportion of total OECD exports, are in the tab

OECD Exports

	US$ Million		*Per cent. of OECD*		P
	1979	*1986*	*1979*	*1986*	
Australia	18·6	22·5	1·8	1·5	
Austria	15·4	22·4	1·5	1·5	
Belgium	56·2	68·6	5·3	4·7	
Canada	55·9	86·7	5·3	5·9	
Denmark	14·6	21·2	1·4	1·4	
Finland	11·1	16·3	1·1	1·1	
France	98·0	119·3	9·2	8·1	
FR Germany	171·5	242·4	16·2	16·5	
Greece	3·9	5·6	0·4	0·4	
Iceland	0·8	1·1	0·1	0·1	
Ireland	7·2	12·6	0·7	0·9	
Italy	72·1	97·5	6·8	6·6	
Japan	102·8	210·8	9·7	14·3	
Norway	13·5	18·2	1·3	1·2	
Netherlands	63·6	80·6	6·0	5·5	
New Zealand	4·6	5·7	0·4	0·4	
Portugal	3·5	7·2	0·3	0·5	
Spain	18·2	27·1	1·7	1·8	
Sweden	27·5	37·3	2·6	2·5	
Switzerland	26·5	37·2	2·5	2·5	
Turkey	2·5	7·4	0·2	0·5	
USA	181·8	217·3	17·1	14·8	
United Kingdom	90·8	107·0	8·6	7·3	
OECD total	1,060·6	1,472·3			

Source: OECD Series 'A' (via I P Sharp) (New Zealand—OECD Series 'C')

European Regional Development Fund

41. **Mr. Win Griffiths:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if, when he next meets his counterparts in the European Community, he will raise the subject of the reform of the European regional development fund.

Mr. Atkins: The ERDF is at present under general review in Brussels together with the Community's other structural funds. I therefore expect many discussions on this subject this year.

47. **Mr. Knox:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what is the value of the grants allocated to England from the European regional development fund since its inception.

Mr. Atkins: £1,276 million.

Rubber and Plastics

42. **Mr. Graham:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster by how much the percentage of Britain's domestic market met by imports of rubber and plastics changed between 1979 and June 1987; and what was the comparable figure in the average, best and worst performing Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development country.

Mr. Atkins: Information on OECD countries' import penetration in rubber and plastics is in the table.

Import penetration in rubber and plastics[1]

	1979			1985			Import penetration		Percentage change
	Production $ billion	Imports $ billion	Exports $ billion	Production $ billion	Imports $ billion	Exports $ billion	1979 Per cent.	1985 Per cent.	1985-1979 Per cent.
Australia	2·5	0·4	—	2·8	0·6	—	13	18	36
Austria	1·4	0·4	0·4	1·3	0·4	0·5	31	36	16
Belgium/Luxembourg	2·0	1·0	0·9	1·6	0·9	1·0	48	61	27
Canada	3·0	0·9	0·3	4·6	1·2	0·8	25	25	−1
Denmark	0·6	0·3	0·3	0·6	0·4	0·3	51	61	20
Finland	0·4	0·2	0·1	0·5	0·2	0·2	44	41	−6
France	12·0	1·8	2·3	10·2	1·8	2·3	16	19	20
Germany	9·6	2·5	3·2	8·4	2·5	3·5	28	34	21
Greece	0·7	0·1	—	0·6	0·1	—	11	15	30
Ireland	0·4	0·2	0·1	0·3	0·2	0·2	47	55	18
Italy	6·9	0·7	2·1	7·2	0·9	2·1	12	15	21
Japan	32·8	0·4	1·5	45·3	0·5	2·6	1	1	−6
Netherlands	1·7	1·1	0·7	1·4	1·1	0·8	53	68	29
New Zealand	0·5	0·1	—	0·5	0·1	—	11	18	63
Norway	0·5	0·3	0·1	0·5	0·3	0·1	39	46	17
Portugal	0·4	—	—	0·5	0·5	—	11	54	417
Spain	4·3	0·1	0·6	3·8	0·2	0·6	3	5	53
Sweden	1·1	0·6	0·4	1·1	0·6	0·4	48	50	5
United States of America	47·3	3·6	1·5	75·4	7·7	2·1	7	9	29
United Kingdom	10·4	1·3	1·4	7·4	1·7	1·3	13	22	73
Total OECD[2]	138·5	16·2	16·1	173·9	22·2	19·1	12	13	7

Notes:
[1] International Industrial Classification Major Groups 355 and 356.
[2] Excluding Iceland, Switzerland and Turkey.
[3] United States $.
'—' Value less than half the final digit shown.
Overseas trade figures include imports for re-export and exports for re-import. For a number of countries this entrepot trade is substantial and import penetration ratios are distorted.
Source: OECD.

46. **Mr. Vaz:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster by how much the trade balance in rubber and plastics changed between the second quarter of 1979 and the second quarter of 1987; and what was the comparable figure in the average, best and worst performing Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development country.

Mr. Atkins: Data are not readily available on a quarterly basis. Information relating to OECD countries' trade in rubber and plastics is in the table.

OECD Countries trade in rubber & plastics[1]

	Exports		*Imports*		*Export/Import Ratio Percentage*	
	1979	*1986*	*1979*	*1986*	*1979*	*198*
Australia	0·1	0·1	0·6	0·8	14	1
Austria	0·6	1·0	0·8	1·2	75	8
Belgium/Luxembourg	3·0	3·9	1·7	2·4	175	16
Canada	0·7	1·7	1·4	2·0	49	8
Denmark	0·2	0·3	0·8	1·1	28	3
Finland	0·2	0·3	0·5	0·7	36	[2]4
France	4·5	5·7	3·5	4·7	129	12
Germany	7·6	10·7	5·1	7·4	149	14
Greece	0·0	0·1	0·3	0·4	13	1
Ireland	0·2	0·2	0·4	0·4	52	5
Italy	2·6	3·5	2·6	3·9	99	9
Japan	3·1	5·2	1·2	1·8	259	28
Netherlands	3·5	4·8	1·7	2·5	202	19
New Zealand	0·0	0·0	0·2	0·3	7	1
Norway	0·3	0·4	0·4	0·6	71	6
Portugal	0·0	0·1	0·3	0·3	6	3
Spain	0·7	1·0	0·7	1·2	95	8
Sweden	0·7	1·0	1·1	1·4	63	6
Switzerland	0·5	0·9	1·0	1·4	47	5
Turkey	0·0	0·1	0·1	0·3	2	3
United States	4·6	5·3	3·4	5·6	136	9
United Kingdom	2·6	3·2	2·7	4·1	96	7
OECD less Iceland	35·6	49·5	30·6	44·7	116	11

Note:
[1] Standard International Trade Classification divisions 23 58 62.
[2] Because the amount of trade varies widely among these countries, changes in the ratio of exports to imports provide a mor than changes in the balances.

Chemicals

44. **Mr. Alan W. Williams:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster by how much the percentage of Britain's domestic market met by imports of chemicals changed between 1979 and June 1987; and what was the comparable figure in the average, be performing Organisation for Economic Co Development country.

Mr. Atkins: Information on OECD co penetration in chemicals is in the table:

Import Penetration in Chemicals[1]

	1979			*1985*			*Import penetration*	
	Production	*Imports*	*Exports*	*Production*	*Imports*	*Exports*	*1979*	*1*
	US$ billion						*Per cent.*	*Per c*
Australia	5·0	1·7	0·8	5·0	2·1	1·4	29	
Austria	3·6	2·1	1·4	4·0	2·2	1·7	49	
Belgium/Luxembourg	8·7	5·7	7·2	7·2	6·1	7·7	79	
Canada	8·4	3·5	3·2	12·9	5·0	4·5	40	
Denmark	1·7	1·8	1·0	1·8	2·0	1·4	72	
Finland	1·9	1·2	0·6	2·7	1·4	0·8	47	
France	32·7	10·6	12·4	31·3	11·6	14·4	34	
Germany	54·5	13·3	23·5	46·6	15·2	25·5	30	
Greece	1·1	0·8	0·2	0·9	0·9	0·2	46	
Ireland	0·8	1·2	0·9	0·8	1·2	1·5	110	
Italy	20·2	7·6	6·2	23·5	9·2	7·1	35	
Japan	67·4	5·3	7·2	88·5	8·2	9·5	8	
Netherlands	12·9	6·1	10·7	11·7	6·9	11·7	74	
New Zealand	0·7	0·7	0·1	0·8	0·9	0·2	53	
Norway	1·8	1·2	0·9	2·0	1·3	1·1	59	
Portugal	0·7	0·9	0·2	0·8	0·8	0·4	61	
Spain	7·5	2·7	1·4	6·9	2·7	2·1	31	
Sweden	4·1	2·7	1·5	4·0	2·9	2·0	51	
United States	144·2	8·9	20·2	222·7	17·0	22·0	7	
United Kingdom	34·5	8·0	10·9	29·4	9·8	12·9	25	
Total OECD[2]	412·4	85·9	110·6	503·5	107·5	128·2	22	

Notes:
[1] International Industrial Classification Major Groups 351 and 352.
[2] Excluding Iceland, Switzerland and Turkey.
— Value less than half the final digit shown.

.S. $ billion	Change in Exp/Imp Ratio Percentage
	−10
	14
	−7
	67
	16
	14
	−6
	−3
	15
	2
	−9
	9
	−6
	66
	−3
	467
	−16
	10
	24
	n/m
	−30
	−18
	−5

liable measure

and worst
eration and

ries' import

Percentage change 1985/1979 Per cent.
28
—
38
−6
17
−11
18
39
21
134
2
16
36
13
1
13
19
15
16
47
1

Overseas trade figures include imports for re-export and exports for re-import. For a number of countries this entrepot trade is sul and import penetration ratios are distorted.
Source: OECD.

Retail Sales

45. **Mr. Andrew MacKay:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what was the value of retail sales in October 1987 and 1986.

Mr. Butcher: The estimated values of retail sales were £8,120 million in the four-week trading period for October 1987 and £7,480 million in the corresponding period for 1986.

Toys (Safety Mark)

48. **Mr. John Marshall:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what is his policy on efforts in the toymakers' industry to introduce a safety mark for toys.

Mr. Maude: The Government welcome and support the initiative of the United Kingdom toy industry to promote the safety of toys through the "Lion Mark" and other means.

Exports (Spain)

49. **Mr. Gill:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what was the value of British exports to Spain in the first six months of *(a)* 1986 and *(b)* 1987.

Mr. Alan Clark: United Kingdom exports to Spain for the first six months of 1986 and 1987 were respectively £873·4 million and £1,056·9 million.

Consumer Protection

50. **Mr. Michael:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if he has any plans to introduce new legislation to protect consumers.

Mr. Maude: I refer the hon. Member to my replies to the hon. Member for Glasgow, Pollok (Mr. Dunnachie) on 18 November and to my hon. Friend the Member for Hertfordshire, South-West (Mr. Page) on 16 December.

In addition, the Government intend shortly to introduce regulations to implement the EC directive on misleading advertising. We are also considering proposals for regulations under the Consumer Protection Act 1987 on misleading price indications.

Export Promotion

52. **Mr. Page:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what steps he is taking to promote exports by small and medium-sized firms.

Mr. Alan Clark: Our existing services to exporters are designed to be of particular use to smaller companies: About 75 per cent. of companies that use them have fewer than 200 employees. The measures my right hon. and learned Friend announced yesterday include additional support for such companies. In particular, the consultancy assistance now available to companies with fewer than 500 employees is an important new initiative designed to help them plan their approach to exporting, and we are planning to introduce soon a repackaging of our export services which we think will meet more closely the needs of exporters, particularly the smaller or inexperienced exporter.

British Steel Corporation Stainless

54. **Mr. Flannery:** To ask the Chancellor of the of Lancaster if he will give the profits of Britis Corporation Stainless, Sheffield, for each of the years, respectively; and if he will make a statement Majesty Government's plans for the future of Briti Corporation Stainless.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: For reasons of com confidentiality, the BSC does not publish full accounts for individual businesses within the corpo Profit and loss figures for BSC Stainless, which ha in Sheffield and South Wales, are therefore not av As I indicated on 3 December, the Government in privatise BSC as a single entity, and the future Stainless will therefore be considered in the context as a whole.

Shipbuilding

55. **Ms. Quin:** To ask the Chancellor of the Du Lancaster when he last discussed with his Eu counterparts the European Commission's propo "Shipbuilding — Industrial, Social and R Aspects"; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Atkins: An early version of the Comm document "Shipbuilding — Industrial, Socia Regional Aspects" was tabled at the Octobe Industry Council. The most recent version, in proposals for the Renaval programme of assist shipbuilding closure areas, has yet to be fully disc

On 22 December last, during Industry discussion of the Resider steel areas programme, m hon. and learned Friend the Chancellor of the Du Lancaster urged the early adoption of the R proposals for shipbuilding areas also. I hope tha programmes will be adopted early this year.

British Steel (Denationalisation)

56. **Mr. Murphy:** To ask the Chancellor of the of Lancaster if he will make a further statement detailed timetable for the denationalisation of Steel.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: As I indicated on 3 Decemb Government intend to privatise BSC as soon as p subject to market conditions. The necessary legislati be introduced later in the current Session. No de have yet been taken, however, on the detailed timeta the privatisation.

Output

57. **Mr. Riddick:** To ask the Chancellor of the of Lancaster what information he has regarding the of the service industries and manufacturing between the second and third quarter of 1987.

Mr. Butcher: Between the second and third qua 1987 output of both service and manufacturing ind rose by 2 per cent. in volume terms.

British Steel

59. **Mr. Barry Jones:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster when he next proposes to meet the chairman of British Steel to discuss prospects for the industry.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: No date has yet been fixed for our next meeting, but I expect to meet the chairman of British Steel on a number of occasions during 1988.

British Caledonian

61. **Mr. Dykes:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if he will make a statement on the implications for the areas of his Department's responsibilities of the latest development in the takeover attempts for the British Caledonian airline.

Mr. Maude: The proposed merger between British Airways and British Caledonian has been investigated by the Monopolies and Mergers Commission, which concluded that the acquisition, having regard to proposals as developed by BA during the course of the inquiry, might be expected not to operate against the public interest. My right hon. and noble Friend the Secretary of State has made it clear that he expects BA's proposals to be implemented in full.

Information Technology

Mr. Michael Marshall: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what proportion of the professional information technology staff in his Department, including programmers, systems analysts and managers, are based in London and the south-east.

Mr. Butcher: Of the professional information technology staff engaged in administrative computing in the Department of Trade and Industry, 50 per cent. are based in London and the south-east.

Mr. Michael Marshall: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what proportion of the trainees for professional information technology posts within his Department are *(a)* female and *(b)* more than 30 years of age.

Mr. Butcher: Of the trainees for professional information technology posts engaged in administrative computing in the Department of Trade and Industry, 37 per cent. are women and 22 per cent. are more than 30 years of age.

Mr. Michael Marshall: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what proportion of the professional information technology staff in his Department, including programmers, systems analysts and managers are *(a)* female and *(b)* more than 30 years of age.

Mr. Butcher: Of the professional information technology staff engaged in administrative computing in the Department of Trade and Industry, 33 per cent are women and 67 per cent. are more than 30 years of age.

Mr. Michael Marshall: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster how many professional level information technology staff are employed by his Department, including programmers, s and managers; and how many trainees t posts.

Mr. Butcher: There are 457 profession tion technology staff engaged in administ who are employed by the Departmen Industry and of these 76 are trainees.

Departmental Responsibili

Mr. Kirkwood: To ask the Chancellor Lancaster if he will list in the *Official R* of his departmental responsibility w Scotland.

Mr. Atkins: In general, the respor Department of Trade and Industry ext and it has lead responsibility for policy some matters, notably regional in operational responsibility in Scotland l Ministers and Departments.

Pens (Safety)

Mr. Janner: To ask the Chancellor Lancaster (1) whether he will introduce l pen tops of the type that caused the death of Braunstone, Leicester;

(2) whether he will institute research pens available to schoolchildren;

(3) whether he will consult Biro Bic voluntary withdrawal by them from the with the type of tops which caused th Walker of Braunstone, Leicester.

Mr. Maude: I refer the hon. and learn the answer given in respect of his c Monday.

My officials will be monitoring the pro towards introducing safer models both t the pen top implicated in the death of I of other pen suppliers. I have no plans to legislation on pen tops, but suppliers are under the general safety requirement c Protection Act 1987, to supply consumer pens, which are reasonably safe having circumstances. Producers and importe subject to the product liability provisions come into force on 1 March.

Inner City Task Force (North K

Sir Brandon Rhys Williams: To ask t the Duchy of Lancaster if, pursuant to December 1987, *Official Report*, colum out the figures there shown for the North force area, relating to housing ownersh percentages of the total population equivalent figures for Greater London a Kingdom as a whole, in a similar form.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: It is not pos aggregated figure for the United K different categories were used in the su and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ir qualification, the information requested

Persons percentage housing by household

	North Kensington		Greater London		England and W
	Persons	Percentage	Persons	Percentage	Persons
Owner occupied freehold	1,778	7·02	2,999,238	46·23	25,030,293
Owner occupied leasehold	1,308	5·16	418,355	6·45	3,877,112
Council etc.	10,672	42·15	2,005,994	30·92	13,671,990
Housing association	7,575	29·92	227,427	3·51	774,674
Rent and business	41	0·16	12,316	0·19	225,901
By employment	362	1·43	94,098	1·45	937,767
Other rent unfurnished	1,543	6·09	424,585	6·55	2,183,064
Other rent furnished	2,041	8·06	304,718	4·70	947,404
Total	25,320	100·00	6,486,731	100·00	47,648,205

Source: 1981 ccensus of population.

Director General of Oftel

Mr. Darling: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster when he last met the Director General of Oftel; and what subjects he discussed.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: I last met the Director General of Telecommunications on 18 November. We discussed a number of current and longer-term telecommunications issues.

Companies (Subsidiaries)

Mr. Patrick Thompson: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if he has any plans to introduce legislation to prevent companies from leaving subsidiaries out of their group accounts; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Maude: We are considering possible changes to the law governing which companies have to be included in consolidated accounts, in the context of the EC seventh company law directive.

International Tin Council

Mr. Warren: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what has been the total expenditure incurred by Her Majesty's Government for legal and administrative costs of the International Tin Council since 25 October 1985.

Mr. Atkins: I refer my hon. Friend to the answer given to my hon. Friend the Member for Beaconsfield (Mr. Smith) on 11 January 1988 at column *129*.

Pacer Trains

Dr. Marek: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster how many Pacer trains have been sold abroad to date.

Mr. Atkins: None to date.

Small Business Organisations

Mr. Matthew Taylor: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster when he last met representatives of small business organisations; and what subjects were discussed.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: I regularly meet members of the small business community and take note of their views on a wide range of issues.

Advertising Services (Report)

Mr. Page: To ask the Chancellor of the Lancaster when the report of the Monopolies an Commission on the supply of advertising s specialised magazines for campers, climbers an is to be published; and if he will make a statem

Mr. Maude: The report is published today.

The commission found that a complex existed in favour of Holmes McDougall L Magazine Ltd, Rambler Ltd. and Mountain Ltd. which are publishers of magazines int campers, climbers and walkers. These companie a policy of refusing to accept advertisement c information about the price of the goods adv their magazines.

The commission concluded that the operati policy by the publishers restricted or distorted co and amounted to an action by each of them whic against the public interest. The commission foun operation of the policy had three particular adve First, it has hindered or prevented reade magazines from making an informed choice of supplier according to the balance of their priorities between personal service and lower p

Secondly, it has restricted competition between specialist retailers and the mail order c which sell at lower prices. Finally, it has nar range of prices at which particular goods are of it has increased the average price level.

The commission has recommended that the of State should make an order which would unlawful for publishers of specialist magazines for campers, climbers and walkers to operate the refusing to accept advertisements containi information.

I accept the findings of this report and the con recommendation that an order should be made Fair Trading Act to remedy the detriments to interest. I am consequently arranging for the p shortly of a notice setting out the terms of the order and inviting interested persons who wish representations to do so.

Self-regulating Organisations

Mr. Knapman: To ask the Chancellor of the Lancaster if he will make a statement about p recognising self-regulating organisations u Financial Services Act.

Mr. Maude: The Financial Services Act provides that the Securities and Investments Board may not recognise a self-regulating organisation without the consent of the Secretary of State. The Act also requires the Secretary of State to refuse his consent if he considers, after receiving and considering a report on the matter from the Director General of Fair Trading, that the rules of the organisation have, or are intended or likely to have, to any significant extent the effect of restricting, distorting or preventing competition or, if they have or are intended or likely to have that effect to any significant extent, the effect is no greater than is necessary for the protection of investors.

I announced that my right hon. and noble Friend had given leave to the board to recognise the Financial Intermediaries, Managers and Brokers Regulatory Association on 14 December. He has now considered the rules submitted by the Association of Futures Brokers and Dealers (AFBD) to the board, and has received and considered a report on it by the Director General of Fair Trading. He has concluded that on the basis of the information presently available to him he does not consider that those rules have, or are intended or likely to have, to any significant extent the effect described above. He has therefore today given his consent to the board for the recognition of AFBD.

Internal Market Council

Mr. Knapman: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if he will make a statement on the Internal Market Council held on 18 December 1987.

Mr. Maude: The Council, at which I represented the United Kingdom, agreed the key elements of a directive on the provision of non-life insurance services. This represents significant progress towards a free market in financial services within the Community. The Council also agreed directives on member states arrangements for the inspection of laboratories to verify compliance with good laboratory practice; on the rules governing the classification, packaging and labelling requirements for dangerous preparations; and establishing a mandatory range of quantities in which spirit drinks and sparkling wines must be sold. It discussed proposals for directives on member states laws on trade marks and on the disclosure of major shareholdings in listed companies.

Public Appointments

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if he will list the names of all the people appointed to public bodies by his Department who are currently in office, giving for each the office concerned and the date of appointment.

Mr. Butcher *[holding answer 12 January 1988]:* This information could only be provided at disproportionate cost.

Steel Imports

Mr. Barry Jones: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what is the amount, by cash, by tonnes, for each year since 1980, annually of imports of *(a)* hot rolled steel and *(b)* all steel into the United Kingdom from (i) the EEC and (ii) the rest of the world.

Mr. Alan Clark *[holding answer 12*
to changes in statistical definitions
information is only readily available
ECSC treaty products. The figures a

(a) United Kingdom imports of ECS

	£ milli
(i) From EEC	
1980[1]	
1981	
1982	
1983	
1984	
1985	
1986[2]	
1987 January-November[2]	
(ii) From the rest of the world	
1980[1]	
1981	
1982	
1983	
1984	
1985	
1986[2]	
1987 January-November[2]	

[1] The country split for the 1980 value is
by steel strike.
[2] 1986 and 1987 EEC figures include Spa
[3] The amounts shown mainly cover hot
include cold rolled sheets and plate.

(b) United Kingdom imports—United Ki products

	(£ millio
(i) From EEC	
1980[1,3]	
1981[3]	
1982[3]	
1983[3]	
1984[3]	
1985	1,(
1986[2]	1,(
1987 (Jan-Nov)[2]	1,(
(ii) From the rest of the world	
1980[1,3]	
1981[3]	
1982[3]	
1983[3]	
1984[3]	
1985	
1986[2]	
1987 (Jan-Nov)[2]	

Notes:
[1] 1980 affected by steel strike.
[2] 1986 and 1987 EEC figures include Spa
[3] 1980-1984 United Kingdom steel indu
small amounts of railway tyres, wheels and
forgings.
Source: Iron and Steel Statistics Bureau.

Scientific Research (Expl

Mr. Bowis: To ask the Chancello
Lancaster whether he is giving any assi
for the Exploitation of Science and
efforts to improve the way British in
fruits of scientific research; and i
statement.

nuary 1988]: Due
r steel products,
r total imports of
as follows:

eaty products[3]

ve / if	*Quantity million tonnes*
·9	2·66
·3	2·13
·8	2·24
·1	2·07
·7	2·21
·5	2·35
·3	2·53
·1	2·57
·7	1·33
·9	0·68
·0	1·06
·1	0·84
·2	0·74
·9	0·86
·8	1·02
·9	0·87

nated. 1980 affected

nd Portugal.
d products but also

om steel industry

ne / f)	*Quantity (million tonnes)*
3	3·05
3	2·51
7	2·61
7	2·36
5	2·63
8	2·75
1	2·90
3	2·91
5	1·57
0	0·80
7	1·22
0	0·98
8	0·92
2	1·00
6	1·22
2	1·00

nd Portugal.
products included
s; also castings and

ation)

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nce to the Centre
echnology in its
stry exploits the
e will make a

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: The Centre for Exploitation of Science and Technology (CEST), which will operate as a completely independent body, is jointly funded by contributions from industry and Government. The Department of Trade and Industry, with the Department of Education and Science and the Advisory Council on Science and Technology are together providing £1 million over five years. The main contribution, however, is from industry with some 18 companies already committing £5 million to the centre's launch. Other companies are expected to join once the centre is underway.

I welcome the setting up of CEST as an important step in helping to create the conditions in which United Kingdom companies can exploit opportunities for innovation. I expect it to do this by improving industry's access to the most up-to-date information on trends and developments in science and technology from around the world and by helping to bring together the scientific community, industry and the relevant parts of the Government.

DEFENCE

Falklands Campaign

Mr. Ashley: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what is the relationship between the benefits paid to those injured in the Falklands campaign and to their families, to those paid to the families of those killed or similarly injured in Northern Ireland; how much would be paid in each case to *(a)* a man losing a leg and *(b)* a widow left with two young children; and what are the payments made for a comparable injury or death resulting from military action in any other area of the world.

Mr. Freeman: The range of benefits available under the provisions of the armed forces pension scheme in respect of those killed or injured as a result of duty in Northern Ireland, or in any other area of the world, are the same as for those of casualties of the Falklands campaign. Actual amounts payable vary according to the rates of benefit in force at the date of death in service or invaliding from service.

Benefits payable under the scheme in the event of death attributable to service vary according to rank. Those payable in respect of attributable injury which results in invaliding from service vary according to rank and degree of disability and, in certain circumstances, may also be affected by length of service given. Examples of benefits payable in 1982, that is at the time of the Falklands campaign, are as follows:

a. On attributable invaliding, after four years reckonable service, with total loss of one leg:

	Private (and equivalent) £	*Captain (and equivalent)* £
Service Pension	[1]1,447	[1]5,267
Lump Sums	2,974	5,839

[1] Index-linked from date of award.
[2] Per annum.

b. On attributable death in service, for a widow left w children in her care:

	Private (and equivalent) £	(
Forces Family Pension	[1][2]3,405	
Lump Sums	7,435	

[1] Index-linked from date of award.
[2] Per annum.

Additional benefits would also be payab war pension scheme administered by the De Health and Social Security.

Mr. Ashley: To ask the Secretary of State how much money has been donated to the So Fund since its inception; how much has bee in each year for *(a)* the welfare of those wh a result of the Falklands conflict and *(b)* th those who continue to work in the arduous c the South Atlantic; and how much money re fund.

Mr. Freeman: The most recent report pub trustees, a copy of which was forwarded to t Member with my letter of 30 October 1987, 31 October 1986, £15,168,652 in donation received. Accounts for the fund's financial ye October 1987 have not yet been published.

The annual reports show that grants hav for each of the fund's accounting periods Within the figure for the period ending 31 O certain grants were made for the welfa continuing to defend the Falkland Islands page 6 of the trustees' annual report for 198

Grants
27 May 1982-31 October 1983
1 November 1983-31 October 1984
1 November 1984-31 October 1985
1 November 1985-31 October 1986

As at 31 October 1986 the balance i £3,498,012.

Mr. Ashley: To ask the Secretary of State if he will publish a table giving for the Roy Royal Marines, the Army, the Royal Air For Fleet Auxiliary and RNSTS, and the Mercha following information about the Falklands w Atlantic Fund: (1) the number who died: *(a)* without dependants, (2) the number who were with and *(b)* without dependants, (3) the tot from the fund to individuals who had been or of each service, (4) the total distributed from families of those who died in each service amount given to each of the services for gen the terms on which this was given.

Mr. Freeman: The numbers killed tot follows:

	(a) Totals
Royal Navy	86
Royal Marines	27
Army	123

	(a) Totals	(b) With dependants
RAF	1	1
RFA/RNSTS	10	6
Merchant Navy	6	5
Chinese unofficials	2	2

There were 777 service and civilian casualties arising from the conflict. This figure is increasing as further disabilities come to light. It is not possible to say how many of the injured had dependants as this information is not held centrally.

As regards any analysis of grants by service or to families of those who died, the trustees of the South Atlantic fund have not published such data.

Mr. Ashley: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) if the South Atlantic Fund had sufficient money to help widows so that they would be as well off as they would have been had their husbands not died;

(2) what assumptions were made about the income that would have been earned had the man concerned not died, in calculating the amount paid to widows of those killed in the Falklands conflict; and for how many years it was assumed that this income would have lasted.

Mr. Freeman: The aim of the trustees, within the framework of charity law and the assets of the fund, has been to help all those who suffered or were bereaved to live, as far as possible, the kind of life they might have expected had the conflict not taken place. In considering grants to widows the trustees have had to bear in mind both the earnings potential of their deceased husbands and the long-term needs from the fund of those men who suffered injury.

Mr. Ashley: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many people have been means-tested by the South Atlantic Fund before a grant was made; if this is universal; what income and capital is taken into account; and if there were objections to means testing.

Mr. Freeman: This is a matter for the trustees. However, I understand that there has been no general means testing, though the trustees have taken into account state pensions and benefits but not personal assets or personal insurance and other similar personal provision.

Mr. Ashley: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) if, when the South Atlantic Fund is closed and the residual assets transferred to the service benevolent funds, he will ensure that each service gets money according to the numbers belonging to it that were injured or killed in the Falklands conflict;

(2) if he will request the trustees of the South Atlantic Fund to ensure that, when monies are transferred on the closure of the fund, they will not be greatly in excess of what will be needed to meet all due claims from beneficiaries in perpetuity.

Mr. Freeman: These are matters for the trustees who have decided to extend further the life of the fund to not later than July 1989.

Mr. Ashley: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what complaints have been received from beneficiaries of the South Atlantic Fund regarding the criteria for grants, the method of assessment and the method and timing of pay; what was their nature; and what response was made.

Mr. Freeman: These are matters for the trustees.

Training Land

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many acres of land in the United Kingdom are currently used for the purposes of military training.

Mr. Freeman: The area of United Kingdom land used for military training, ranges and camps totalled 459,318 acres as at 1 April 1987, the latest date for which complete figures are available. This figure includes both land and foreshore and 81,000 acres which MOD has rights over only.

Land Disposal

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many acres of land held by his Department have been disposed of to local authorities or private developers for the purpose of home construction in each of the past five years.

Mr. Freeman: I regret that records are not maintained in the form required that would enable this information to be provided. I can, however, say that between 1 April 1982 and 1 April 1987 the Defence estate has been reduced by 21,047 acres.

Departmental Land

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will detail by *(a)* grade and *(b)* location all listed properties on land held by his Department.

Mr. Freeman: I will write to the hon. Gentleman and place a copy of my letter in the Library of the House.

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will give the latest estimate of the acreage of all land belonging to, or used by, his Department.

Mr. Freeman: The figures for Ministry of Defence land holdings in the United Kingdom at 1 October 1987 are as shown:

	acres
Freehold	553,055
Leasehold	39,482
Rights only	93,086

The Ministry of Defence owns virtually no land overseas but some 309,000 acres are either made available to the Department by host Governments or leased; the Department additionally has rights of access over 197,600 acres.

Service Personnel (Hirings)

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) if he will give details of the machinery by means of which serving members of the armed services are hired for activities associated with private individuals, companies and associations;

(2) if he will give details of the amounts received from the hire of serving members of the armed services during the most convenient accounting period.

Mr. Freeman: I refer the hon. Member to the answers I gave him on 12 November 1987 at columns *304-5*.

Private Security Companies

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how much has been paid by his Department for services provided by private security companies in the most recent available period.

Mr. Sainsbury: For the year 1987 the value of centrally placed contracts with private security companies is expected to be in the order of £1·2 million.

Information on contracts placed locally is not held centrally. However, these will be of very low value.

Private Landlords

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what annual rents have been paid out by his Department to private landlords in each year since 1979.

Mr. Freeman: I regret the information is not held in the form requested and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost. However, figures for each financial year from 1982-83, the earliest for which detailed information is immediately available, show MOD paid out the following amounts as rent or other related charges for married quarters, land and other buildings hired in the United Kingdom and overseas.

	£ million
1982-83	61·442
1983-84	59·549
1984-85	67·814
1985-86	72·361
1986-87	85·590

BP Share Launch

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if, pursuant to his reply of 12 November 1987, *Official Report*, column *306*, the sum of £2,293 has now been recovered from the publicity company involved in the BP share launch ceremony.

Mr. Freeman: Yes. The sum of £2,293 has now been recovered from BP.

SOCIAL SERVICES

Community Care

Mr. Atkinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he has yet received Sir Roy Griffiths' report on community care.

Mr. Newton: No.

Nursing Training

Mr. Sheerman: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services how much money in real terms expressed at constant prices has been spent on nursing training in each of the last 10 years.

Mr. Newton: The information requested is as follows:

	£ million at 1986-87 constant prices
1977-78	498
1978-79	479
1979-80	479
1980-81	503
1981-82	490
1982-83	482
1983-84	480
1984-85	453
1985-86	441
1986-87	439

Notes:

The figures for each year are estimates made up from two elements

(a) The expenditure of English Regional Nurse Training Committees (for the years 1977-78 to 1982-83) and the grants made to the English National Board for Nursing, Midwifery and Health visiting for salaries of nurse teachers and other training costs (for 1983-84 to 1986-87).

(b) The salaries and superannuation costs, but not national insurance costs, of learners paid by Health Authorities. These salary costs do not take account of the service contribution made by learners during training which varies according to the particular course and the School of Nursing.

AIDS

Mr. Butler: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will procure from North West Thames regional health authority estimates available to them from the strategic plan of the Paddington and North Kensington district health authority of the number of beds needed for AIDS patients in 1992, for publication in the *Official Report*.

Mr. Newton: The district health authority has not yet published figures for beds required in 1992 for AIDS patients. However, I understand that work is well advanced on the production of a further draft strategic plan which has yet to be approved for issue by the health authority. Should my hon. Friend wish to pursue the matter further, he may wish to contact the chairman of the Paddington and North Kensington authority direct.

No Smoking Day

Mr. Michael Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) for how many years the Health Education Authority has retained the public relations company, Peter E. Firth and Co., for the promotion of National No Smoking Day;

(2) what fee is to be paid by the Health Education Authority to the public relations company, Peter E. Firth and Co., for the promotion of National No Smoking Day;

(3) what expenses have been agreed to be paid by the Health Education Authority to the public relations company, Peter E. Firth and Co., for the promotion of National No Smoking Day 1988;

(4) how many public relations consultants were asked to tender for the contract to promote National No Smoking Day 1988.

Mrs. Currie: I understand that the National No Smoking Committee, which is composed of a wide range of charitable and public bodies including the Health Education Authority, has retained the public relations firm Peter E. Firth and Company since 1984 for the promotion of National No Smoking Day. The firm was invited with two others to tender in 1986, when it was awarded the contract for the 1987 and 1988 events. The fees and expenses to be paid in 1988 are a matter for the committee.

South Tees Health Authority (Urology Department)

Miss Mowlam: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what is the length of the waiting lists in the urology department in the South Tees health authority in the current year and in each of the last five years.

Mr. Newton: The requested information is given in the table, together with in-patient cases treated during each year.

South Tees District Health Authority Urology Waiting List at 31 March

Year	*Number of cases on in-patient waiting list*	*In-patient cases treated*
[1]1982	209	924
1983	270	1,145
1984	248	1,054
1985	153	1,372
1986	211	1,490
1987	272	n/a

[1] NHS activity affected by industrial action
n/a = not available

Toxic Distress Allergies

Mr. Michael Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what steps are being taken to ensure that general practitioners are up to date in modern toxic distress allergies and environmental illnesses.

Mr. Newton: The management of allergies and environmental illnesses feature in the undergraduate medical curriculum and in vocational training for general practice. Established general practitioners decide how best to keep their knowledge up to date; they may also refer patients to physicians specialising in allergic disorders and specialists in occupational medicine.

Private Hospitals (Unused Capacity)

Mr. Butler: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will undertake measures to encourage the National Health Service to explore unused capacity in the private hospital section.

Mr. Newton: Health authorities are encouraged to consider the use of non-National Health service health care provision where this would be a cost-effective way of providing NHS services. In 1986, patients from 121 health authorities received treatment from non-NHS health care institutions. As part of this year's waiting list initiative activity, health authorities have set up over 20 projects, treating approximately 2,700 patients, with non-NHS providers. In October 1987 my right hon. Friend contributed the foreword to a district health authority by district health authority directory of private acute hospitals, produced by BUPA and distributed throughout the NHS; this provided essential information for NHS managers considering the use of non-NHS facilities. We have supported two pilot schemes (in the Trent and West Midlands regions) involving BUPA in negotiating with non-NHS hospitals for the treatment of NHS patients under contract. The waiting list fund for 1988-89 has been increased from £25 million to £30 million. As part of the initiative for the coming year, we are encouraging DHAs to consider worthwhile projects which use facilities beyond their own, including the private sector.

Late Abortions

Mr. Steel: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services how many and what proportion of late abortions in England and Wales are for women resident in Scotland.

Mr. Newton: There is no universally accepted definition of late abortion. However, the number of notifications of abortions performed under the Abortion Act 1967 on women usually resident in Scotland, carried out in England and Wales at 21 completed weeks gestation and over, for 1986 is 46, which represents 1·69 per cent. of all abortions at this gestational age carried out in England and Wales.

Capital Schemes (North-West Region)

Mr. Butler: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services how many capital schemes of over £1 million *(a)* have been completed and *(b)* are under construction, in the National Health Service north-west region since 1979.

Mrs. Currie: Information held centrally on health building schemes, each cost over £1 million, for north-western region shows that 37 schemes have been completed since 1979 and nine more are currently under construction.

Married Couples (Capital Cut-off)

Mr. Beith: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services whether he has any plans to change the provisions of the Social Security Act so that the capital cut-off for a married couple is no longer subject to the same £3,000 limit as a single person.

Mr. Portillo: It is a long-established principle of income-related benefits that a married couple living together are treated as a single financial unit. It would be both impractical and costly to treat all adults as individuals for benefit purposes. The capital cut-off which applies to each financial unit is to be raised to £6,000 from April when income support replaces supplementary benefit. An income of £1 a week will be assumed on capital between £3,000 and £3,250 and a further £1 a week for every band of £250 held up to £6,000. The same level will also apply to housing benefit and family credit.

Hospital Projects

Mr. Butler: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services how many hospital projects costing at least £1 million have been started and completed since 1979.

Mrs. Currie: Information held centrally shows 25 health building projects, each costing over £1 million, have been started and completed since 1979.

Health Authorities (Audits)

Mr. Andrew Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services whether he will make it his policy to require health authorities to be audited by independent auditors appointed by the Audit Commission with a duty to report on the economy, efficiency and effectiveness with which they manage and deploy their resources; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Newton: We have no plans to do so, but officials are in close touch with officers of the Audit Commission about ways of developing the National Health Service audit function.

The Secretary of State is required by the National Health Services Act 1977 to appoint auditors for the statutory audit of the accounts of health authorities. The statutory auditors, who include five major firms of commercial auditors, work to standards which we have approved and which are fundamentally the same as the Consultative Committee of Accountancy Bodies standards, adapted and extended as necessary for application to the external audit of health authorities. The primary duty placed on the auditors is the certification of the annual accounts, but the standards include responsibility for ensuring that health authorities have adequate arrangements for achieving economy, efficiency and effectiveness in their deployment of resources through testing the adequacy of health authorities' systems for achieving value for money.

The activity of the statutory audit branch is examined each year by the Comptroller and Auditor General who, in addition to obtaining assurance about the certification of the annual accounts, also reviews and takes into account the value for money audit when making his own inquiries into the deployment of NHS resources.

Single Payments

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will provide a breakdown for each of the last four years for which figures are available of single payments made to the following categories of claimants from his Department's Brighton office: pensioners, single parents and long-term unemployed.

Mr. Scott: I regret that figures for single payments made to single parents and to the long-term unemployed are not kept by local offices. Figures for single payments made to pensioners from the Brighton DHSS office are as follows:

Year	*Number*	*Amount £*
April 1983—April 1984	680	44,925
April 1984—April 1985	1,132	58,755
April 1985—April 1986	1,471	78,045
April 1986—April 1987[1]	[1]1,683	[1]101,007

[1] The figures for 1986-87 are provisional and subject to amendment.

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will identify the average size of single payments made to claimants from his Department's Brighton office for each of the last four financial years together with details of how many payments were made in the following bands: £0 to £50, £50 to £100, £100 to £150, £150 to £200, £200 to £250, £250 to £300, £300 to £350, £350 to £400, £400 to £450, £450 to £500 and over £500 for each of those years.

Mr. Scott: Details of how many single payments were made in each of the bands quoted is not kept.

During the last four financial years the average size of each single payment made by the Brighton DHSS office was as follows:

Financial year	*Average amount of payment £*
1983-84	65·77
1984-85	61·84
1985-86	71·64
1986-87[1]	[1]85·10

[1] The figure for 1986-87 is provisional and subject to amendment.

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will provide details for the last four years for which figures are available of the number of single payments made by his Department's Brighton office for *(a)* household furniture, *(b)* clothing, *(c)* bedding and *(d)* replacement household equipment, and as a result of urgent payments made to replace domestic and household goods affected by natural disasters (fire, flood and so on).

Mr. Scott: I regret that the information requested is not available and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Social Fund

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what consultation was undertaken by his Department with local authorities and welfare organisations to determine local needs and the formula by means of which the balance was determined between grants and loan budgets under the social fund for 1988-89 for each local office of his Department.

Mr. Scott: The division of the national social fund budget between grants and loans was based on research carried out on our behalf by the social policy research unit. An explanation of the basis of social fund allocations to local offices for 1988-89 is available in the Library. In deciding community care grant allocations for future years we will be carrying out a local consultation process, the precise details of which will be announced closer to the time.

Manor Hospital, Walsall

Mr. Winnick: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services when the extension to the Manor hospital, Walsall is now to be opened for full use; and if there are any financial reasons for delay.

Mrs. Currie: The timing and opening of new capital schemes is a matter for the regional and district health authorities to determine in the light of available resources. The hon. Member may therefore wish to write to the chairman of the West Midlands RHA for the information he seeks.

Radiotherapy Unit, Southend

Mr. Teddy Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services when he expects to make a decision on the proposal by the North East Thames regional health authority to close the radiotherapy unit in Southend; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Currie: We hope to make a decision as soon as possible.

Eraldin

Mr. Ashley: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will place in the Library any information ICI gave his Department regarding the level and total of payments it made for each type of adverse reaction that occurred from the drug Eraldin.

Mr. Newton *[holding answer 2 November 1987]:* We have found no record that ICI informed the Department of the details of payments made under the Eraldin voluntary compensation scheme. Certain information about payments was given by ICI in confidence under the pharmaceutical price regulation scheme, but cannot be disclosed without a breach of that confidence.

Hospitals

Mr. Rathbone: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services how the nursing establishment for individual hospitals is computed; and what methods are used to refine such computations from time to time.

Mr. Newton: This is a matter for individual health authorities to determine.

Glaucoma

Mrs. Margaret Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will list in the *Official Report* the exact number of sufferers of glaucoma whose final diagnosis resulted from initial detection during the course of a National Health Service sight test in each of the past 10 years.

Mrs. Currie: I regret that this information is not available.

Agency Nurses

Mr. Gordon Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will give the number, and cost at current and at 1987 prices to the National Health Service, of agency nurses employed for each year since 1979.

Mr. Newton: *[holding answer 14 December 1987]:* The information requested is given in the table.

Agency Nursing and Midwifery Staff[2] (whole-time equivalent) as at 30 September		*Expenditure[1] on Non-NHS Staff (Agency, Etc.)—Nursing*	*Per annual accounts £000*	*At 1986-87 prices £000*
1979	4,020	1979-80	30,348	50,517
1980	4,220	1980-81	44,199	62,060
1981	3,760	1981-82	43,288	55,357
1982	3,040	1982-83	34,525	41,185
1983	2,440	1983-84	30,614	34,912
1984	3,750	1984-85	40,157	43,863
1985	4,120	1985-86	51,297	52,841
1986	5,450	1986-87	70,788	70,788

[1] *Source:* Annual accounts of regional and district health authorities and those of the special health authorities for the London postgraduate teaching hospitals. (Annual accounts of their predecessor authorities for the years prior to 1982-83).

Note: The figures for the earlier years have been expressed at 1986-87 prices by the use of the Gross Domestic Product deflator.

[2] Figures are whole time equivalent rounded to the nearest ten.

Nurses and Midwives

Ms. Harman: To ask the Secretary of State for Services what is the number of *(a)* nurse *(b)* midwives whole-time equivalents, excluding staff, in each district health authority.

Mr. Newton *[holding answer 14 December 1987]* information is given in the tables:

National Health Service nursing and midwifery staff in pos regional health authority at 30 September 1986
Whole-time eq

Region	*Nursing*	*M*
Northern	25,820	
Yorkshire	28,360	
Trent	34,990	
East Anglian	14,470	
North West Thames	25,820	
North East Thames	31,110	
South East Thames	27,740	
South West Thames	22,540	
Wessex	21,620	
Oxford	15,640	
South Western	25,590	
West Midlands	39,770	
Mersey	21,020	
North Western	35,430	
London post-graduate special health authority	4,310	
England	374,210	

National Health Service nursing and midwifery staff in pos district health authority at 30 September 1986

	Whole-time equiva Nursing	*M*
Northern Regional Health Authority		
Total	25,820	
Hartlepool	740	
North Tees	1,170	
South Tees	2,400	
East Cumbria	1,470	
South Cumbria	1,100	
West Cumbria	1,120	
Darlington	1,130	
Durham	1,070	
North West Durham	690	
South West Durham	1,520	
Northumberland	3,060	
Gateshead	1,380	
Newcastle	4,680	
North Tyneside	920	
South Tyneside	880	
Sunderland	2,410	
Yorkshire Regional Health Authority		
Total	28,360	
Hull	2,440	
East Yorkshire	1,640	
Grimsby	1,280	
Scunthorpe	1,080	
Northallerton	500	
York	2,240	
Scarborough	800	
Harrogate	1,070	
Bradford	2,540	
Airedale	1,310	
Calderdale	1,440	
Huddersfield	1,920	
Dewsbury	920	
Leeds Western	3,160	

	Whole-time equivalent Nursing	Midwifery
Leeds Eastern	2,930	200
Wakefield	2,020	100
Pontefract	980	130
Trent Regional Health Authority		
Total	34,990	2,140
North Derbyshire	1,990	140
Southern Derbyshire	3,690	170
Leicestershire	5,990	360
North Lincolnshire	2,210	110
South Lincolnshire	1,890	130
Bassetlaw	660	30
Central Nottinghamshire	2,030	160
Nottingham	4,980	360
Barnsley	1,510	110
Doncaster	2,280	150
Rotherham	1,650	120
Sheffield	6,010	310
East Anglian Regional Health Authority		
Total	14,470	950
Cambridge	2,320	160
Peterborough	1,480	120
West Suffolk	1,520	100
East Suffolk	2,480	130
Norwich	3,550	230
Great Yarmouth and Waveney	1,330	60
West Norfolk and Wisbech	1,080	80
Huntingdon	660	60
North West Thames Regional Health Authority		
Total	25,820	1,490
North Bedfordshire	1,320	120
South Bedfordshire	1,760	150
North Hertfordshire	910	90
East Hertfordshire	900	90
North West Hertfordshire	3,060	70
South West Hertfordshire	1,040	120
Barnet	2,560	140
Harrow	1,140	120
Hillingdon	1,880	110
Hounslow and Spelthorne	1,680	140
Ealing	1,710	80
Brent	1,940	50
Paddington and North Kensington	1,850	110
Riverside	3,940	100
North East Thames Regional Health Authority		
Total	31,110	1,820
Basildon and Thurrock	2,130	130
Mid Essex	1,810	100
North East Essex	2,810	130
West Essex	1,450	120
Southend	1,800	120
Barking, Havering and Brentwood	3,120	160
Hampstead	1,990	50
Bloomsbury	3,090	60
Islington	1,330	130
City and Hackney	2,330	150
Newham	1,060	20
Tower Hamlets	2,090	110
Enfield	1,290	110
Haringey	1,220	90
Redbridge	1,310	150
Waltham Forest	2,240	110
South East Thames Regional Health Authority		
Total	27,740	1,760
Brighton	2,180	40
Eastbourne	1,610	60
Hastings	1,170	80
South East Kent	1,470	100
Canterbury and Thanet	2,400	150
Dartford and Gravesham	1,820	120
Maidstone	1,420	60
Medway	1,420	200
Tunbridge Wells	1,850	120
Bexley	1,430	120
Greenwich	1,790	120
Bromley	1,940	140
West Lambeth	2,240	140
Camberwell	1,780	160
Lewisham and North Southwark	3,220	160
South West Thames Regional Health Authority		
Total	22,540	1,190
North West Surrey	1,550	110
West Surrey and North East Hants	1,570	90
South West Surrey	1,130	70
Mid Surrey	1,820	70
East Surrey	1,700	50
Chichester	1,330	60
Mid Downs	1,640	120
Worthing	1,350	70
Croydon	2,300	140
Kingston and Esher	1,460	100
Richmond, Twickenham and Roehampton	1,240	40
Wandsworth	2,700	160
Merton and Sutton	2,640	110
Wessex Regional Health Authority		
Total	21,620	1,320
East Dorset	2,890	150
West Dorset	1,850	60
Portsmouth and South East Hampshire	3,400	250
Southampton and South West Hampshire	3,840	220
Winchester	1,160	110
Basingstoke and North Hampshire	1,610	80
Salisbury	1,350	70
Swindon	1,580	160
Bath	2,930	160
Isle of Wight	1,010	60
Oxford Regional Health Authority		
Total	15,640	1,220
East Berkshire	1,970	190
West Berkshire	2,720	210
Aylesbury Vale	1,630	60
Wycombe	1,180	140
Milton Keynes	630	80
Kettering	1,350	120
Northampton	2,250	160
Oxfordshire	3,840	250
South Western Regional Health Authority		
Total	25,590	1,340
Bristol and Weston	3,070	200
Frenchay	2,610	30
Southmead	1,920	190
Cornwall and Isles of Scilly	2,730	150
Exeter	3,350	110

	Whole-time equivalent Nursing	Midwifery
North Devon	940	40
Plymouth	2,750	210
Torbay	1,530	60
Cheltenham and District	1,200	90
Gloucester	2,290	130
Somerset	3,120	150
West Midland Regional Health Authority		
Total	39,770	2,580
Bromsgrove and Redditch	1,150	50
Herefordshire	1,190	50
Kidderminster and District	1,260	30
Worcester and District	1,650	100
Shropshire	2,640	170
Mid Staffordshire	1,700	90
North Staffordshire	3,890	240
South East Staffordshire	1,800	100
Rugby	430	30
North Warwickshire	1,260	110
South Warwickshire	1,840	80
Central Birmingham	2,520	250
East Birmingham	1,360	30
North Birmingham	1,290	140
South Birmingham	2,420	100
West Birmingham	2,440	130
Coventry	2,530	180
Dudley	1,960	120
Sandwell	1,470	80
Solihull	950	180
Walsall	1,800	130
Wolverhampton	2,110	170
Mersey Regional Health Authority		
Total	21,020	1,230
Chester	1,600	140
Crewe	1,680	110
Halton	570	20
Macclesfield	1,570	60
Warrington	2,370	100
Liverpool	4,860	290
St. Helens and Knowsley	2,460	150
Southport and Formby	1,160	40
South Sefton	2,070	140
Wirral	2,600	180
North Western Regional Health Authority		
Total	35,430	2,410
Lancaster	2,160	70
Blackpool Wyre and Fylde	2,380	120
Preston	2,390	150
Blackburn Hyndburn and Ribble Valley	2,620	160
Burnley Pendle and Rossendale	2,520	150
West Lancashire	930	50
Chorley and South Ribble	580	40
Bolton	1,720	180
Bury	1,000	90
North Manchester	2,250	120
Central Manchester	1,890	170
South Manchester	2,860	170
Oldham	1,410	130
Rochdale	1,100	110
Salford	3,160	
Stockport	2,030	
Tameside and Glossop	1,250	
Trafford	1,150	
Wigan	1,900	

[1] Figures include qualified nurses and midwives, lea unqualified staff but exclude agency staff.

[2] Figures are independently rounded to the nearest ten (time equivalents.

Ms. Harman: To ask the Secretary of State fo Services what is the number of whole-time equival nurses and *(b)* midwives each year since 1979; a will estimate the proportion of the change sin attributable to (i) the change in standard hours other reasons.

Mr. Newton *[holding answer 14 December 198* information is given in the table.

NHS nursing and midwifery staff[1 2 3] at 30 September—in wholetime equivalents (WTE)

Year	Nursing and midwifery	Nursing	Mi
1979	358,400	338,100	
1980	370,100	349,800	
1981	391,800	370,600	
1982	397,100	376,400	
1983	397,100	374,800	
1984	397,500	374,700	
1985	401,200	378,100	
1986	402,700	379,400	

[1] Includes qualified nurses and midwives, learners and u staff, and agency staff.

[2] Figures are independently rounded to nearest one whole-time equivalents.

[3] Figures have not been adjusted to take account of the in hours introduced during 1980-81. But it is estimated t 23,900 (WTE) of the increase in the combined total of nu midwifery staff is due to this reduction. The balance of 30,3 is for additional service provision.

Hospital and Community Health Service

Sir Barney Hayhoe: To ask the Secretary of S Social Services whether he will publish in tabular f the four Thames regions jointly and separat comparable information given for HCHS current in his Department's evidence to the Social Servic Committee about trends in actual and expenditure in health services earlier in the curre

Mr. Newton *[holding answer 15 December 198* table provided in the Department's evidence to th Services Select Committee is drawn fro Government's public expenditure survey d Directly comparable information in terms of exp by individual health authorities is not available.

An analysis of trends in expenditure in the regions over the period 1982-83 to 1986-87 is give table. Expenditure figures for 1987-88 will not be a until after the end of the financial year.

Thames Regions: Trends in actual expenditure on hospital and community health services

	1982-83	1983-84	1984-85	1985-86	1986-8
North West Thames					
Net spending (£ million)	624·6	666·3	691·6	719·6	789·
Charges (£ million)	8·6	9·1	9·6	9·2	8·
Total spending (£ million)	633·2	665·4	701·2	728·8	777·
Increase (per cent.)	—	5·1	5·4	3·9	6·
Inflation etc in service (per cent.)	—	5·1	5·8	5·2	6·
Change in purchasing power (per cent.)	—	0·0	−0·4	−1·2	−0·
Change in real terms (per cent.)	—	0·5	0·9	−2·0	3·
Cash releasing cost improvements					
new (£ million)	—	—	10·6	14·4	15·
recurrent (£ million)	—	—	10·6	24·2	39·
increase (per cent.) new cost improvements	—	—	1·5	1·9	2·
Margin available for service development in year (per cent.)	—	0·0	1·1	0·7	1·
North East Thames					
Net spending (£ million)	788·9	829·2	869·2	902·8	986·
Charges (£ million)	11·7	12·0	12·2	11·6	11·
Total spending (£ million)	800·7	841·1	881·3	914·2	976·
Increase (percentage)	—	5·1	4·8	3·7	6·
Inflation etc. in service (percentage)	—	5·1	5·8	5·2	8·
Change in purchasing power (percentage)	—	0·0	−1·0	−1·4	−0·
Change in real terms (percentage)	—	0·4	0·4	−2·2	3·
Cash releasing cost improvements					
new (£ million)	—	—	11·7	17·2	16·
recurrent (£ million)	—	—	11·7	27·8	45·
increase (percentage)—new cost improvements	—	—	1·4	1·8	1·
Margin available for service development in year (percentage)	—	0·0	0·4	0·4	1·
South East Thames					
Net spending (£ million)	691·3	729·7	762·1	797·9	847·
Charges (£ million)	9·2	9·7	10·0	9·6	9·
Total spending (£ million)	700·4	739·4	772·1	807·5	857·
Increase (percentage)	—	6·6	4·4	4·6	8·
Inflation etc. in service (percentage)	—	5·1	5·8	5·2	6·
Change in purchasing power (percentage)	—	0·4	−1·3	−0·6	−0·
Change in real terms (percentage)	—	0·9	0·0	−1·4	3·
Cash releasing cost improvements					
new (£ million)	—	—	14·0	14·3	12·
recurrent (£ million)	—	—	14·0	29·0	43·
increase (percentage)—new cost improvements	—	—	1·9	1·8	1·
Margin available for service developments in year (percentage)	—	0·4	0·6	1·2	0·
South West Thames					
Net spending (£ million)	525·7	554·0	580·9	603·8	645·
Charges (£ million)	4·7	5·1	5·4	4·5	4·
Total spending (£ million)	530·4	559·1	586·3	608·3	650·
Increase (per cent.)	—	5·4	4·9	3·8	6·
Inflation etc. in service (per cent.)	—	5·1	5·8	5·2	6·
Change in purchasing power (per cent.)	—	0·3	−0·9	−1·4	0·
Change in real terms (per cent.)	—	0·8	0·4	−2·2	3·
Cash releasing cost improvements					
new (£ million)	—	—	6·9	8·5	10·
recurrent (£ million)	—	—	6·9	15·0	25·
increase (per cent.)—new cost improvements	—	—	1·2	1·3	1·
Margin available for service development in year (per cent.)	—	0·3	0·3	−0·1	1·
Thames Regions					
Net spending (£ million)	2,880·5	2,769·2	2,803·8	3,024·0	3,227·
Charges (£ million)	34·2	35·9	37·1	34·8	33·
Total spending (£ million)	2,664·7	2,805·1	2,940·9	3,058·8	3,261·

	1982-83	1983-84	1984-85	1985-86
Increase (per cent.)	—	5·3	4·8	4·0
Inflation etc. in service (per cent.)	—	5·1	5·8	5·2
Change in purchasing power (per cent.)	—	0·2	−0·9	−1·1
Change in real terms (per cent.)	—	0·6	0·4	−1·9
Cash releasing cost improvements				
new (£ million)	—	—	43·2	64·3
recurrent (£ million)	—	—	43·2	95·8
increase (per cent.)—new cost improvements	—	—	1·5	1·7
Margin available for service development in year (per cent.)	—	0·2	0·6	0·6
Change in GDP deflator	—	4·60	4·40	8·04

Notes:
Income and expenditure figures are based on health authorities' summarised accounts; figures for 1986-87 are provisional.
Real terms growth has been calculated using the Gross Domestic Product deflator.

Ancillary Staff

Ms Harman: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) if he will give, for each year since 1979, the average number of whole-time equivalent ancillary staff employed per unrestricted principal in general practice in England and Wales;

(2) if he will give the total and a breakdown for each family practitioner committee, for the last full year for which figues are available of *(a)* the average number of whole-time equivalent ancillary staff per unrestricted principal in general practice and *(b)* the number of unrestricted principals in general practice who employ less than their full entitlement under the ancillary staff scheme of two whole-time equivalent ancillary staff.

Mr. Newton *[holding answer 18 December 1987]*: Information on employment of ancillary staff by individual doctors and on ancillary staff in general is not available in the form requested. In respect of ancillary staff in the ancillary staff scheme the information as at 1 October each year is as follows:

Date	*Ancillary Staff per Unrestricted Principal (Average for England and Wales*
1979	0·94
1980	0·96
1981	0·98
1982	1·01
1983	1·06
1984	1·10
1985	1·14
1986	1·20

Dalkon Shield

Mr. Ashley: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) when the Dalkon shield was withdrawn in Britain; when his Department circulated advice of its withdrawal; what action was recommended to them; what efforts were made to inform women using the shield of the risks of side effects; and whether there was any media advertising or leafleting in doctors' surgeries or family planning clinics to inform women;

(2) if he will estimate the number of women currently using the Dalkon shield;

(3) if, when a medically related device is withdrawn because of side effects, he will make it his policy to place advertisements in national newspapers to in term users of the withdrawal and to urge them their general practitioners;

(4) how many regional health authorities recall systems for women using the Dalkon what was the departmental advice to health a

(5) if he will make representations to A. H allow those making a late application for co because of damage from the Dalkon shield to cases considered;

(6) what discussions were held with A. H. manufacturer of the Dalkon shield, regardi advertising campaign warning against continu shield; and what conclusions were reached;

(7) when the Committee on Safety of Medic him to approve the use of the Dalkon shield; was taken by his Department when the withdrawn from the United States market whose initiative it was withdrawn in Britain; a make a statement.

Mr. Newton *[holding answer 11 January* Dalkon shield was voluntarily withdra manufacturer, A. H. Robins, from the Unite market in July 1974 immediately after similar United States of America. The manufacture doctors of the withdrawal. Such devices had time been made subject to licensing control Medicines Act and therefore the Committee Medicines was not required to advise on app

I understand that, as a result of its investig United States, the Food and Drugs Administr insist on withdrawal of the Dalkon shield fro States market.

The 1974 handbook of contraceptive practi GPs and family planning doctors advised ann checks for users of intra-uterine devices gener Department did not consider that it was neces specific guidance or to undertake publicity NHS.

In 1980 and 1985, the manufacturers again doctors about the tracing of women still fit device and in 1985 the Committee on Safety o in an issue of "Current Problems" sent to referred to the possible risks of over-extende Dalkon shield, as with any other IUD, and manufacturer's advice for removal in case shield was still being worn. Advice sou

Department at that time from leading medical bodies, indicated that the number of women still using the device was likely to be very small.

In 1985 the manufacturers had discussions with Ministers about their plans for publicising the need for women still using the device to see their doctors. They placed advertisements in the women's press.

In 1986, at the direction of the United States District Court of Virginia, the manufacturers publicised, in the United Kingdom and other countries, the need to file any claims in connection with Dalkon shield by 30 April 1986, the date set by the court.

It would not be appropriate for the Government to intervene in a matter of litigation. Late claims are a matter for the courts and no guidance was issued to health authorities on this matter. I am aware, however, of initiatives taken over a number of years in one regional health authority, West Midlands, to recall the shield and latterly to advise about claims.

The Government's general position if side effe medical devices are reported is that the action wh needed will be considered in the light of the par circumstances of each case.

Nurses

22. **Mr. Robert G. Hughes:** To ask the Secret State for Social Services when he expects to recei report on nurses' pay and conditions in London.

Mr. Newton *[holding answer 12 January 198* assume my hon. Friend is referring to the review of n services in London commissioned by the National H Service management board. The report of the study is now being finalised for submission in evidence nurses' pay review body.

Written Answers to Questions

Thursday 14 January 1988

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Diplomatic Passports

Mr. Janner: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether he will introduce diplomatic passports for United Kingdom diplomats; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Eggar: There are no immediate plans to introduce diplomatic passports but a joint Home Office/Foreign and Commonwealth Office working group is at present studying the question.

Mr. Janner: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what information he has as to which nations do and which do not issue diplomatic passports to their diplomatic staff; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Eggar: I am not aware of any country, other than the United Kingdom, which does not issue diplomatic passports to its diplomatic staff overseas.

Cyprus

Mr. Hardy: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what payments have been made to the Government of Cyprus in each of the last three years *(a)* in total, *(b)* as aid and *(c)* in respect of the use of the sovereign bases.

Mrs. Chalker: The information is as follows:

	Financial Year 1984-85	*Financial Year 1985-86*	*Financial Year 1986-87*
(a)	1,578,143	1,568,326	1,377,547
(b)	1,578,143	1,568,326	1,377,547
(c)	Nil	Nil	Nil

The sovereign base areas are sovereign Briti and no payment is made in respect of their use. given for aid include aid provided by the Development Administration and the Fo Commonwealth Office. They also include payn to individuals under Government arrange training and scholarships.

Falkland Islands

Dr. Marek: To ask the Secretary of State f and Commonwealth Affairs, pursuant to his an hon. Member for Wrexham on 11 January, if the reasons as to why the terms of the cont which the renewable resources assessment Imperial college, London provides scientific ad Falkland Islands Government are commerciall tial; and at whose suggestion they were made c

Mr. Eggar: The terms of the contract negotiated between the Falkland Islands Gover the renewable resources assessment group and to the approval of the Islands' Executive Co normal commercial practice for details of c remain confidential to the parties concerned.

"Britain—An Official Handbook"

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State f and Commonwealth Affairs what was th preparing "Britain 1988—An Official Handb how many copies have been printed.

Mr. Eggar: 17,500 copies of the handbook printed by Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 10, Central Office of Information on behalf of the F Commonwealth Office and 6,721 sale copies. and production costs are estimated to total £1 Majesty's Stationery Office's production recovered from sales.

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State f and Commonwealth Affairs what was the publi of "Britain—An Official Handbook" in 197 succeeding year; and how many copies were each year.

Mr. Eggar: The information requested is g table:

	Publication date	*Total print run*	*Number of Her Majesty's Stationery Office sale copies*	*COI copies*
Britain 1979	23 January 1979	21,000	10,250	10,750
Britain 1980	29 February 1980	18,370	9,750	8,620
Britain 1981	6 March 1981	17,500	7,645	9,855
Britain 1982	23 February 1982	17,500	7,880	9,620
Britain 1983	14 February 1983	18,400	7,580	10,820
Britain 1984	29 May 1984	23,000	6,980	[1]16,020
Britain 1985	6 February 1985	17,600	7,480	10,120
Britain 1986	2 January 1986	17,750	7,188	10,562
Britain 1987	2 January 1987	17,750	7,348	10,402
Britain 1988	6 January 1988	17,500	6,721	10,779

[1]Includes 5,000 copies of a special edition prepared for distribution at the London Economic Summit.

ENERGY

Radioactive Waste

Mr. Matthew Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what are the estimated volumes of radioactive waste likely to be produced by a commercial fusion reactor in terms of cubic metres per gigawatt (e) year.

Mr. Michael Spicer: I am advised by the United Kingdom Atomic Energy Authority that a commercial fusion power reactor of the type now envisaged might produce 10-100 cu m of radioactive waste per gigawatt (e) year. This volume is similar to that produced by a fission reactor of similar volume, but its radioactivity reduces more quickly with time.

Fast Breeder Reactor Programme

Mr. Wallace: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy when national representatives of the European fast reactor collaboration programme last met; and what subjects were discussed.

Mr. Michael Spicer: Representatives of the utilities, the design companies and the R and D organisations involved in the European fast reactor collaboration meet frequently and discuss a wide range of fast reactor issues.

Renewable Energy

Mr. Speller: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy if he will give details of past and current spending proposals for renewable energy research and development supported by his Department over the last five years.

Mr. Michael Spicer: My Department's expenditure on renewable energy research and development over the last five years is as follows:

	£ million
1982-83	14·7
1983-84	11·7
1984-85	14·9
1985-86	13·2
1986-87	12·0
1987-88	[1]14·4

[1] Estimated.

Note: These figures include expenditure on "waste as a fuel" projects under the Energy Efficiency Office demonstration scheme.

ATTORNEY-GENERAL

County Courts

Mr. David Nicholson: To ask the Attorney-General what changes in staffing there have been since 1983 in the county courts of *(a)* Bristol, *(b)* Exeter, *(c)* Yeovil and *(d)* Taunton.

The Attorney-General: Since 1983 the number of staff at the county courts at Bristol, Yeovil and Taunton have increased from 81 to 82, 19 to 20½ and 13½ to 14 respectively. The number of staff at Exeter remains unchanged. It is intended by the end of January 1988 to increase the staffing levels at Bristol, Exeter and Yeovil by two additional members of staff and at Taunton by one additional member of staff.

Mr. David Nicholson: To ask th
what representations he has received
log of cases before the county courts
Exeter, *(c)* Yeovil and *(d)* Taunton.

The Attorney-General: During the
Lord Chancellor's Department has rec
tions concerning delays in listing cas
court and one concerning delays in list
court. None was received in relation to

Divorce

Mr. Watts: To ask the Attorney-G
defended divorce proceedings in eac
years for which figures are available b
to *(a)* male defendants and *(b)* fema

The Attorney-General: The inform
follows:

	Male Respondents
1984-85	1,815
1985-86	1,797
1986-87	1,442

Mr. Watts: To ask the Attorney
divorce proceedings in each of the
which figures are available were *(a)*
uncontested.

The Attorney-General: Figures for
for which full data are available (198
in the table.

England and Wales

	198
Uncontested decrees nisi granted	149,18
High Court defended divorce cases disposed of by trial	50

Land Registry

Mr. Barry Field: To ask the Att
was the cost of the Land Registry ser
last five years in *(a)* England, *(b)* Wa
(d) by county.

The Attorney-General: The follow
England and Wales, the expenditure i
Land Registry services; and for Scotl
involved in providing the services of t
Registers (about 97 per cent. of which
Register of Sasines and the Land R
Figures are not kept for England a
nor for individual counties in E
Scotland. Such figures could be
inordinate expense.

	England and Wales £ million
1982-83	66·8
1983-84	75·6
1984-85	82·4
1985-86	91·0
1986-87	102·2

Both the Land Registry and the Department of the Registers are self-financing, expenditure being fully offset by income from fees.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Companies Act Investigations

Mr. Sedgemore: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster (1) how many investigations have been made under section 444 of the Companies Act 1985 and its predecessor, section 173 of the Companies Act 1948, in each of the last five years;

(2) how many civil servants at the Department of Trade and Industry, and how many others, are currently concerned in carrying out investigations under section 444 of the Companies Act 1985;

(3) what criteria he uses in deciding whether to hold an investigation under section 444 of the Companies Act 1985 into the ownership of shares in or debentures of a company.

Mr. Maude: The criteria for an investigation under section 444 of the Companies Act 1985 is that it appears to the Secretary of State there is good reason to investigate the ownership of any shares or debentures of a company, and that it is unnecessary to appoint inspectors for the purpose. The section empowers the Secretary of State or his officers to make the investigations; it does not empower him to appoint outsiders for this purpose. No investigations are currently in progress. Information sought about previous investigations cannot be provided without undue expense.

Sumrie Clothes plc

Mr. Sedgemore: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster when the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry received the report of his inspectors into the affairs of Mr. Michael Hepker, Sumrie Clothes plc and related matters; if he will make the report public; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Maude: The inspectors' report on Sumrie Clothes plc has not been received. When it is, a decision on publication will be taken.

Furniture Foam

Mr. Teddy Taylor: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, pursuant to the statement by his Under-Secretary of State on 11 January, why he requires to seek the prior approval of the EEC Commission before implementing his proposals to restrict the use of foams in furniture in the interests of safety.

Mr. Maude: In accordance with directive EC 83/189 on the provision of information on technical standards and regulations, member states of the European Community submit new proposals to the Commission of the European Community in draft. This provides other member states and the Commission with an opportunity to comment on the proposals from the point of view of any possible conflict with proposals for EC legislation, and in case the proposed measure could constitute a new barrier to trade which could not be justified by reference to the need for protection of health and safety of consumers or workers. These established procedures will be followed in the case of the proposed regulations for improved fi domestic upholstered furniture. Although th has the power to prohibit the United Kin any regulations which it believes would b trade and can use the European Court to en it would be unlikely to do so in any c regulations would affect United Kingdom manufacturers alike, as these would.

Peckham Task Force

Ms. Harman: To ask the Chancellor o Lancaster how many jobs have been c Peckham task force in *(a)* its first 12 mont and *(b)* its second 12 months of operation; of those jobs have been filled by (i) you (ii) local people.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: Many north Peck projects create new jobs directly. Other j indirectly by businesses helped by task fo

- jobs in firms assisted by development fund;
- jobs created in voluntary or stat a result of task force assistance;
- jobs gained for residents as a r courses facilitated by the task f

In addition, the broad range of work be by the task force to increase skills and ent north Peckham residents feeds throu confident and employable people who c and hold down jobs in the wider London

It would involve disproportionate cost jobs resulting directly and indirectly from task force's work, and be misleading to in that can be readily counted.

Ms. Harman: To ask the Chancellor o Lancaster how much has been spent by th force; and in relation to any expenditure o estates have been the recipients of work p the task force.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: Since the Gove Peckham task force was set up in 1986, so of Government funds have been committe projects benefitting the residents of the are £1 million has come from funds availabl and £1·3 million from other Government addition, some £250,000 has been co private sector and £130,000 by the local a which have benefited from task force Peckham estate, where the task force improved lighting and the refurbishment Southwark adult education institute, Grove estate, on which projects to est facilities and to convert unused garages t small firms are in hand.

Support for Innovation

Mr. Speed: To ask the Chancellor o Lancaster if he will make a statement o support for innovation schemes for projects.

Mr. Butcher: As my right hon. and lea the House during his statement on 12 J decided that research and development

stage of commercial exploitation should be the responsibility of the private sector. Therefore, the general schemes of single company support for innovation were closed to new applications at 18.00 hours on 12 January. Formal applications received before then will be appraised under the schemes as they existed previously. The schemes covered are support for innovation, the microelectronics industry support programme, support for software products support, and the fibre-optics and opto-electronics scheme.

Departmental Press and Public Relations

Mr. Cabom: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what proportion of his Department's 1987-88 expenditure on press and public relations will be devoted to the production of a video to promote a new corporate image of his Department.

Mr. Maude *[holding answer 11 January 1988]:* In the context of the new measures recently announced to the House, we have produced a short video to help with staff communications, as is now common in many organisations in both the public and private sectors. This video is mainly concerned with the Department's new policies and services although it does also mention the importance of the Department's image with the business community. The production cost of this video is approximately £17,000. The Department's expenditure on press and public relations in 1987-88 is expected to be £1,123,000.

Mr. Cabom: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what plans he has to change the corporate image of his Department; and what costs will be involved on *(a)* new stationery, *(b)* uniforms and badges and *(c)* the change of vehicle logos.

Mr. Maude *[holding answer 11 January 1988]:* We have introduced new letterheads in the Department to replace a wider range of diverse styles which were previously in use. An expensive survey would be needed to identify the exact costs of redundant stationery including those held locally by secretaries and typing pools. We estimate the purchase cost of redundant stationery held in the central stationery stores to be approximately £5,000. However, this will be offset to a significant extent by using this stationery internally or in scrap pads. It is our intention that in due course the new style will be reflected in other areas such as uniform badges and on vehicles. Planning is still in hand for this process but in many cases we will phase in the changes as part of normal renewal and maintenance programmes.

PRIME MINISTER

Yorkshire

Q31. **Mr. Cryer:** To ask the Prime Minister when she next expects to pay an official visit to Yorkshire.

The Prime Minister: I have at present no plans to do so.

Winterbourne Houghton

Q47. **Mr. Nicholas Baker:** To ask the Prime Minister if she will pay an official visit to Winterbourne Houghton.

The Prime Minister: I have at present no plans to do so.

Taxation and Family Policy (Departmental Co-ordination)

Q59. **Mr. Shersby:** To ask the Prime Minister if she will make a statement on co-ordination between the relevant Departments responsible for taxation and family policy, with particular reference to eligibility for mortgage interest tax relief as it applies to married couples, unmarried couples cohabiting and groups of individuals buying the same house together.

The Prime Minister: All Government Departments take account of the effects of legislation on the family and there is proper co-ordination of their work on policy changes. Mortgage interest tax relief is the responsibility of my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer; the aspect to which my hon. Friend refers was discussed in the Chancellor's Green Paper "The Reform of Personal Taxation" published in March 1986 (Cmnd. 9756).

Tayside

Q71. **Mr. Bill Walker:** To ask the Prime Minister if she has any plans to visit Tayside.

The Prime Minister: I have at present no plans to do so.

Firearms Certificates

Mr. Teddy Taylor: To ask the Prime Minister if she will raise at the next meeting of the European Council the proposals by the Commission for the mutual recognition of firearms certificates; and if she will make a statement.

The Prime Minister: My hon. Friend is no doubt referring to the proposal for a Council directive on the control of the acquisition and possession of weapons. Member states must be free to carry out the checks necessary to preserve security and maintain law and order. We shall continue to make clear to other member states our belief that the proposal in its present form does not contain adequate safeguards to combat terrorism and limit the ability of criminals to acquire firearms illegally. As the proposal has yet to be formally discussed, it would not be appropriate to raise it at the next European Council.

Civil Service (Report)

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Prime Minister what consultation has taken place between Her Majesty's Government, the First Division Association, and the permanent secretaries, in their capacity as affected employees, over Sir Robin Ibbs's report on the Civil Service.

The Prime Minister: The report to which the hon. Gentleman refers is still under consideration. The unions will be consulted if any change in terms and conditions of service is contemplated.

Africa (Visit)

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Prime Minister if she will list all those who accompanied her on her recent visit to Africa; and what their duties were.

The Prime Minister: On my visit to Africa I was accompanied by four officials and 11 support staff. It would not be appropriate to list the names and duties of those who accompanied me.

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Prime Minister what was the cost of her recent visit to Africa; and if it was all met from public funds.

The Prime Minister: It is too soon to give precise information on the cost of this visit. A provisional estimate is £80,000. The cost was met from public funds.

Publicity

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Prime Minister which Minister is responsible for ensuring that the conventions governing the content of Government advertising and promotional materials are complied with.

The Prime Minister: Ministers in charge of Departments are responsible for ensuring that Government conventions on publicity and advertising are complied with.

Windscale Fire

Dr. Cunningham: To ask the Prime Minister if, pursuant to her reply of 11 January, *Official Report*, column *2*, she will list all those papers about the 1957 Windscale fire withheld from release under the terms of the Public Records Act.

The Prime Minister: It has been the practice of successive Administrations not to disclose the contents of closed records. The limited number of records concerned have been retained under section 3(4) of the Public Records Act 1958 or closed for longer than 30 years under section 5(1) of the Act in accordance with the established criteria.

Engagements

Mr. Stern: To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 14 January.

Mr. Adley: To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 14 January.

The Prime Minister: This morning I presided at a meeting of the Cabinet and had meetings with ministerial colleagues and others. In addition to my duties in the House I shall be having further meetings later today.

OVERSEAS DEVELOPMENT

Third World (Education Campaign)

Mr. Anthony Coombs: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether he has any plans to provide more funding for a public education campaign on Third world issues.

Mr. Chris Patten: I have decided to increase the Overseas Development Administration's annual grant to the Centre for World Development Education from £100,000 to £125,000 for the financial years 1988-89 and 1989-90. The Scottish Education and Action for Development also receives an annual grant of £6,000, and recently I agreed a contribution of £70,000 to the Council of Europe's public awareness campaign on north/south interdependence.

The widespread distribution to schools last year of our booklet "British Aid" is to be followed this year with the ODA's first video for schools on the aid programme.

ENVIRONMENT

Property Repossession

106. **Dr. Reid:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will provide the latest figures for property repossessions arising from mortgage default in 1987.

Mrs. Roe: The Building Societies Association has estimated that 21,950 properties in the United Kingdom were taken into possession by building societies in the year ending June 1987, 0·3 per cent. of the number of loans which were outstanding to the societies at the end of that period. It is estimated that 630 dwellings were taken into possession by English local authorities during the financial year 1985-86, the latest period for which an estimate is available. Corresponding information is not available from other lending institutions.

Severe Weather

Mr. Cummings: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he intends to make special financial arrangements to assist district councils in the county of Durham in the event of severe weather conditions during the winter.

Mr. Chope: I refer the hon. Member to the answer which I gave to the hon. Member for Liverpool, West Derby (Mr. Wareing) on 17 December 1987 at column *617*, and to my right hon. Friend's reply on 13 January 1988 to my hon. Friend the Member for Gravesham (Mr. Arnold).

Rating Reform

Mr. Battle: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what estimate he has of the proportion of households in England which will be liable to pay above average community charge which are households with below average incomes.

Mr. Howard: In order for a community charge to be larger than the average of £224, local authorities in that area would have to be spending at least £47 per adult more than the estimated cost of a standard level of service. I estimate that in England 16 per cent. of households have below average incomes and live in such areas. Many of that 16 per cent. may be entitled to a rebate. This estimate is necessarily subject to a margin of error.

Mr. Anderson: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what are the implications of the proposed community charge for premises in enterprise zones.

Mr. Howard: Non-domestic property in enterprise zones will continue to be exempt from rates during the life of the zone. We propose to provide for a special method of valuing properties in enterprise zones, so that, when the zone comes to an end, rateable values will discount any element of rent payments which reflect the benefit of the rates holiday.

Individuals living in enterprise zones presently pay domestic rates and will be liable for the community charge in the same way as everyone else.

Mr. Rooker: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will set out the detailed calculations for each local authority showing the assumptions about

numbers of poll tax payers whose incomes will lead to payment of rebates, which led him to give a figure of £1,500 million for payment of rebates in his speech of 16 December 1987, *Official Report*, column 1117.

Mr. Howard *[holding answer 11 January 1988]:* I refer the hon. Member to my reply to my right hon. Friend the Member for Aylesbury (Mr. Raison) on 8 December at columns *98-99*, for the basis on which my right hon. Friend made his estimate of a total rebate cost of £1,500 million.

It is not possible to make such estimates for individual local authorities since information about incomes at this level is available on a sample basis which is not adequate to make estimates at local level.

Supermarket Development (Nottingham)

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what representations he has received concerning the sale of land belonging to Nottingham city council for supermarket development without competing tenders being received; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Waldegrave: None. One letter of objection about a proposed superstore development at Hyson Green, Nottingham, addressed to the leader of the city council and signed by 10 persons has been copied to my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister.

Council House Sales

Mr. Butler: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment when he intends to introduce proposals to abolish the cash-flow provisions affecting the right to buy council homes.

Mr. Waldegrave: The White Paper "Housing: The Government's Proposals" proposed that the cost floor rule under the right to buy should be abolished. The responses are still under consideration.

Competitive Tendering

Mr. Hannam: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment whether local authorities will still be able to utilise the priority suppliers scheme under the arrangements for competitive tendering proposed in the Local Government Bill; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Chope: I refer my hon. Friend to the answer I gave him on 11 January.

Acid Rain

Mr. Wray: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what is the latest information about the deterioration of forests due to acid rain; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Moynihan: I refer the hon. Member to my reply of 18 December 1987, at column *795*, to the hon. Member for Carmarthen (Mr. Williams).

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what evidence he has of the percentage of the United Kingdom native tree species showing signs of acid rain die-back.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: I have been asked to reply.

The survey of forest health carried out by the Forestr Commission in 1987 included observations of oak, beec and Scots pine. The results are being analysed in relatio to levels and types of air pollution at each of the sites; n information is yet available to provide guidelines on th relationship between crown thinning and acid rain an other pollutants.

Treasure Trove

Mr. Barry Field: To ask the Secretary of State for th Environment whether he has any plans to review the la on treasure trove; and if he intends to issue a consultatio paper.

Mr. Moynihan: My right hon. Friend has bee reviewing the arrangements for reporting and recording o archeological finds generally. We plan to issue consultation paper shortly.

Tree Survey

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for th Environment what representations he has receive concerning the desirability of a nationwide tree survey and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Moynihan: I have not received any suc representations. However, annual surveys of forest healt are carried out by the Forestry Commission. Variou surveys have been carried out, or are being carried ou into the effects of the great storm on 16 October 1987, bu these are confined to the affected area in the south-east o England.

Car Exhaust Emissions

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for th Environment what proposals are being considered by hi Department for the reduction of emission of hydrocarbon and nitrous oxide from car exhausts.

Mr. Moynihan: As to standards which are already permitted within the European Community, I refer th hon. Member to my reply of 7 December, at column *20* to my hon. Friend the Member for Fulham (Mr Carrington). We expect proposals from the Commissio shortly to allow tighter standards of controls over smal cars.

Residuary Bodies

Mr. Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for th Environment if he will list the current emoluments to th chairmen and members of the residuary bodies for the fiv former metropolitan county residuary bodies.

Mr. Chope: The information is as follows:

Current remuneration (from 1 October 1987)

	£
Chairmen	
Greater Manchester Merseyside West Midlands	19,064
South Yorkshire Tyne and Wear West Yorkshire	17,330

	£
Members	
All members	6,107

Notes:

(i) One member of West Yorkshire residuary body receives a daily attendance allowance (currently £17·55) as an alternative to an annual salary.

(ii) Remuneration is subject to abatement, if applicable, in respect of public sector pension received.

Mr. Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list the numbers of meetings of each residuary body since 1 April 1987.

Mr. Chope: The number of full residuary body board meetings held during the period 1 April 1987 to 13 January 1988 was as follows:

Residuary body	*Number of full Board meetings*
London	34
Greater Manchester	9
Merseyside	18
South Yorkshire	9
Tyne and Wear	10
West Midlands	18
West Yorkshire	10

Local Income Tax

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for the Envoronment (1) if, further to his reply to the hon. Member for Pembroke (Mr. Bennett) of 16 November 1987, *Official Report*, columns *183-185*, he will publish in the *Official Report (a)* the number of income tax payers he has assumed were resident in each rating authority, *(b)* the average level of income he assumed each income tax payer was earning and *(c)* the total number of income tax payers in England, the average level of income they were earning and the source of his information;

(2) if, further to his answer to the hon. Member for Pembroke (Mr. Bennett) of 16 November 1987, *Official Report*, columns *183-185*, he will give the exact relationship he assumed between changes in expenditure by a local authority and changes in grant when producing exemplifications of local income tax rates for each authority.

Mr. Howard *[holding answer 13 January 1988]:* The assumption about the relationship between expenditure and grant was described in the note covering the exemplifications placed in the Library on 12 November. Full equalisation of taxable resources was assumed. To calculate exemplifications on this basis it is unnecessary to make assumptions about the number of income tax payers or the average income, either for England as a whole or for each district and borough.

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment, further to his answer to the hon. Member for Pembroke (Mr. Bennett) of 16 November 1987, *Official Report*, columns *183-85*, on local income tax, he will publish the figures he assumed for England for *(a)* the total amount of Government grant, *(b)* what part of Government grant was equivalent to the total paid in rate rebates and *(c)* the level of the national non-domestic rate in pence to two decimal places.

Mr. Howard *[holding answer 13 January 1988]:* A number of assumptions were made about such matters as the total amount to be raised from LIT, rebates, balances and the yield of an extra 1p income tax. I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave on 23 November to the hon. Member for Southwark and Bermondsey (Mr. Hughes). It was unnecessary to make any additional assumptions about the total amount of Government grant. The Government's assumption about the level of the NNDR has been that, on the basis of actual poundages in 1987-88, it would be 224·11p.

Plutonium

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what is his policy on the transport by air of plutonium, plutonium oxide or plutonium nitrate produced at the Sellafield reprocessing plant; and whether he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: I have been asked to reply.

The transport of all radioactive materials by air must comply fully with the national and international regulations governing this type of transport. The International Atomic Energy Agency is about to undertake a review of this particular issue, to decide whether any regulatory changes are required.

Fuller Peiser

Mr. Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list all consultancies carried out by the London-based agents Fuller Peiser since 1983 on behalf of his Department.

Mr. Chope: The Department is currently using Fuller Peiser as agents for the disposal of some of its property in London. I am not aware that the Department has placed other work with the firm since 1983.

Mr. Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list all asset sales by the Department or its agencies managed by the London-based agents Fuller Peiser since 1983.

Mr. Chope: The Property Services Agency is currently using Fuller Peiser as agents for the disposal of some of its property in London. No central record is kept of commissions by the Department's agencies, but we are aware that the firm was also retained as agents by Aycliffe and Peterlee new town development corporation to carry out the marketing for the disposal of the industrial assets of the Corporation.

TRANSPORT

Lenton Triangle Junction, Nottingham

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what representations he has received on the closure by British Rail of a part of the Lenton Triangle junction, Nottingham; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. David Mitchell: My right hon. Friend has received representations from the hon. Members for Bolsover (Mr. Skinner) and for Nottingham, North. It would not be appropriate to comment on these in view of his quasi-judicial position.

Nottingham-Bulwell-Mansfield Railway

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what representations he has received about the opening of a railway line from Nottingham through Bulwell to Mansfield; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. David Mitchell: My right hon. Friend has received representations from the hon. Members for Bolsover (Mr. Skinner) and for Nottingham, North. As this possibility of reopening a passenger service between Nottingham and Mansfield through Bulwell is relevant to British Rail's proposal to close part of the Lenton Triangle junction, it would not be appropriate for my right hon. Friend to comment in view of his quasi-judicial position.

M1 (Traffic Flow)

Mr. Butler: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport whether he has any plans to improve the speed of traffic flow along the M1 during carriageway repairs.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: We are always looking for ways of improving traffic flow, consistent with safety of road users and the work force at roadwork sites. We aim to minimise delays by careful programming, improved traffic management and greater use of lane rental contracts which give an incentive for early completion.

Settle to Carlisle Railway

Mr. Curry: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what information he has as to the financial contribution to the running costs and maintenance of the Settle to Carlisle railway service which has been provided by North Yorkshire county council in 1987 and proposed for subsequent years.

Mr. David Mitchell: I understand that North Yorkshire county council is making no financial contribution to the maintenance and running costs of the Settle to Carlisle railway service in the financial year 1987-88, but is contributing £750 for publicity. I am awaiting confirmation of the council's position.

Mr. Curry: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what information he has as to the financial contribution to the running costs and maintenance of the Settle to Carlisle railway provided by Cumbria county council in 1987 and as to what contribution is envisaged by Cumbria county council over the next two years.

Mr. David Mitchell: I understand that Cumbria county council is presently contributing £27,000 to support services on the Settle to Carlisle railway, and that that level is unlikely to change in the next two years, provided the line stays open for British Rail services. I also understand that the county council is contributing £2,000 for publicity in 1987-88. I am awaiting confirmation of the council's position.

Coach Drivers

Sir Anthony Grant: To ask the Secretary of State Transport if he has any plans to change the conditi regarding the health of a coach driver before he obtain public service vehicle licence.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: The conditions, which are set in "Medical Aspects of Fitness to Drive" (published by Medical Commission on Accident Prevention), are k under regular review by the Secretary of State's honor medical advisory panels. Compliance is monito through an initial medical examination and regu mandatory checks for all PSV drivers from the age of

Pedal Cyclists

Sir Anthony Grant: To ask the Secretary of State Transport how many persons have been killed or inju by pedal cyclists in each of the last five years.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: Statistics are available only pedestrians injured by pedal cyclists. They are as follo

Pedestrians injured by pedal cyclists: Great Britain: 1982-86

	Killed	*Seriously injured*	*Slightly injured*	*T*
1982	11	231	565	
1983	8	220	570	
1984	8	239	556	
1985	10	168	423	
1986	8	155	419	

Motorways (Hunting)

Mr. Tony Lloyd: To ask the Secretary of State Transport what advice he gives concerning hunt adjacent to motorways; and if he will make a stateme

Mr. Peter Bottomley: We are not aware of any spec safety problems that this is posing or of ignorance on part of hunting interests about the dangers and need vigilance. The attention of the Fox Hounds Associati has been drawn to this in the past.

A30 (Honiton to Exeter)

Mr. Maxwell-Hyslop: To ask the Secretary of State Transport why his decision on the route of any A improvement between Honiton and Exeter has not been announced; and what decision he has now reach

Mr. Peter Bottomley: We are considering the respo to the public consultation held last year and other relev factors. We shall announce our preferred route as soon we have completed this.

Travel Statistics

Mr. Roy Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State Transport if he will show the most recent information the percentage of passenger journeys made by transp mode for each region in Great Britain.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: The following information available from the 1985-86 national travel survey:

Percentage of journeys (all journeys over 1 mile)

Region	Car or van	Bus or coach	Rail	Other public modes	Other private modes	All modes
Northern	63	20	1	2	14	100
Yorkshire and Humberside	62	20	1	1	16	100
East Midlands	72	12	—	1	15	100
East Anglia	75	7	—	1	17	100
South East excluding London	77	6	3	1	13	100
London	60	15	11	1	13	100
South West	76	7	—	1	16	100
West Midlands	72	12	1	1	14	100
North West	66	16	1	2	14	100
Wales	71	13	1	1	14	100
Scotland	59	21	1	2	17	100
Great Britain	69	13	3	1	14	100

Other public modes include coach tours and excursions, taxis and minicabs, air journeys (within Great Britain), and other public modes.

Other private modes include motor cycles, scooters and mopeds, bicycles, other private modes and walking (over 1 mile).

Mr. Roy Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if, ignoring journeys to and from work of under 25 miles, he will show the most recent information available on the percentage of journeys made by (i) car-van, (ii) bus-coach, (iii) rail, (iv) aircraft and (v) other over distances of 25 to 50 miles, 50 to 100 miles, 100 to 150 miles, 150 to 200 miles, 200 to 250 miles and over 250 miles, respectively.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: The following information is available from the 1985-86 national travel survey:

Percentage of journeys

	Length of Journey					
	25 to 50 miles	50 to 100 miles	100 to 150 miles	150 to 200 miles	200 to 250 miles	Over 250 miles
Car or van	82	80	81	75	61	48
Bus or coach	5	7	9	9	12	19
Rail	11	10	7	10	21	20
Other Public Modes	1	2	2	3	4	12
Other Private Modes	1	1	1	3	2	1
All Modes of Transport	100	100	100	100	100	100

Other public modes include coach tours and excursions, taxis and minicabs, air journeys (within Great Britain) and other public modes. It is not possible separately to identify air journeys.

Other private modes include motor cycles, scooters and mopeds, bicycles and other private modes.

Motor Cycles (Eye Protectors) Regulations

Mr. Waller: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what information he has as to the availability of eye protectors prescribed in the Motor Cycles (Eye Protectors) Regulations 1985.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: The supply of visors has improved through new manufacturers' products significantly increasing the numbers available. A drop in demand was reported in December but not all motor cyclists may yet have approved eye protectors. I urge all those riders who are in such a position to obtain them well before 1 April 1988.

Mr. Waller: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what representations he has received from the Association of Chief Police Officers concerning possible difficulties in enforcing the Motor Cycles (Eye Protectors) Regulations at the present time.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: The Association of Chief Police Officers expressed concern about the availability of approved eye protectors. This has led it to recommend that riders should for the time being be warned rather than prosecuted for not having approved eye protectors.

King's Cross Fire

Mr. Bowis: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if, following the preliminary hearing of 2 December 1987, he is in a position to announce where and when the formal investigation into the King's Cross underground fire will be held.

Mr. Channon: The formal investigation into the King's Cross underground fire will be held before Mr. Desmond Fennell OBE QC and will begin on Monday, 1 February 1988 at 10.30 am in Westminster Central hall, Storey's gate, London SW1H 9NU.

A second one-day preliminary meeting devoted to technical matters concerning the King's Cross underground fire, will be held before Mr. Desmond Fennell OBE QC, at 10.30 am on Monday, 25 January 1988 in Church house, Great Smith street, London SW1.

Both meetings will be held in public. Advertisements will be placed in the press.

Dock Labour Scheme

Mr. Nicholas Bennett: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will detail the current administrative costs

of the dock labour scheme and the individual administrative costs of each local board in each of the past 10 years.

Mr. Patrick Nicholls: I have been asked to reply.

I refer my hon. Friend to the income and expenditure account which is published in the annual report and accounts for the National Dock Labour Board and in the notes to the accounts which follow. The latest published figures, for the year ended 27 December, 1986, show that the board's management levy was maintained at 2¼ per cent. of the total leviable wage bill, and amounted to £4·3 million. Administrative costs for individual local boards are not made public.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Medomsley Prison

Ms. Armstrong: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether work on the new kitchen block at the premises of the former Her Majesty's prison at Medomsley, Derwentshire, has been completed.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: No. The building element of this work is nearing completion, but the kitchen equipment will not be installed pending a decision on the future role of this establishment.

Ms. Armstrong: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what plans he has for the recently closed prison at Medomsley; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: Her Majesty's prison Medomsley, originally a detention centre, was temporarily brought into use as a category C training prison in June last year. The establishment was closed in October and the staff deployed to areas of pressing need in other prisons. The establishment is presently being surveyed with a view to assessing whether, and how, it should be redeveloped. A decision on Medomsley's future will be made when the results of the survey have been evaluated.

Prisons (Drugs)

Mr. Butler: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will initiate a review of the administration of drugs in Her Majesty's penal establishments.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: No. This was one of the matters reviewed by the Social Services Committee in its Third Report in the 1985-86 Session. The use of medicines at all establishments continues to be monitored by the Director of Prison Medical Services.

Video Recordings Act 1984

Mr. Wallace: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will state the number of convictions obtained for offences under the Video Recordings Act 1984 in respect of each year during which the Act has been in force.

Mr. John Patten: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to my hon. Friend the Member for Lancashire, West (Mr. Hind) on 27 November at columns *365-66*.

Arson (Wales)

Mr. Ieuan Wyn Jones: To ask the Secretary of the Home Department how many alleged ar incidents of arson at holiday and second homes h dealt with by police forces in Wales since 1979.

Mr. John Patten: Information in the form rec not collected centrally.

Drug Addiction (Report)

Mr. Corbett: To ask the Secretary of Stat Home Department whether he will place a co drug addiction research initiative report, comp by Dr. Virginia Berridge, in the Library.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: No. It is open to Dr. Be publish the report or make it otherwise availab wishes. The public bodies (including the Hom which jointly funded the report have no plan publication.

Television Licences

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for t Department what is his Department's policy on t of unexpired television licences of deceased holde next of kin.

Mr. Renton: Refunds are available when tw are held of which one was obtained in error unexpired monochrome licence is surrendered fo licence; and when a licence is surrendered withi of its issue (or due date of issue in cases of ren have no plans to extend these arrangements.

Prison Population

Mr. Bermingham: To ask the Secretary of Sta Home Department what was the prison popul England and Wales on the latest date available.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: On 8 January the prison p in England and Wales was 47,271, excluding 557 held in police cells.

Mr. Bermingham: To ask the Secretary of Sta Home Department what was the averag population in England and Wales for 1987.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: The provisional average p of prison department establishments in 1987 w 48,400. The provisional average population held cells was about 530.

Mr. Bermingham: To ask the Secretary of Sta Home Department what was the prison population for England and Wales for the l available.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: On 30 November 1987, date for which reliable information is availab 10,890 untried or convicted unsentenced priso held in prison department establishments in En Wales. A further 912 prisoners, many of whom remand, were held in police cells. By 11 January date for which information on prisoners in pol available, the number was 676.

Mr. Bermingham: To ask the Secretary of Sta Home Department what was the average priso population during 1987.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: The information requested will not be available for another month.

The average population of untried or convicted unsentenced prisoners in prison department establishments in England and Wales for the first 11 months of 1987 was about 10,640. Over the same period an average of 535 prisoners, many of whom would have been on remand, were held in police cells.

Mr. Bermingham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what was the certified normal accommodation and the actual population on the latest date available for (1) Her Majesty's prison, Bedford, (2) Her Majesty's prison, Birmingham, (3) Her Majesty's prison, Cardiff, (4) Her Majesty's prison, Doncaster, (5) Her Majesty's prison, Exeter, (6) Her Majesty's prison, Leeds, (7) Her Majesty's prison, Leicester, (8) Her Majesty's prison, Lewes, (9) Her Majesty's prison, Lincoln, (10) Her Majesty's prison, Liverpool, (11) Her Majesty's prison, Manchester and (12) Her Majesty's prison, Reading.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: On 8 January the certified normal accommodation and populations of the prison service establishments listed were as follows:

Establishment	*Certified normal accommodation*	*Population*
Bedford	176	346
Birmingham	592	1,135
Cardiff	340	424
Doncaster[1]	720	—
Exeter	310	478
Leeds	642	1,381
Leicester	200	435
Lewes	364	551
Lincoln	359	678
Liverpool	968	1,236
Manchester	969	1,565
Reading	178	323

[1] Planned to open in 1993.

Probation and Community Service

Mr. Bermingham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what was the weekly cost of supervising a person on probation and community service in England and Wales for the latest date available.

Mr. John Patten: In the financial year 1985-86 the weekly cost of supervision by the probation service in England and Wales was about £15 for a person on a probation order and about £13 for a person serving a community service order. These are estimates which depend on assumptions about the allocation of the time of probation officers and are approximate. The figures are derived from those published in "Probation Statistics, England and Wales" (table 12.3 of the latest issue, 1986), copies of which are in the Library.

Mr. Bermingham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what was the weekly cost of supervising a person in a probation hostel in England and Wales for the latest date available.

Mr. John Patten: The estimated weekly cost of accommodating a person net of residents' contributions in a probation/bail hostel in England and Wales in 1986-87, was £155·25.

Crime Statistics

Mr. Bermingham: To ask the Secretary of State for t Home Department (1) how many persons convicted of indictable offence in England and Wales in 1986 by magistrates' court had committed an offence whi involved violence;

(2) what percentage of persons sentenced to a period immediate imprisonment in 1986 in England and Wa had been sentenced to a period of six months or less.

Mr. John Patten: In 1986, there were 34,647 perso found guilty of violence against the person, sexual offen and robbery. There were 42,743 persons sentenced at courts to immediate imprisonment, of whom 49 per ce received sentences of six months or less. This informati can be found in table S1.1(A) of "Criminal Statisti England and Wales, Supplementary Tables 1986, volu 1" and in table 7.28 and 7.29 of "Criminal Statisti England and Wales 1986", (Cm. 233), respectively, cop of which are in the Library.

Fine Defaulters

Mr. Bermingham: To ask the Secretary of State for t Home Department how many persons in 1986 w committed to prison in lieu of default in payment of a fi

Mr. Douglas Hogg: The information available centra is that in 1986 about 19,200 persons were received i prison department establishments in England and Wa following committal in default of payment of a fine. T figures appear in the annual publication "Prison Statist England and Wales" (table 7.3, of the 1986 issue, C 210), copies of which are in the Library.

Prisoners (Cost)

Mr. Bermingham: To ask the Secretary of State for Home Department what was the weekly cost of keep a person in prison in England and Wales for the latest d available.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: Information on the costs of runn the prison service is published in the annual reports on work of the prison department, copies of which are in Library. The report for 1986-87 (Cm. 246) shows that average weekly cost of keeping a person in a pe establishment in England and Wales in that year was £ (see appendix 6, table D).

Mr. Khurshid Ahmad Malik

Mr. Teddy Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Home Department if his Department has been able return to Mr. Khurshid Ahmad Malik the Indian passp which was deposited with the Department in Septem and acknowledged on 21 October under the refere M565200, to enable him to return to his homeland af receiving private medical treatment, details of which h been sent to the Under-Secretary of State by Dr. S. Malik of Southend on Sea.

Mr. Renton: I regret that we have not been able to so. As Mr. Malik was told in the immigrat department's letter to him on 6 January, an exhaust search has not traced his passport. I acknowledge that t has caused Mr. Malik considerable inconvenience a extend the Department's apologies to him. The le

recently sent him may, as it indicated, assist him in obtaining an emergency travel document from the Indian high commission. If the high commission is unable to issue a travel document we will consider what further action we are able to take.

I can assure my hon. Friend that strenuous efforts to locate the missing passport will continue. Staff are trained to treat passports and other documents with care and the incidence of loss of passports within the immigration department, which receives some 500,000 items of correspondence each year, many of which contain passports, is very small.

Remand

Mr. Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what had been the longest time a person had been held in prison awaiting trial as of 31 October.

Mr. Douglas Hogg *[holding answer 17 December 1987]:* According to such information as is held centrally, the longest period a person has been held in custody on 31 October awaiting or during his trial was just over 15 months. The trial was completed on 10 December 1987.

SCOTLAND

Rating Reform

Mr. Worthington: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland when he expects to introduce a unified business rate in Scotland.

Mr. Andrew Welsh: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland when the proposed business rate will take effect in Scotland; and when the Scottish business rate will be brought to the same level as in England.

Mr. Lang: The introduction of a uniform business rate applying throughout Great Britain cannot be considered until non-domestic property north and south of the border is valued for rating purposes on a comparable basis. The process of harmonising valuation practice is under way but is unlikely to be completed until after the 1990 revaluation. On the question of a separate uniform business rate for Scotland, I refer the hon. Member for Clydebank and Milngavie (Mr. Worthington) to my reply to his question on 17 December at column *643*.

Video Recordings Act 1984

Mr. Wallace: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will state the number of convictions obtained for offences under the Video Recordings Act 1984 in respect of each year during which the Act has been in force.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: The table gives the number of persons against whom a charge was proved of an offence under the Video Recordings Act 1984, excluding offences under section 14 (which cannot be identified separately from other offences of forgery).

Scotland

Year	Act
1984	
1985	
1986	
1987 (January to September)	

Roads

Mr. Foulkes: To ask the Secretary of State what schemes within the trunk road net construction in each year since 1979.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: The rele tion, by financial year, is as follows:

Trunk Road Schemes (over £1 million) which start since 1978-79

Road and date	*Scheme*
1978-79	
A92	Bourtreebush—Aberdeen City Bounda
A929	Powrie Brae Improvement
A94	Parkford Improvement
A1	Broxburn—Skateraw Diversion
A9	Blackford Bypass
A9	Tore—Maryburgh
A9	Pitlochry Bypass Phase I
1979-80	
A9	Aviemore—Granish
A9	Charleston—Tore
A96	Auchmill Road Bucksburn Phase II
A96	Elgin Relief Road
A1	Ayton Bypass
A9	Ardullie—Foulis
A952	Invernettie Diversion
A92	Thornton Bypass—Northern Section
A9	Pitlochry Bypass Phase II
A9	North of Kingussie—South of Aviemo
1980-81	
A9	Improvement at Syde and Pert
1981-82	
A82	Reconstruction of Eas Eonan and De Bridges
A74	Improvement at Johnstone Bridge
A94	Balnabreich—St. Ann's
A742	Improvement from Greenock—Inverk
A835	Silverbridge—Gorston Diversion
A9	Evanton Bypass
A9	Regional boundary—Drumochter Lod
A96	West Adamston Improvement
A92	Thornton Bypass Phase II
A1	Penmanshiel Diversion Contract No.
A78	Dundonald Camp—Monkton Diversi
A75	Carsluith Diversion
A9	Killiecrankie—North of Calvine State
A9	North of Guay—Tynreich
A82	Carnoch—Craigrannoch Stage I
A82	Strathfillan Manse
A94	Improvement at Stracathro
A9	Auchterarder and Aberuthven Bypass
A77	Bridgemill Diversion
1982-83	
A7	Canonbie Diversion
A92/A94	Stonehaven Bypass
A972	Kingsway Stage II

Road and date	Scheme
A74	Improvement northbound Kirkton—Glengonner—Abington
A82	Carnoch—Craigrannoch Stage II
A76	Bargower Diversion
1983-84	
A94	Scotston—Candy
A74	Abington—Glengonner—Kirkton Farm Improvement southbound
A92	East Fife Regional Road (EFRR) Phase I
A929	Tealing—Tarbrax
A9	Perth Western Bypass
M74	Wellburn—Poniel
A835	Maryburgh—Moy
A9	Killiecrankie—North of Calvine Stage 2
A95	Reconstruction of new U/bridge at Loch Vara
A94	Laurencekirk Bypass
A75	Collin Diversion
A1	Tranent Bypass
A75	Gatehouse of Fleet Bypass
1984-85	
A9	Dalreoch—Burnside
A74	Perchall—Woodend
A85/A972	Kingsway Improvement Stage III
M74	Draffan—Wellburn
A1	Musselburgh Bypass
A75	Creetown Bypass
A92	East Fife Regional Road (EFRR) Phase II
A82	Camus Nan Clais—Hollybank
A75	Bridge of Dee Diversion
1985-86	
M74	Poniel—Millbank
A94	Forfar Bypass
A82	Dubh Eas Stage II
A7	Synton—Mossend Diversion
A82	Auchentullich—Polnaberoch
A9	Alness Bypass
A835	Conon Diversion
1986-87	
A96	Auldearn Bypass
A82	Polnaberoch—Arnburn
A75	Annan Bypass
A96	Bucksburn—Tyrebagger Hill Stage I
A82	Arden—Auchentullich
A75	Ringford Bypass
A830	Mallaig—Kinsadel Stage I
A929	Kingsway—Powrie Improvement
A92	Murcar—Balmedie
A9	Mound, Sutherland Diversion
1987-88[1]	
A96	Forres Bypass
A9	Dornoch Firth Crossing south approach road
A75	Castle Douglas Bypass
A9	Dornoch Firth Crossing north approach road
M74	Northbound Strengthening from A72 Junction to A723 Junction
A830	Lochailort—Polnish Bridge Improvement
A82	Auchendennan—Arden Improvement
A75	Glenluce Bypass
M80	Stepps Bypass advance works contract No. 1
A82	Luss—Camus Nan Clais
A9	Dunbeath Diversion

[1] 11 January 1988.

In addition, 195 schemes costing between £100,000 and £1 million started over the period.

Mr. Foulkes: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what was the actual expenditure on the trunk road network in each year since 1978-79; what is the projected outturn expenditure for the current financial year; and what is the budgeted expenditure for 1988-89.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: The inform requested is as follows:

Financial year	Expenditure (£ million net)[1] Capital	Current
1978-79	65	8
1979-80	74	9
1980-81	81	10
1981-82	88	16
1982-83	96	14
1983-84	87	20
1984-85	97	17
1985-86	101	19
1986-87	95	20
1987-88 projected	110	19
1988-89 budget	To be announced later this year	

[1] Figures rounded to nearest £ million. Rounded figures m necessarily sum to the totals.

Mr. Foulkes: To ask the Secretary of State for Sco what is the current position of the Dumfries bypa relation to projected expenditure and planned date o of construction, and what were the original budge original planned start date.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: The Dumfries b has been under construction for many years. Throu that period estimates of costs and planned start date varied as the results of detailed studies became know current cost is estimated at £15·10 million and it is pl to start construction in the late summer of this yea

Mr. Foulkes: To ask the Secretary of State for Sco what is the current state of planning for the A74 upgr announced during the general election campaign; w the budgeted cost; and what alterations in priorities trunk road network will be necessary to accommod

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: As recently annou feasibility studies are under way to consider the bes of implementing the upgrading. Until these studies been completed, around the end of this year, it will possible to assess priorities in the trunk road progra and how the A74 project will fit in. The estimated c the project is at least £200 million.

Mr. Foulkes: To ask the Secretary of State for Sco if he will publish in the *Official Report* all correspon between Ministers and the hon. Member for Ca Cumnock and Doon Valley on the Auchinlech/Cum New Cumnock, Maybole and Girvan bypasses.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: Since 1980 Sc Office Ministers have corresponded with the hon. M about the four bypasses mentioned on 13 occasions have arranged for copies of these letters to be placed Library of the House.

Scottish National Meat Centre

Mr. Wray: To ask the Secretary of State for Sco what participation the Scottish Development Agenc have in the activities and formation of the Sc national meat centre and food park.

Mr. Lang: The Scottish Development Age discussing with Edinburgh district council the po development of a Scottish national meat cen Edinburgh. The nature and extent of the ag participation in the centre is still under considerati

Regional Aid

Sir Russell Johnston: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what was the total value of regional aid grants paid to companies in respect of activities in Badenoch and Lochaber, respectively, in each of the last eight years for which figures are available.

Mr. Lang: Information on payments of grant by the Highlands and Islands Development Board under section 8 of the Highlands and Islands Development (Scotland) Act 1965 is not available in the form requested. Approvals of grants under this Act to firms in the Badenoch and Strathspey and Lochaber local authority districts in the period 1980 to 1987 are as follows.

A small number of payments of re assistance have also been made to cor Lochaber district in the period 1980 to 198 these cannot be given as to do so information on individual businesses. No were made to firms in the Badenoch district.

Details of payments under the old re ment grant scheme are available only for p £25,000 to firms in the Fort William and employment office areas (EOA) which sub and Badenoch respectively. These are set

	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985
Local Authority District			*Section 8 Approvals (£ thousands)*			
Badenoch and Strathspey	648	239	402	651	807	1,028
Lochaber	355	408	459	647	551	918
EOA			*RDG payments (£ thousand)*			
Fort William	30	2,247	3,226	275	402	136
Inverness	849	428	4,193	321	162	623

Nature Reserves

Mr. Buchanan-Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he has plans to dispose of any nature reserves or parts of nature reserves in Scotland; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Rifkind: I refer my right hon. Friend to the answer given to the hon. Member for Linlithgow (Mr. Dalyell) by my hon. Friend the Minister with responsibility for home affairs and the environment on 13 January; and to the answer given on the same day to the hon. Member for Copeland (Dr. Cunningham) by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment.

European Demonstration Reprocessing Plant

Mr. Wallace: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland when he received the final report by Mr. Alexander Bell on the public inquiry into the proposed siting of the European demonstration reprocessing plant at Dounreay; and when he expects to make a statement.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: My right hon. and learned Friend has not yet received the report. When he does he will consider it carefully before coming to a decision, but I cannot say when that will be.

DEFENCE

BP Flotation

Mr. Wray: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if, pursuant to his reply of 2nd November 1987, *Official Report*, column *600*, to the hon. Members for Glasgow, Provan and Newham, North-West (Mr. Banks), the costs to the public funds for the use of the Royal Marines and Commandos in the British Petroleum share launch have now been assessed; and how much of them has been recovered.

Mr. Freeman: I refer the hon. Membe I gave the hon. Member for Newham, N Banks) on 12 November 1987, at colum reply of 13 January 1988.

Tanks

Mr. Fatchett: To ask the Secretary of S (1) what representations he has received about the purchase of Challenger tanks make a statement;

(2) when he expects to announce a decis orders of tanks for the Army; and if statement.

Mr. Sainsbury: I refer the hon. Memb given on 12 January to my hon. Friend Bridlington (Mr. Townend) at column *2*

UK Air Defence Region (Incu

Mr. Rogers: To ask the Secretary of S on how many occasions since 1979 hav Soviet aircraft entered the United King region at the same time.

Mr. Freeman: I have nothing to add to by my hon. Friend the Minister of State Forces on 11 January 1988, at column *6*

Nuclear Installations (Military

Mr. Ieuan Wyn Jones: To ask the Secre Defence if, pursuant to his answer to the Ynys Môn of 16 November 1987, *Official 452*, he will clarify how close to nucl military aircraft are permitted to fly.

Mr. Freeman: The instructions govern at which low-flying military aircraft may installation vary according to the type Details are classified.

Expenditure

Mrs. Clwyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what was the Government's level of spending on defence, expressed per household, for 1979 and for each year since then (i) current prices, (ii) 1979 prices and (iii) 1987 prices.

Mr. Freeman: The information requested is shown:

Defence expenditure per household

	Current prices £s	*1987-88 prices* £s	*1979-80 prices* £s
1979-80	456	792	456
1980-81	550	805	464
1981-82	614	819	472
1982-83	699	869	501
1983-84	744	884	510
1984-85	818	932	537
1985-86	849	912	526
1986-87	853	889	512
1987-88	877	877	505

Unit Costs

Mr. Rogers: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) when he last published in a written answer the unit cost of a particular system;

(2) when it became his practice not to publish project unit costs.

Mr. Sainsbury *[holding answer 11 January 1988]:* The unit cost of a particular system was last published in a written answer on 6 July 1987, at columns *61-2*. Information of a similar character was given on 2 November 1987, at column *609*.

Last year the practice of publishing unit costs of selected equipments in the annual "Statement on the Defence Estimates" was reviewed. It had long been recognised that publication of prices paid for equipment by my Department could be inimical to the commercial interests of manufacturers in other markets, and representations from the manufacturers themselves confirmed that this was the case. My right hon. Friend accordingly decided to discontinue the publication of such figures. They will, however, be made available to the Defence Committee of the House each year on a classified basis.

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Ordnance Survey and Admiralty Publications

Mr. Barry Field: To ask the Lord President of the Council (1) when hon. Members will be able to receive Ordnance Survey publications from the Vote Office;

(2) when hon. Members will be able to receive Admiralty publications from the Vote Office.

Mr. Wakeham: The Accommodation and Administration Sub-Committee of the Services Committee will shortly be considering the question whether the Vote Office should provide Ordnance Survey and Admiralty publications to Members on request. I shall ensure that my hon. Friend is informed of its decision.

EDUCATION AND SCIENCE

Assessment and Testing (Report)

Mr. Baldry: To ask the Secretary of State for Ed and Science when he expects the task group on ass and testing to report; and what action he an taking following the publication of such a report

Mrs. Rumbold: I refer my hon. Friend to my ri Friend's reply to my hon. Friend the Mem Walthamstow (Mr. Summerson) on 12 January, at *205*.

Nursery Education

Mr. Pike: To ask the Secretary of State for Ed and Science if he will list, by sex, the number of in each local education authority who receive education.

Mr. Dunn: The number of boys and girls unde January 1987 attending maintained nursery sch nursery classes in primary schools in each local ed authority in England is as follows:

Boys and girls in nursery schools and classes in Engla January 1987[1]

	Boys
Barking	512
Barnet	1,196
Bexley	307
Brent	1,133
Bromley	60
Croydon	315
Ealing	1,381
Enfield	719
Haringey	1,064
Harrow	410
Havering	121
Hillingdon	1,329
Hounslow	1,892
Kingston Upon Thames	515
Merton	800
Newham	1,921
Redbridge	249
Richmond Upon Thames	327
Sutton	327
Waltham Forest	1,158
Inner London	11,113
Birmingham	4,545
Coventry	978
Dudley	1,154
Sandwell	1,862
Solihull	702
Walsall	1,991
Wolverhampton	1,941
Knowsley	980
Liverpool	3,156
St. Helens	893
Sefton	1,044
Wirral	836
Bolton	1,446
Bury	398
Manchester	3,464
Oldham	993
Rochdale	910
Salford	1,582
Stockport	548
Tameside	1,139
Trafford	312

	Boys	Girls
Wigan	1,043	989
Barnsley	1,425	1,358
Doncaster	1,557	1,518
Rotherham	1,380	1,329
Sheffield	2,445	2,282
Bradford	2,450	2,286
Calderdale	667	624
Kirklees	2,038	1,841
Leeds	2,830	2,753
Wakefield	1,916	1,853
Gateshead	830	815
Newcastle Upon Tyne	1,421	1,416
North Tyneside	1,197	1,217
South Tyneside	927	925
Sunderland	1,528	1,431
Isles of Scilly[2]	0	0
Avon	1,687	1,591
Bedfordshire	2,371	2,211
Berkshire	2,549	2,352
Buckinghamshire	1,130	1,013
Cambridgeshire	997	955
Cheshire	2,370	2,413
Cleveland	4,195	3,941
Cornwall	775	629
Cumbria	1,176	1,084
Derbyshire	3,115	2,815
Devon	1,065	998
Dorset	387	367
Durham	2,949	2,709
East Sussex	543	453
Essex	1,105	1,072
Gloucestershire[2]	0	0
Hampshire	972	832
Hereford and Worcester	460	449
Hertfordshire	3,834	3,668
Humberside	3,510	3,310
Isle of Wight	72	56
Kent	993	919
Lancashire	3,049	2,903
Leicestershire	2,650	2,552
Lincolnshire	491	476
Norfolk	448	422
North Yorkshire	1,389	1,305
Northamptonshire	1,252	1,181
Northumberland	917	899
Nottinghamshire	5,604	5,484
Oxfordshire	915	832
Salop	565	557
Somerset	57	27
Staffordshire	2,925	2,887
Suffolk	1,077	982
Surrey	1,330	1,292
Warwickshire	1,035	918
West Sussex	300	246
Wiltshire	114	127
Total	141,552	134,622

[1] Full and part-time pupils.
[2] These authorities have no nursery schools or classes.

Education Reform

Ms. Armstrong: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what representations he has received seeking the extension, by law, of the national curriculum to those children who are supported by public funds through the assisted places scheme; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Rumbold: Only a very sm responses from individuals and consultation document made point assisted places scheme.

AGRICULTURE, FISHERI

Fatstock Certifica

Mr. Ieuan Wyn Jones: To Agriculture, Fisheries and Food statement on the future of fatstock

Mr. Donald Thompson: Fatsto integral part of the beef and she schemes. Its future will depend u current review of the Community's s on future arrangements for beef sup discussions have yet to start.

Variable Premium P

Mr. Ieuan Wyn Jones: To Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, wh prices published on 13 July 1987 a the variable premium payments are if he will make a statement.

Mr. Donald Thompson: Yes. Va for the 1988 sheepmeat market calculated on the basis of the dec levels reached at the 1987 price-fixin were announced by my Department

Milk Quota

Mr. Ieuan Wyn Jones: To Agriculture, Fisheries and Food statement on his Department's p leasing.

Mr. Donald Thompson: Quot producers a valuable element of fle the Commission's intention, expres quota system published last Octob should be maintained.

Radiation

Dr. David Clark: To ask the M Fisheries and Food how many shee of Cumbria which had died from monitored for radioactivity in each December 1986.

Mr. Donald Thompson: None.

Dr. David Clark: To ask the M Fisheries and Food if he will pla literature relating to the disposal of to farmers in the restricted area of Chernobyl accident in 1986.

Mr. Donald Thompson: In addit I gave to the hon. Member on 10 D officials wrote — on 8 April 1987 lambing season — to farmers in outlining "mark and release" arra lamb crop. This letter included a of casualties. A copy of the letter Library of the House.

Environmentally Sensitive Areas

Dr. David Clark: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what percentage of land within each environmentally sensitive area is currently being farmed under the restrictive rules in return for payment.

Mr. Donald Thompson: It will not be possible to provide a definitive estimate of the percentage of land covered by ESA arrangements until we have completed our detailed land cover survey of each ESA. Our provisional estimate of the area of land being farmed under ESA agreements in England is shown below.

	Area covered by ESA agreements (ha)
The Broads	[1]6,749
Pennine Dales	8,403
Somerset Levels and Moors	8,181
South Downs	3,104
West Penwith	5,646

[1] This does not include land farmed under the Broads grazing marsh conservation scheme in 1987.

Meat and Livestock Commission

Mr. Ieuan Wyn Jones: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food when he hopes to publish his response to the Purdom report on the Meat and Livestock Commission.

Mr. Donald Thompson: The Ministry's efficiency scrutiny of the Meat and Livestock Commission, a copy of which has been placed in the Library of the House, has been discussed with the MLC which is taking action on a number of the recommendations it contains.

WALES

Public Inquiry (Swansea)

Mr. Gareth Wardell: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if, in the light of the existence of circular 44/87, he will undertake to review any findings of the inspector for the public inquiry into the application for executive houses at Murton lane, Newton, Swansea; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Grist: This appeal is one of those transferred by regulations to a planning inspector and my right hon. Friend has no power to intervene in the decision-making process other than by formally recovering jurisdiction. On present information, he does not believe that there is a case for taking such action. The guidelines on housing for senior management remain as set out in Welsh Office circular 30/86.

Agriculture Department, Ruthin

Mr. Barry Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales (1) if he will take steps to ensure that the Welsh Office Agriculture Department, Ruthin, will remain open for the foreseeable future;

(2) if he will meet staff unions from the Agriculture Department office in Ruthin to discuss the prospects for closure; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Walker: We have no plans to close the Ruthin divisional office.

Mr. Barry Jones: To ask the Secretar Wales how many staff are employed at t Department office in Ruthin; how many c handles annually; and how many farms in n office is expected to service annually.

Mr. Peter Walker: The divisional of employs about 77 people (including 26 Claims and grant applications in 1987 tota number of holdings recorded in 1987 was

Gobowen Orthopaedic Hospi

Mr. Barry Jones: To ask the Secretar Wales what estimate he has made of th closure of beds at Oswestry (Gobowen hospital upon the expectations of patient joint replacement operations; and if he statement.

Mr. Grist: I understand that the closures measures and as such consideration of the the health authorities concerned. Official Office are, however, keeping in touch with t Shropshire health authorities.

Cancer Treatment

Mr. Barry Jones: To ask the Secretar Wales if he will take urgent steps to ens Clwyd suffering from cancer to receiv Clwyd; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Grist: The Welsh Office is already health authorities in Clwyd and Merseyside services for patients in Clwyd can be impr

Mr. Barry Jones: To ask the Secretar Wales how many patients suffering from c Clwyd and Gwynedd, receive treatment in if he will make a statement.

Mr. Wyn Roberts: The information r held centrally. The cancer treatmen Clatterbridge hospital, Wirral, are the resp Mersey regional health authority to which information should be directed.

Flooding

Mr. Alex Carlile: To ask the Secretar Wales if he will introduce a system of hig or cheap loans to farmers in Wales for the works and buildings to alleviate the enterprises of persistent flooding; and if statement.

Mr. Peter Walker: Grants of 30 per c favoured areas and 15 per cent. outside th areas are currently available to farmers facilities to prevent the flooding of agric watercourses if such works form part of ar under the agriculture improvement schem water authorities have permissive powers Drainage Act 1976 to undertake land dra protection works. I said in the House on at column 752, during the debate on the ef in Wales, that I would look into any prob drawn to my attention. I am still happy t

Mr. Alex Carlile: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he has any proposals for works to alleviate persistent flooding on major roads in mid-Wales; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Wyn Roberts: In consultation with the county council and the water authority we are continuing to investigate the causes of persistent flooding of the A483 and A487 trunk roads in North Powys and to seek to identify cost-effective remedies where needed. Non-trunk roads are the responsibility of the county highway authorities.

Mr. Alex Carlile: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he has any proposals to alleviate farm losses caused by flooding in the Severn valley; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Walker: Flood protection works are the responsibility of the Severn Trent water authority which, I understand, has a flood alleviation scheme for the confluence of the rivers Vyrnwy and Severn under initial consideration. Any works may be eligible for Government grant under the Land Drainage Act 1976. Otherwise farming is a commercial operation which should reasonably be expected to allow for the consequences of bad weather.

Milk

Mr. Ieuan Wyn Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many Welsh farmers are at present engaged in milk production; and what were the corresponding figures for each year since 1979.

Mr. Peter Walker: The number of registered milk producers in Wales in December for each year since 1979 is shown in the table:

Registered milk producers in Wales in December

	Number
1979	7,939
1980	7,617
1981	7,375
1982	7,283
1983	7,253
1984	7,046
1985	6,850
1986	6,769
1987	[1]

[1] The December 1987 figure is not yet available. The figure for November 1987 was 6,484.

Farm Diversification Grants

Mr. Ieuan Wyn Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what funds have been made available for grants for farm diversification in Wales during 1987-88; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Walker: It is not anticipated that claims for grant will be made during the financial year.

Local Authorities (Vacant Land)

Mr. Nicholas Bennett: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what information he has as to the amount of vacant land held by each Welsh local authority in 1974, 1979, 1983 and for each subsequent year; what percentage of the total land in each authority area and of the local authority's total land holding this represents; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Ian Grist: This information is not held centrally.

EMPLOYMENT

Community Programme

Ms. Armstrong: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what are the relative percentages of training and work experience for participants on the community programme.

Mr. Lee: Agents and sponsors are responsible for designing their own programmes of work experience and training, and detailed information is not held centrally. However, the following information is provided from the latest (4th) community programme participants survey:

66 per cent. of participants were receiving on-the-job training at the time of the survey.

20 per cent. were receiving formal training at their place of work.

12 per cent. were receiving training away from their place of work but during work hours.

12 per cent. had received, or were receiving, training in their own time, of whom 60 per cent. were attending one day a week for an average 26 weeks.

There is some overlap in the figures, with many of those receiving on-the-job training receiving one of the other types of training.

Ms. Armstrong: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what percentage of participants on the community programme is women *(a)* nationally, *(b)* in the county of Durham and *(c)* in Durham, North-West constituency.

Mr. Lee: It is not possible to give the information in the precise form requested. During the 12 months ended 30 November 1987, the latest date for which statistics are available, the total number of entrants to the community programme was 272,697, of whom 70,356, or 25·8 per cent. were female. The corresponding figures for the county of Durham were 6,551, 1,670 and 25·5 per cent. Figures for the Durham, North-West constituency are not available.

Ms. Armstrong: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will give an estimate of how the change in the community programme from part time to full time is likely to affect the numbers of women applying for places.

Mr. Lee: The planned change in the community programme from part time to full time has been overtaken by the Government's decision that the community programme and a number of training programmes should be replaced by a new comprehensive training programme for unemployed adults. No detailed assumptions about the breakdown of those applying for places on the new programme have been made.

Mr. Teddy Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment (1) why the Manpower Services Commission has declined to provide authorisation and funding for community programmes after 26 August; if he will provide guidance to the management of such schemes on the longer term arrangements they may make for recruitment and programmes; and if he will make a statement;

(2) if he will make a further statement on the future of the community programme.

Mr. Cope: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State announced in the House on 18 November that the community programme is to be replaced by a new adult training programme from September. I hope that most existing community programme managing agents will decide to take part in the new programme, which will offer, for the first time, a comprehensive package of assessment and training for long-term unemployed people. We are currently considering the Manpower Services Commission report on the new programme and my right hon. Friend expects to respond shortly to the chairman of the commission.

Mr. Teddy Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how many persons were employed in connection with community programmes sponsored and financed by the Manpower Services Commission at the most recent date for which figures are available.

Mr. Lee: On 30 November 1987, the latest date for which statistics are available, there were 221,348 persons employed on community programmes.

Mr. Teddy Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will make a statement on the operation of the community programme in the Southend-on-Sea area.

Mr. Lee: The community programme is operating successfully in the Southend-on-Sea area, as it is elsewhere in the country.

Age Discrimination

Mrs. Clwyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he has any plans to introduce legislation to prevent age discrimination in employment.

Mr. Lee: The Government do not believe that legislation of this nature would be beneficial or practical.

Restart Scheme

Ms. Richardson: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment (1) what percentage of those invited to attend restart interviews are women since the beginning of the scheme; and what is the total number of women approached;

(2) if he will publish up-to-date figures showing the outcome of interviews conducted under the restart scheme, classified by sex, covering the period from the introduction of the scheme in the same format used in the reply given on 10 December 1987, *Official Report*, columns *231-32*, giving a breakdown of these figures to show outcomes for each three month or similar time period.

Mr. Lee: The information requested is not available.

MSC (Press Releases)

Mr. Darling: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will list the number of press releases issued by the Manpower Services Commission in each month since August 1985.

Mr. Lee: The total number of press releases issued in each month includes those prepared and issued by the MSC press office and COI regional offices on MSC's behalf.

	1985	*1986*	*1987*
January	—	169	143
February	—	144	178
March	—	153	284
April	—	159	198
May	—	138	64
June	—	147	110
July	—	186	147
August	116	120	149
September	159	150	209
October	190	183	169
November	148	142	140
December	134	110	89

NATIONAL FINANCE

Public Expenditure

14. **Mr. Neil Hamilton:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement on the trend of public expenditure as a proportion of national income.

25. **Mr. Fallon:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement on the trend of public expenditure as a proportion of national income.

Mr. Major: Public spending as a proportion of national income has been falling since 1982-83. My right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer announced plans in his Autumn Statement which will ensure that this trend continues.

19. **Mr. Kirkwood:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer when he expects to publish the White Paper on public expenditure.

Mr. Major: The 1988 public expenditure White Paper will be published at 11 am on Wednesday 20 January and copies will be available in the Vote Office.

43. **Mr. Michael McNair-Wilson:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will describe the procedure and criteria used in determining the relative priorities accorded to the different programmes within the annual public expenditure planning total for 1988-89; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Major: The public expenditure plans for 1988-89 announced in my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer's Autumn Statement were determined by the Government in the 1987 public expenditure survey, in addition to the specific policy reviews which go on throughout the year. Briefly, the survey process involved a review by each departmental Minister of his spending programme. In the light of these reviews there was a discussion in Cabinet in July which determined the framework for bilateral discussions between departmental Ministers and myself in the autumn. The plans agreed at these bilaterals were endorsed by Cabinet in October.

Decisions on priorities are based on detailed analysis and assessment of programmes, particularly in the area of efficiency and value for money, but ultimately such decisions must be a matter of political judgment. In the 1987 survey the Government's policies set out in our general election manifesto were reflected in expenditure decisions — for example, the increases in planned spending on education, health and inner cities.

66. **Mr. Wood:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement on the trend of public expenditure as a proportion of national income.

Mr. Major: I refer my hon. Friend to the answer I gave earlier today to my hon. Friend the Member for Tatton (Mr. Hamilton).

87. **Mr. Chapman:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is his latest estimate of the outturn for public expenditure in 1987-88; and what is his latest estimate of revenue.

Mr. Major: The Autumn Statement forecast for 1987-88 was for general Government expenditure of £172·8 billion and general Government receipts of £171·1 billion. More details are available in the 1987 Autumn Statement.

Mr. Thurnham: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will estimate the likely savings in public expenditure as a result of the recent proposals of the efficiency unit.

Mr. Brooke: The efficiency unit proposals to which my hon. Friend refers are still under consideration.

Luncheon Vouchers

17. **Mr. Steen:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will take steps to increase the level of tax exemption for luncheon vouchers.

Mr. Brooke: I cannot anticipate my right hon. Friend's Budget.

Public Sector Borrowing Requirement

18. **Mr. John Marshall:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is his latest estimate for the public sector borrowing requirement outturn in 1987-88.

21. **Mr. Knapman:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is his latest estimate for the public sector borrowing requirement outturn in 1987-88.

Mr. Major: The Autumn Statement forecast was for a PSBR in 1987-88 of £1 billion.

46. **Mr. John Greenway:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is his latest estimate for the public sector borrowing requirement's outturn in 1987-88.

Mr. Major: I refer my hon. Friend to the answer I gave earlier today to my hon. Friend the Member for Hendon, South (Mr. Marshall).

North Sea Oil

20. **Mr. Mullin:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will estimate expected North sea oil revenue from all sources for each year up to 1991.

Mr. Lilley: Projections of Government revenues from the North sea for 1987-88 were published in the Autumn Statement 1987 and, for later years, in the 1987-88 Financial Statement and Budget Report. Revised projections will be published at the time of the next Budget.

70. **Mr. Kennedy:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what representations he has received on the current taxation regime governing North sea oil activity; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Lilley: We have received representations from a number of representative bodies and companies. We have taken careful note of these representations, and keep the North sea fiscal regime under constant review.

Economic Growth

22. **Mr. David Shaw:** To ask the Chancellor of th Exchequer what has been the rate of growth in the Unite Kingdom economy since 1980; and how this compare with the figures for other major European Communit countries.

55. **Mr. Bellingham:** To ask the Chancellor of th Exchequer what has been the rate of growth in the Unite Kingdom economy since 1980; and what are th comparable figures for other major European Communit countries.

77. **Mr. Nicholas Bennett:** To ask the Chancellor of th Exchequer what has been the rate of growth in the Unite Kingdom economy since 1980; and what has been th comparable figure for other major European Communit countries.

Mr. Lilley: Since 1980 the United Kingdom econom has grown at a rate of over 2½ per cent. a year, which substantially faster than any other major Europea country.

32. **Mr. Richard Shepherd:** To ask the Chancellor the Exchequer what is his latest forecast for the rate economic growth in the United Kingdom over the comi year.

35. **Mr. Allan Stewart:** To ask the Chancellor of th Exchequer what is his latest forecast for the rate economic growth in the United Kingdom over the comi year.

81. **Mr. Wells:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequ what is his latest forecast for the rate of economic grow in the United Kingdom over the coming year.

Mr. Major: In the Autumn Statement my right ho Friend the Chancellor forecast that the economy wou grow by 2½ per cent. in 1988. The non-oil economy expected to grow by 3 per cent. This will take us into t eighth successive year of steady growth.

34. **Mr. Hanley:** To ask the Chancellor of t Exchequer if he will estimate the effects on employment economic growth in the United Kingdom since 1983.

97. **Mr. Key:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequ if he will estimate the effects on employment of econom growth in the United Kingdom since 1983.

Mr. Major: The steady growth of the United Kingdo economy since 1983 has contributed to a rise of over million in the number of jobs.

49. **Mr. Michael:** To ask the Chancellor of t Exchequer when he next expects to meet the direct general of the Confederation of British Industry to discu the prospects for the British economy.

95. **Mr. Morley:** To ask the Chancellor of t Exchequer when he next expects to meet the represe tatives of the Confederation of British Industry to discu the state of the economy.

104. **Mr. Cousins:** To ask the Chancellor of t Exchequer when he next expects to meet the direct general of the Confederation of British Industry to discu the current performance of British industry.

Mr. Major: My right hon. Friend meets the direct general of the CBI from time to time and a wide range issues are discussed.

Take-home Pay

23. **Mr. McLoughlin:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what has been the growth of real take-home pay for a married man on male average earnings since 1978-79.

Mr. Lilley: Since 1978-79, real take home pay has risen by almost 24 per cent. for a married man on average male earnings.

British Petroleum plc

24. **Mr. Cummings:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many shares the Bank of England now holds in British Petroleum.

89. **Mr. Cohen:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is the value of the shares which the Bank of England now holds in BP.

100. **Mr. Darling:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will indicate the number of British Petroleum shares that have been purchased by the Bank of England under the special arrangements to date; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Brooke: Approximately 39 million.

102. **Miss Mowlam:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement on his policy towards future sales of shares in British Petroleum plc in the light of the outcome of the recent sale of shares in the company.

Mr. Norman Lamont: The shares in British Petroleum which were purchased by the Bank of England under the buyback scheme will be disposed of in due course as part of the wider privatisation programme. The Bank has undertaken not to dispose of any shares acquired under these arrangements up to 29 April 1988 except at a price in excess of 120p.

International Debt

26. **Mr. Worthington:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what initiatives he is taking with Finance Ministers of creditor countries to address the rescheduling of a share of the debt of Latin American countries.

28. **Mr. David Young:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what initiatives he is taking with Finance Ministers of creditor countries to address the rescheduling of a share of the debt of Latin American countries.

37. **Mr. Meale:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what initiatives he is taking with Finance Ministers of creditor countries to address the rescheduling of a share of the debt of Latin American countries.

39. **Mr. Buckley:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what initiatives he is taking with Finance Ministers of creditor countries to address the rescheduling of a share of the debt of Latin American countries.

Mr. Lilley: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave earlier today to the hon. Member for Workington (Mr. Campbell-Savours).

29. **Mr. Patnick:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what responses he has received to his 1987 initiative to deal with the problem of developing countries' debt.

68. **Mr. David Davies:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what responses he has received to his 1987 initiative to deal with the problem of developing countries' debt.

Mr. Lilley: Good progress has been made on two of the three specific proposals that my right hon. Friend the Chancellor made at the April meeting of the development committee. The United Kingdom has converted aid loans into grants for 14 African countries; other creditor countries are following suit. To date, seven countries have had their official debts rescheduled over longer than usual periods in the Paris Club. We are continuing to press for international action to reduce interest rates on rescheduled officially guaranteed debts.

74. **Mr. Skinner:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what recent meetings he has had with other Finance Ministers regarding world debt; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Lilley: Last September my right hon. Friend attended the Commonwealth Finance Ministers' meeting and the meetings of the IMF and World Bank where the debt problems of some of the developing countries, especially those of the poorest in sub-Saharan Africa, were discussed.

Taxation

27. **Mr. Nicholas Baker:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will bring forward proposals to reduce capital taxation.

Mr. Norman Lamont: I have noted my hon. Friend's suggestion but cannot, of course, anticipate the Budget judgment.

Hospital Radio Broadcasting Equipment (VAT)

30. **Mr. Amess:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what representations he has received about value added tax on hospital radio broadcasting equipment.

Mr. Lilley: I refer my hon. Friend to my reply on 27 November at column *129*.

Interest Rates

31. **Mr. Geraint Howells:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement on present levels of interest rates.

83. **Mr. Ronnie Campbell:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement on the current level of interest rates.

96. **Dr. Moonie:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement on interest rates.

Mr. Lilley: Bank base rates are 8½ per cent.

58. **Mr. Latham:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he will make a statement on the trend in interest rates during the Christmas adjournment.

Mr. Lilley: Bank base rates have remained at 8½ per cent. throughout the Christmas adjournment.

Credit Card Companies

33. **Mr. Macdonald:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will introduce legislation to provide for closer regulation of the operation of credit card companies; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Lilley: My right hon. Friend has no present plans to alter the regulatory framework for credit card operations.

Drug Trafficking

36. **Mr. Evennett:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he is satisfied with the liaison arrangements between Her Majesty's Customs and Excise and the police and other enforcement agencies in connection with the investigation of drug trafficking.

Mr. Lilley: Yes.

Self-employment

38. **Mr. Devlin:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will quantify the extent to which growth in the economy has been reflected in an increase in self-employment over the period since 1979.

67. **Mr. Quentin Davies:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will quantify the extent to which growth in the economy has been reflected in an increase in self-employment over the period since 1979.

Mr. Major: Self-employment in the United Kingdom in June 1987 was over three-quarters of a million higher than in 1979, an increase five times as great as in the previous 30 years. Self-employment has been encouraged by the combination of steady, sustained growth in the economy and the success of supply side policies in stimulating enterprise.

Capital Investment

40. **Mr. Andrew Smith:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what action he proposes to take to stimulate capital investment.

Mr. Major: The Government's economic policies will continue to encourage capital investment by promoting an environment in which business can prosper.

Value Added Tax

41. **Mr. Grocott:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what was the total revenue from value added tax *(a)* in 1979 and *(b)* in the latest year for which figures are available.

Mr. Lilley: The information is as follows:

	(£ million)
1979	6,360
1986	21,094

73. **Mr. Atkinson:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement on progress on his negotiations within the European Economic Community regarding the raising of the value added tax threshold.

Mr. Lilley: The European Parliament has given general support for the Commission's draft directive concerning VAT and small and medium-sized enterprise proposes, amongst other things, a higher registration threshold of 35,000 ecu (about £25,0

101. **Mr. Alex Carlile:** To ask the Chancello Exchequer when he next intends to meet the Ministers of the European Economic Commu discuss the possible harmonisation of value ad within the Community.

Mr. Brooke: The Community's economic committee is examining the Commission's prop the abolition of fiscal frontiers and is expected t in March. The timetable for subsequent discussio Finance Ministers' Council has not yet been deci

Mr. Teddy Taylor: To ask the Chancello Exchequer what have been the costs sustained by Commission and the United Kingdom Govern pursuing the infraction proceedings at the Europea of Justice on the United Kingdom's value added rates; and who will be responsible for paying the

Mr. Lilley *[holding answer 13 January 1988]*: the European Court to decide on the ba responsibility for costs. Neither the costs incurre Commission in bringing the case nor the Governm defending it at the European Court are at present

Buildings (VAT)

42. **Mr. Heathcoat-Amory:** To ask the Chan the Exchequer what recent representations he has about value added tax on buildings.

Mr. Lilley: Budget representations from seve bodies have included references to VAT on buil

Privatisation

44. **Mr. Battle:** To ask the Chancellor of the E what is his latest estimate of the income to the E from privatisation in the present year, and in the years.

72. **Mr. Jack Thompson:** To ask the Chancell Exchequer what is his latest forecast of incom Treasury from privatisation measures in 198 1988-89.

105. **Mr. Cabora:** To ask the Chancello Exchequer what is his latest estimate of the inco Exchequer from privatisation in the present yea the next two years.

Mr. Norman Lamont: The latest estimate o from privatisation in the present year and in the years is contained in the Autumn Statement.

65. **Mr. Murphy:** To ask the Chancello Exchequer if he proposes to make any chang Government's privatisation programme as a res BP flotation.

84. **Mr. Win Griffiths:** To ask the Chancell Exchequer what conclusions he has drawn fro flotation; and what measures he intends to take with any further privatisation proposals.

85. **Mr. Morgan:** To ask the Chancello Exchequer if he will make a statement on Her Government's latest plans for further pri measures.

Mr. Norman Lamont: No.

99. **Mr. Beith:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether, in the light of recent events, he has revised his estimates of privatisation proceeds to the Exchequer over the next few years.

Mr. Norman Lamont: The latest estimate of proceeds for the next three years remains as given in the Autumn Statement.

Industry (Costs)

45. **Mr. John Townend:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what estimate he has made of the relative benefit to British industry of 1 per cent. off interest rates as compared with 1 per cent. off pay rises.

Mr. Lilley: I refer my hon. Friend to the reply I gave earlier today to my hon. Friend the Member for Esher (Mr. Taylor).

Excise Duties

47. **Mr. Graham:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement on the latest position regarding negotiations within the EEC about harmonisation of excise duties.

Mr. Lilley: I refer the hon. Member to my right hon. Friend's replies to my hon. Friend the Member for Berkshire, East (Mr. MacKay) on 20 November at column *704*, and to my hon. Friend the Member for Buckingham (Mr. Walden) on 11 December at column *288*.

Pensioners

48. **Mr. Jack:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what plans he has to undertake a study of the subject of the income tax burden on retirement pensioners; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Norman Lamont: I have noted my hon. Friend's suggestion and will bear it in mind, although the income tax burden on pensioners is something we keep continually under review.

Income Tax

50. **Mr. Anthony Coombs:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is the proportion of income tax revenue paid by the highest 5 per cent. of earners currently; what was the figure in 1979; and what are the absolute figures for these two fiscal years.

Mr. Norman Lamont: It is estimated that the top 5 per cent. of tax-paying tax units (married couples and single people) have income tax liabilities of £12·5 billion in 1987-88. This represents 29 per cent. of total income tax liabilities of about £43·1 billion. In 1978-79, the liability of the top 5 per cent. was £4·9 billion which was 24 per cent. of the total liability of £20·3 billion.

54. **Mr. Lewis:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what has been the average annual gain in each year since 1979 to those earning over £50,000 as a result of changes in taxation.

86. **Ms. Armstrong:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how much, on average, those earning over £50,000 a year have gained in changes in taxation since 1979.

94. **Mrs. Clwyd:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what has been the average individual cumulative gain to those earning over £50,000 a year as a result of changes in taxation since 1979.

Mr. Norman Lamont: The table shows the average reduction in income tax liability of taxpayers who in 1987-88 had incomes over £50,000. The figures in the first column are the reduction in liability under the tax regime for the year in question, compared with the liability under the tax regime of the previous year. The second column cumulates the changes and therefore compares each year with 1978-79. All tax regimes have been indexed to 1987-88 levels by reference to the statutory formula and applied to incomes at 1987-88 levels, projected from the 1984-85 survey of personal incomes. Estimates are provisonal.

Average reduction in income tax liability of those with income over £50,000[1]

	Average annual gain per tax unit £	*Average cumulative gain per tax unit* £
1979-80	9,750	9,750
1980-81	−500	9,250
1981-82	−1,450	7,800
1982-83	150	7,950
1983-84	800	8,750
1984-85	1,600	10,350
1985-86	150	10,500
1986-87	100	10,600
1987-88	200	10,800

[1] Based on 150,000 single people and married couples with income over £50,000 expected to pay tax in 1987-88. All information is in terms of tax units, i.e. married couples are counted as one and their incomes combined.

62. **Mr. Martyn Jones:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what figures he has showing the major beneficiaries of changes in direct taxation since 1979.

Mr. Norman Lamont: All 24·7 million taxpayers will pay less in income tax in 1987-88 than they would under the 1978-79 income tax regime, indexed to allow for movements in prices; and, compared with that indexed regime, 1·4 million people have been taken out of income tax altogether.

90. **Mr. Henderson:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what income tax relief has been received by a taxpayer earning £50,000 each year since 1979, at 1987 prices.

Mr. Norman Lamont: The income tax relief received in each financial year from his main personal allowance by a married man with earned income of £50,000 and no other reliefs or allowances is as follows (amounts have been revalued at 1987-88 prices):

	£
1978-79	2,660
1979-80	2,097
1980-81	2,115
1981-82	1,839
1982-83	1,869
1983-84	2,025
1984-85	2,175
1985-86	2,277
1986-87	2,277
1987-88	2,277

Credit Growth

51. **Mr. Doran:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will provide figures for the rate of credit growth over the last four years.

Mr. Lilley: The growth in consumer credit over the last four financial years is as follows:

	Rate of growth (per cent.)
1983-84	20
1984-85	16
1985-86	17
1986-87	17

Source: CSO *Financial Statistics* table 9.3.

79. **Mr. McLeish:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what proportion of outstanding consumer credit is accounted for by credit card lending by banks.

Mr. Lilley: Credit on bank credit cards including its interest-free component accounts for 15 per cent. of all consumer credit outstanding and about 3 per cent. of personal sector debt.

Pay

52. **Mr. Holt:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what level of pay rise for the average employee would be compatible with full compensation for price increases over the last year.

71. **Mr. Cran:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what level of pay rise for the average employee would be compatible with full compensation for price increases over the last year.

80. **Mr. Curry:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what level of pay rise for the average employee would be compatible with full compensation for price increases over the last year.

Mr. Brooke: The pay rise that would compensate fully for price increases over the last year would be about 4 per cent. However, when changes in income tax are taken into account, the pay rise needed would be only about 2½ per cent.

Mortgage Interest Tax Relief

53. **Mr. Sumberg:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he has any plans to review the systems of mortgage interest tax relief; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Norman Lamont: The level of mortgage interest relief has to be fixed each year and will be considered in framing the Budget proposals.

92. **Mr. Sherwby:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if, pursuant to the answer of 26 November, *Official Report*, column *373*, he will analyse the weight of responses for and against the Green Paper proposals on personal taxation which led him to conclude that there was insufficient support for the approach advocated in the Green Paper on the treatment of mortgage interest tax relief for married and unmarried couples; what other proposals in this regard have been put to him; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Norman Lamont: I think my hon. Friend's question arises from a misunderstanding. A proposal to link mortgage interest tax relief to the residence in borrower(s) was made in the context of th independent taxation with transferable outlined in the Green Paper. My answer of 2 referred to overall support for the Green Pap to the tax treatment of married couples as a specifically to mortgage interest relief. The have made it clear that we consider it import tax penalties on marriage should be removed

Private Borrowing

56. **Mr. Malcolm Bruce:** To ask the Chan Exchequer if he will make a statement on private borrowing over the last year.

Mr. Lilley: In the financial year 1986-87, b the private sector amounted to £43 billion.

OECD Countries (Expansion)

57. **Ms. Ruddock:** To ask the Chanc Exchequer what discussions he has had w Ministers abroad concerning expansion tar Organisation for Economic Co-oper Development economies.

59. **Mr. Fisher:** To ask the Chancellor of th what discussions he has held with other Finar on recovery targets for the Organisation for E operation and Development economies.

61. **Mr. George Howarth:** To ask the Cha Exchequer what discussions he has had w Ministers abroad concerning expansion ta Organisation for Economic Co-oper Development economies.

63. **Mr. John Garrett:** To ask the Chan Exchequer what discussions he has had w Ministers abroad concerning expension ta Organisation for Economic Co-oper Development economies.

Mr. Lilley: I refer the hon. Member to the earlier today to the hon. Member for Nor O'Brien).

Capital Gains Tax

60. **Mr. Andrew MacKay:** To ask the Cha Exchequer what representations he has rece ing the effects of capital gains tax on the ec

Mr. Norman Lamont: A number of re have been received and these will be borne i run-up to the Budget.

Forestry

64. **Ms Quin:** To ask the Chancellor of t if he will give an estimate of the cost to the the current financial year of the tax concessi investors in forestry.

Mr. Norman Lamont: The income ta currently estimated at some £10 million. N on which to base an estimate of the cost reliefs is available.

Inflation

69. **Mr. Ward:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement on the latest outlook for inflation.

76. **Mr. Gerald Bowden:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement on the latest outlook for inflation.

Mr. Lilley: As forecast in the Autumn Statement the RPI is expected to increase by 4½ per cent. over the year to the fourth quarter of 1988.

International Finance Ministers

75. **Mr. Yeo:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer when he is next due to meet the Finance Ministers of the other major industrialised countries.

Mr. Lilley: I refer my hon. Friend to the answer I gave earlier today to my hon. Friend the Member for Beaconsfield (Mr. Smith).

European Monetary System

78. **Mr. Livsey:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what recent review he has undertaken of the Government's policy towards membership of the exchange rate mechanism of the European monetary system; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Lilley: The matter is kept under review.

Balance of Payments

82. **Mr. Nigel Griffiths:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is his latest forecast for the United Kingdom balance of payments figure for 1987 and 1988.

Mr. Major: The Autumn Statement forecast was for a current deficit of £2½ billion in 1987 and £3¼ billion in 1988.

88. **Mr. Barry Jones:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement on the implications for the management of the economy of the current balance of payments.

Mr. Major: Present and prospective United Kingdom current account deficits are relatively small as a percentage of GDP and reflect the fast growth of the United Kingdom economy relative to other major countries. The United Kingdom also has a very strong net overseas assets position. As such, the current account position should not pose any major problems. Policy will continue to safeguard against any unsustainable developments.

Money Supply

91. **Mr. McFall:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is the latest figure for M3, calculated on a yearly basis.

Mr. Lilley: The annual growth rate of M3 to November 1987 was 21·3 per cent.

Unemployment Costs

93. **Mr. Boyes:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will commission research into the total cost of unemployment in the north; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Major: No.

Tobacco Tax

98. **Mr. Jessel:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequ what was the yield from tobacco tax in each of the last f years; and what is the estimated yield for the current ye

Mr. Lilley: The information is as follows:

	Excise duty (£ million)	*VAT (£ million)*	*Total ta (£ million*
1982-83	3,446	770	4,21
1983-84	3,806	810	4,61
1984-85	4,140	860	5,00
1985-86	4,459	910	5,36
1986-87	4,768	970	5,73
[1]1987-88	4,850	[2]	

[1] Estimate.
[2] Not available.
Note: VAT receipts on tobacco products are calculated u estimates of consumers' expenditure, forecasts of which are available in sufficient detail to enable an estimate for 1987-88 t made.

Exchange Rates

103. **Mr. Steinberg:** To ask the Chancellor of Exchequer what mechanisms other than market for exist for the medium-term alteration of the exchange r

Mr. Lilley: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I g on 13 November 1987 to the hon. Member for Glasg Cathcart (Mr. Maxton).

Confederation of British Industry

Mr. Pike: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer w he last met the director general of the Confederation British Industry; and what matters were discussed.

Mr. Major: My right hon. Friend last met the dire general of the Confederation of British Industry at meeting of the National Economic Development Cou on Wednesday 13 January. The council discussed outlook for the economy; a report on the knitting indu and international competitiveness, research and devel ment and action by economic development committe

Tax Revenues

Mr. Adley: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequ what areas he is presently looking for new tax revenu and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Norman Lamont: No. Decisions concern taxation are, as my hon. Friend is aware, matters for Chancellor of the Exchequer's Budget Statement.

Central Office of Information

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchec what is the total staff of the Central Office of Informati and what it was in 1978-79 and 1982-83.

Mr. Brooke: The information requested is as follo

1 January	*Permanent staff in post*[1]
1979	1,163
1983	969
1987	804

[1] Including part-timers.

Advertising

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what are the conventions governing the content of Government advertising and promotional materials; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Brooke: The conventions on central Government publicity and advertising are set out in the Government's evidence submitted to the Widdicombe inquiry in 1985 and deposited in the Library of the House (published as annex D to "Local Authority Publicity: interim report of the Committee of Inquiry into the Conduct of Local Authority Business, chaired by Mr. David Widdicombe QC").

SOCIAL SERVICES

NHS (Staff Accommodation)

Ms. Harman: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will give the latest available figures for *(a)* the numbers of units of staff accommodat rented to staff in the National Health Serv average weekly rent for such accommodat the district health authorities in Greater L

Mrs. Currie: Information in the form r collected centrally. However, an inqu authorities in 1985 indicated that in tota Health Service in England had around 1 accommodation for staff. Since 1977 hea have been required to fix annual rentals with those charged by local housing autho properties in their areas.

In practice, most junior doctors and nu rent but, depending on the type of accom occupy, a lodging charge determined between NHS management and staff org nurses these charges were last increased o

The following tables provide examples o pupil nurses and junior doctors might pay a forms of discount:

1. Nursing staff—annual board and lodging charges

(I) *Grade of accommodation*	*(II)* *Standard board and lodging charges* £	*(III)* *Amount payable with 40 p Students-pupil nurses and others under age 22* £	
Bed-sit rooms:			
4-6 sharing common facilities	854	512	(²307)
3-4 sharing common facilities	1,018		
1 bedroom and 1 living room	1,507		
Self-contained flat	2,161		

[1] The charges to nurses other than students may be reduced by up to 40 per cent. where the accommodation provided

[2] A further reduction of 40 per cent. is appropriate where a nurse shares accommodation at the request of her employ

2. Medical staff—board and lodging charges

(I) *Category of accommodation*	*(II)* *Lodging charge per annum* £	*(III)* *Amount payable if doctor is required to stay overnight in h* *1 night in 3 or more* £	*1 night in 4* £	*1 night in 5* £
Single bed-sitting room	1,051	0	368	578
Separate bed and living room	1,554	0	543	855

In addition, the maximum charge may be abated by:

(i) half the proportion by which the accommodation fails to reach 120 sq ft per room (ie a single room of 60 sq ft woul of 25 per cent.).

(ii) up to 20 per cent. in respect of unsatisfactory standards of the accommodation or its furnishings.

Consultants

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what was the annual cost of consultants' contracts for each district health authority in Nottinghamshire in 1979-80, and what increase there has been in real terms by 1986-87 both in total expenditure and per head.

Mrs. Currie: Prior to 1 April 1982 health services in Nottinghamshire were administered by the Nottinghamshire area health authority and expenditure figures on a district basis were not collected centrally.

The hon. Member may wish to contact the chairman of the Trent regional health authority who may be able to assist with the information he seeks.

Traffic Accidents

Mr. Redwood: To ask the Secretary o Services what was the estimated cost accidents to the National Health Service

Mrs. Currie: The estimated cost to the Service of treating road accident victims available. However, the figure for the pre has been estimated at £124 million in E

NHS (Administrative Staff)

Mr. Butler: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will give the percentage change in the number of administrative staff in the National Health Service in England since 1979.

Mr. Steen: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will set out in the *Official Report* in tabular form the number of managers and administrators employed in the National Health Service since 1979; and if he will indicate the percentage increase or decrease each year.

Mr. Newton: The number of whole-time equivalent administrative and clerical staff, including general managers, employed in England in the September of each year between 1979 and 1986 was as follows:

Year	*Staff in post*	*Percentage increase over previous year*
1979	103,000	—
1980	105,400	2·4
1981	108,800	3·2
1982	108,800	less than 0·1
1983	110,000	1·1
1984	110,300	0·3
1985	111,000	0·7
1986	111,400	0·3

The percentage increase over the period was 8·1.

The numbers are independently rounded to the nearest 100, but the percentages have been calculated on the basis of unrounded figures.

Health Care (North West)

Mr. Tony Lloyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what are his priorities for health care in the area covered by the North Western regional health authority.

Mr. Newton: Health care priorities are set by individual health authorities in the light of national and regional policies taking into account local circumstances.

Priorities for the North Western region are outlined in the region's short-term programme for 1987-88, a copy of which is in the Library.

AIDS

Mr. Ashley: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what, pursuant to his answer of 17 December, *Official Report*, column *688*, is the exact number of patients in the United Kingdom, who received blood infected with AIDS virus, if these patients got the virus from one or more batches of contaminated blood; if they were told the result of the infection; over what period of time were these people infected; when was the last indication of an infected blood transfusion; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Newton: The very small chance of human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) infection arising from a blood transfusion in the United Kingdom was further reduced from August 1983 when potential donors in high-risk groups were asked not to give blood. Screening of all donations for antibodies to HIV began in October 1985; there have been no reports of HIV infection arising from transfusions given in England and Wales after that date.

The exact number of patients in the United Ki who have received blood infected with HIV is unl In general, infected patients would be identified they became ill later. At the end of 1987, 41 cases infection associated with blood transfusions given United Kingdom before October 1985 had been r to the communicable disease surveillance centr figure includes the eight cases of AIDS to which I r in my reply on 17 December 1987 at column *688*.

Because blood from different donors is not pool batches, an infected donation would have affecte one recipient.

Radiotherapy

Mr. Warren: To ask the Secretary of State fo Services when his Department's guidance to authorities on the organisation of radiotherapy will be completed; and if he will make a statemen

Mrs. Currie: The Department's review of its g to health authorities on the organisation of radio services is nearing completion.

Oswestry (Gobowen) Orthopaedic Hospita

Mr. Barry Jones: To ask the Secretary of S Social Services how many beds are to be clo Shropshire health authority at Oswestry (Go orthopaedic hospital, and for what period of tim will make extra cash grants to the Shropshire authority to enable it to keep the beds in use; ho orthopaedic surgery wards will shut and what ser be available, when beds are closed for pae rheumatology and spinal injuries; how many nursi are frozen; what is his estimate of the number o from *(a)* Wales and *(b)* Clwyd treated at the ho Oswestry annually; what is his estimate of the im bed closures upon potential patients from Clwy many Clwyd patients attended Oswestry hospital and 1987; and if he will make a statement concern closures as they affect patients from Clwyd seeki replacements.

Mrs. Currie: The Shropshire health auth responsible for the services provided at Oswestry h The hon. Member may therefore wish to write chairman of the Shropshire district health authorit information he is seeking.

Hannah Pickard Ward (Clayton Hospita

Mr. Hinchliffe: To ask the Secretary of State fo Services what is the full cost of the recent upgradi Hannah Pickard ward, Clayton hospital, Wakefie the ward has not been re-opened; when it wil opened; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Currie: Wakefield health authority is res for the services at Clayton hospital. The hon. therefore may wish to approach the chair Wakefield health authority for the details he is s

NHS (Savings)

Ms. Harman: To ask the Secretary of State fo Services by how much general managers in the Health Service in England have been requested

their short-term programmes to achieve a saving on their previously submitted programme; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Newton: Regional health authorities have not yet submitted their short-term programmes for 1988-89. We have given them more time in which to do so, so that they can take account of both the extra resources for that year which my right hon. Friend announced on 3 November and the implications for their 1988-89 plans of the additional resources for 1987-88 which I announced in my statement to the House on 16 December.

Social Security Reform

Mr. Hood: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what is the estimate of the first three years' savings resulting from the April changes in housing benefits in Scotland.

Mr. Portillo: I regret that the information for Scotland alone is not available.

NHS (Expenditure)

Mrs. Clywd: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what was the level of Government spending on the National Health Service, expressed per household, in 1979 and in each year since then at (i) current prices, (ii) 1979 prices and (iii) 1987 prices.

Mr. Newton: The information requested is as follows:

Government spending on the NHS expressed per household (Great Britain)

	£ Cash	*at 1978-79 prices*	*at 1986-87 prices*
1978-79	384·85	384·85	748·74
1979-80	454·31	388·72	756·27
1980-81	583·32	420·97	819·02
1981-82	648·31	426·11	829·03
1982-83	702·38	430·65	837·86
1983-84	739·51	433·48	843·37
1984-85	785·66	441·11	858·21
1985-86	823·09	435·81	847·89
1986-87	876·01	450·26	876.01

These figures are affected by changes in the number and composition of households. Over the same period per capita expenditure has increased from £268·23 to £329·39 at 1986-87 prices.

Richmond House

Mrs. Beckett: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what expenditure was incurred on furniture and office equipment, including floor coverings, as a result of the move *(a)* of his private office and *(b)* of his Department to Richmond house from previous furnished accommodation at Alexander Fleming house.

Mr. Moore: Expenditure incurred to date on furniture and office equipment, including floor coverings, as a result of the move of DHSS staff over the Christmas recess from Alexander Fleming house to Richmond house was as follows:

(a) Secretary of State and his private office—£17,000
(b) The remaining staff (including five other Ministers and their private offices)—£450,000

The vast majority of staff were ab
furniture and equipment from the prev
tion. The costs at *(b)* include floor cove
of the Richmond house complex; provi
machines for facsimile and telex; togeth
for audio conferences.

Widows' Pensions

Mrs. Beckett: To ask the Secretary
Services what rights of appeal are ava
whose pension is withdrawn on the g
living with a man as his wife *(a)* if
ordinary widow's pension and *(b)* if i
pension.

Mr. Portillo: Decisions on entitle
insurance widows' benefits, supplem
family income supplement, includin
whether a widow is living with a man as
by independent adjudication officers.
appeal against decisions of adjudicat
independent social security appeal trib
a right of appeal on a point of law ag
a social security appeal tribunal to
comissioner.

There is no right of appeal open to
of a war widow's pension when the
decides that the pension should be with
is living with a man as his wife. Inste
Secretary of State to review the decisio
war pensions committee to make rep
behalf.

Social Fund

Mrs. Beckett: To ask the Secretary
Services if he will list the offices of his
to date have raised operational difficul
fund budgets; and what difficulties e
with their budget.

Mr. Scott: The questions which a f
raised about their budget allocations
ment matters which are normally tre

Hospital Closures

Mr. Nellist: To ask the Secretary
Services why, pursuant to his answer
for Caernarfon (Mr. Wigley) of 18
Report, column *938*, information is o
December 1986 about the referral o
closures of hospitals.

Mrs. Currie: Statistics about
proposals are routinely collected fr
authorities; those for 1987 are not ye

NHS (Pay Award

Mr. Wareing: To ask the Secretar
Services if he will publish a table sho
authority in England the estimate
funding of pay awards over the last

Mr. Newton: Authorities are expe
of pay awards from within the total r

them, including savings achieved through cost improvement programmes. Allocations to regions do not include any specific "earmarked" provision for pay costs; decisions on the allocation of funds between manpower costs and other expenditure are a matter for health authorities. However, the Government, in considering reports from the review bodies, take account of their financial effects. Additional funds were provided in both 1986-87 and 1987-88.

In 1987-88, the additional £262 million provided for health authorities in England covered 95 per cent. of the cost of the review body awards over and above general inflation; in 1986-87 92 per cent. of that cost was covered in this way.

Mr. J. F. Yeatman

Mr. Steen: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services when he hopes to send the decision on war disability pension to Mr. J. F. Yeatman of Wembury, Plymouth, reference MI/824D0, following his application for a medical re-examination in January 1987 and his medical re-examination on 29 July 1987, the findings of which examination have still not been communicated to Mr. Yeatman; and if he will make a statement as to the reasons for the delay in this matter.

Mr. Portillo: I regret the delay in this case. It is mainly due to a backlog in dealing with claims to war pension because of a significant increase in the number of claims in 1986 and 1987, coupled with the need to obtain further evidence about Mr. Yeatman's medical history following his medical examination in July 1987. A decision will be sent to Mr. Yeatman within the next few days.

Census

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) what consultations he will be holding on the nature of the questions to be contained in the 1991 census of population; and when he expects this consultation to take place;

(2) whether he will consider including a question in the 1991 census of population in order to ascertain the number of Welsh-speakers living outside Wales.

Mrs. Currie: I refer the hon. Member to the reply given to the hon. Member for Tatton (Mr. Hamilton) on 2 November 1987, at column *573*. Consultations on the content of the 1991 census are taking place currently. The arrangements are described in "Census Newsletter No. 2", a copy of which is in the Library.

A question in order to ascertain the number of Welsh-speakers living outside Wales is being considered, as are many other suggestions.

However, no decisions have yet been taken on the content of the census. Proposals will be published as a White Paper later this year.

Community Medicine

Mr. Wolfson: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services when he intends to publish the report of the committee of inquiry into the future development of the public health function and community medicine; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Moore: I have today published the report of the inquiry set up by my predecessor to consider the future development of the public health function in En required by its terms of reference, the report co on the control of communicable disease and t public health doctors within the framework management in the NHS and also examines issues of the public health function. It suggest which surveillance of the health of the populat be improved, a greater emphasis on the prev illness and premature death achieved, and the eff of health services better evaluated. The Gover grateful for the work of the chairman and meml inquiry. We shall be studying their recommen detail as a matter of urgency and hope to make statement on implementation in the near futur

Publicity

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State Services what is the latest figure for the estimate in 1987-88 by his Department on *(a)* advertising, *(b)* radio advertising, *(c)* advertising and *(d)* other promotional material are the estimated expenditures in each area for

Mr. Moore *[holding answer 17 Decembe* Figures for total spending by my Department on radio and newspaper advertising and other pr literature in 1987-88 are as follows:

Television	
Radio	
Newspapers	
Other promotional literature	
Total	

For 1988-89 detailed decisions on expenditur have not yet been taken, but the overall publici expected to be £18 million.

Press and Public Relations

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State Services what is the latest figure for the expenditure by his Department on press a relations for *(a)* 1987-88 and *(b)* 1988-89.

Mr. Moore *[holding answer 17 December* Department has no section which can be identified as public relations. Functions commonly associated with public relations are by the Department's information division.

Estimates for the year 1987-88 are as follow

Advertising and other paid publicity activities	
Manpower	
Estimates for the year 1988-89 are as follows:	
Advertising and other paid publicity activities	
Manpower	

Cancer Screening

Dr. Glyn: To ask the Secretary of State Services what estimate he has made of th expanding the cervical smear test programme that all results are available within one week for over 16 years of age at least once every three

Mrs. Currie *[holding answer 18 December 1987]:* The Department's cancer screening evaluation unit has estimated that the additional cost in England and Wales of a change from five-yearly to three-yearly screening for all women aged 20 to 64 would, assuming 100 per cent. acceptance of screening, be somewhat over £22 million per annum.

The additional cost of a change from three-yearly screening beginning at age 20 to three-yearly screening beginning at age 17 would, assuming 100 per cent. acceptance of screening, be about £4 million per annum.

Ensuring that all results were available within one week would require considerable over-capacity in laboratories in order that they could cope with fluctuations in demand. The further cost that would be required has not been calculated, since maintaining such over-capacity would not seem to be the best use of resources.

The national policy is to screen women aged 20 to 64 ever five years. Epidemiological studies indicate that women screened in line with this policy are 84 per cent. less likely than unscreened women to develop invasive cervical cancer. I am advised that our efforts should be directed at increasing uptake, since increasing the proportion of women being screened in line with this policy will have a greater impact on death rates than increasing the frequency of screening.

Hospital Beds

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will give for 1983 and for the latest year available the total number of hospital beds for each of the following services, broken down by district health authorities *(a)* general medical, *(b)* general surgical, *(c)* non-psychiatric acute, *(d)* geriatric, *(e)* maternity, *(f)* mental illness, *(g)* mentally handicapped and *(h)* total.

Mrs. Currie *[holding answer 7 December 1987]:* The information the hon. Member seeks has now been placed in the Library.

Written Answers to Questions

Friday 15 January 1988

THE ARTS

Departmental Expenditure

Mr. Ieuan Wyn Jones: To ask the Minister for the Arts what was his Department's total expenditure on the arts in England and in Wales during the 1986-87 financial year.

Mr. Richard Luce: My Department's total expenditure on the arts in the financial year 1986-87 was £285.7 million, largely in the form of grants in aid to arts bodies. Of the grant in aid of £135.6 million to the Arts Council for Great Britain, £7.6 million was provided for the Welsh Arts Council. Responsibility for the provision of grants in aid to the National Museum of Wales and the National Library of Wales rests with my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Wales.

EDUCATION AND SCIENCE

Special Educational Needs

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science how many students with special educational needs regularly attend courses run by colleges of further and higher education in England and in each of the English counties.

Mr. Jackson: A survey by the National Bureau for Handicapped Students was commissioned in 1985. Its report "Catching-Up?" and DES statistical bulletin 7/87 summarise the results and are in the Library of the House. Figures are not provided for individual counties, but about 44,000 students with special educational needs were attending various courses run by public sector institutions of further and higher education in England. Of these, 17,600 were on mainstream college courses or courses specifically provided for students with special educational needs, 12,500 were enrolled at another institution but attended a college for part of the week, and 13,400 were attending outreach courses run by college staff at other centres. Some of the data are to be updated annually.

NATIONAL FINANCE

Sexual Harassment

Ms. Richardson: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is his Department's policy on sexual harassment at work; whether guidance on reporting complaints has been issued to all staff; how many complaints have been reported in the past five years; and what disciplinary action has been taken.

Mr. Brooke: The Civil Service policy on sexual harassment is set out in the programme of action to achieve equal opportunities for women in the Civil Service which was published by the Cabinet Office (Management and Personnel Office) in 1984. Sexual harassment at work is not tolerated and is dealt with as a disciplinary matter through the usual Civil Service complaints procedures. Specific guidance on reporting alleged sexual harassment is included in "Women in the Treasury; a guide to personnel management policies" which has been issued to all Treasury staff. There have been four complaints reported in the past five years; in the two proven cases, formal written warnings were issued.

Manor of Northstead

Mr. Campbell-Savours: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what was the cost to the Exchequer of the Manor of Northstead in each year since 1980.

Mr. Lawson: Nothing. The stewardship of the Manor of Northstead, like that of the Chiltern Hundreds, is a nominal office of profit under the Crown; no salary actually attaches.

Central Office of Information

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is the estimated total cost of the Central Office of Information in 1987-88; and what it was in 1978-79 and 1982-83.

Mr. Brooke *[holding answer 14 January 1988]:* The estimated total running costs of the COI in 1987-88 and comparable actual costs for 1978-79 and 1982-83 are as follows:

£ million

Year	*Cash prices*	*Constant 1987-88 prices*
1978-79	10·7	21·5
1982-83	17·6	22·0
1987-88 (estimated)	19·0	19·0

At constant 1987-88 prices the total expenditure for the COI in 1978-79 was £71·4 million, in 1982-83 was £60·5 million, and in 1987-88 is estimated to be £141 million.

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is the cost of Central Office of Information work put out to private consultants and agencies in 1987-88; and what it was in 1978-79 and 1982-83.

Mr. Brooke *[holding answer 14 January 1988]:* The COI does not hold records of expenditure with consultancies and agencies in the form requested. In 1987-88 the department estimates that it will spend £104·5 million on goods and services with the private sector as a whole. Comparable figures for earlier years are not available.

BP Shares

Mr. Darling: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he intends to meet the Kuwaiti Government or the Kuwaiti Investment Office in order to discuss the Kuwaiti Investment Office's shareholding in British Petroleum plc.

Mr. Lawson: It is not my normal practice to disclose details of possible discussions with other Governments or their agencies.

OVERSEAS DEVELOPMENT

Overseas Development Administration (East Kilbride)

Mr. Ingram: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what are the actual or estimated costs of office rentals for the Overseas Development Administration's accommodation in East Kilbride in each of the last three years, the current year, and in each of the next three years.

Mr. Chris Patten: The annual rental cost per square metre of the Overseas Development Administration's office accommodation for its East Kilbride headquarters is as follows:

	£
Actuals	
1984-85	37·92
1985-86	39·44
1986-87	70·59
1987-88	73·06
Estimated	
1988-89	75·98
1989-90	78·64
1990-91	81·00

Overseas Development Administration Headquarters

Mr. Ingram: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what plans the Overseas Development Administration has for accommodation for its London headquarters when it eventually leaves Eland house.

Mr. Chris Patten: The matter is being kept under review by officials of my Department and the Property Services Agency.

Overseas Development Administration (Accommodation)

Mr. Ingram: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what are the actual or estimated costs of office rentals for the Overseas Development Administration's accommodation in London in each of the last three years, the current year and in each of the next three years.

Mr. Chris Patten: The annual rental cost per square metre of the Overseas Development Administration's London headquarters—excluding its scientific units—is as follows:

	£
Actuals	
1984-85	156·20
1985-86	164·45
1986-87	149·97
1987-88	172·20
Estimated	
1988-89	179·09
1989-90	185·36
1990-91	190·92

The charges are those paid to the Property Services Agency under property repayment services arrangements.

Overseas Development Administration (Dispersal)

Mr. Ingram: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what would be the estimated net annual recurrent cost savings if the London-based Overseas Development Administration jobs were dispersed to the Glasgow-East Kilbride area.

Mr. Chris Patten: The main recurrent saving from moving the Overseas Development Administration London-based posts to East Kilbride would be on accommodation costs and would be approximately £1·9 million a year at January 1988 prices. Other recurrent savings, for example on London weighting, would probably be broadly offset by the additional recurrent costs of relocation, including travel.

This estimate takes no account of unquantifiable efficiency losses arising from the separation of such a significant element of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office from the remainder of that office. Nor does it take account of the capital and other non-recurrent costs of relocation, or of costs which would accrue to other Government Departments and public bodies.

Mr. Ingram: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether he will place in the Library copies or summaries of the reviews and studies that the Overseas Development Administration has made into further dispersal of its work to East Kilbride since the initial dispersal exercise in 1981.

Mr. Chris Patten: The matter has been kept under review on a continuing basis since 1981, as part of the wider exercise to ensure that the Government met their commitment to disperse to the west of Scotland functions providing at that time 2,050 jobs, and as part of a regular programme of internal Overseas Development Administration management reviews. The conclusion has always been that there were no further major blocks of work which could be dispersed without unacceptable loss of efficiency, although minor changes have been made. As my hon. Friend the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs told the House on 3 November 1987, I re-examined the question last year as a result of representations from the Overseas Development Administration's local trade union sides in London and East Kilbride, but concluded that there was no case for a further major dispersal programme.

Mr. Ingram: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will give the number of Overseas Development Administration posts dispersed to East Kilbride as a result of the reviews and studies which the Administration has carried out since the initial dispersal exercise in 1981.

Mr. Chris Patten: One hundred and sixty-seven posts in the Crown Agents pensions division were dispersed to East Kilbride in 1982. The Crown Agents pensions division was incorporated in the Overseas Development Administration's pensions department on 1 December 1987. Three posts dealing with arrangements for joint funding of projects with non-governmental organisations were transferred to East Kilbride from London in 1983. It was decided last year that consultancies department (10 posts based in London) should form part of overseas manpower department (based in East Kilbride). The implications of this for the structure of the department and location of jobs are currently being examined.

In addition we have nine staff in new posts created in East Kilbride since 1981 in specialist areas such as information technology and internal audit.

CIVIL SERVICE

Staff Appraisal

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: To ask the Minister for the Civil Service what representations he has received from civil servants on the new staff appraisal system in the Civil Service.

Mr. Luce: No representations have been received. However, the recently completed evaluation of the new staff appraisal system has shown that the system has been well received by civil servants, who are especially pleased with its openness.

PRIME MINISTER

Property Services Agency

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Prime Minister whether Her Majesty's Government have any proposals to remove from the Property Services Agency its current responsibilities in defence work either *(a)* in full or *(b)* in part; and if she will make a statement.

The Prime Minister: The responsibilities of the Property Services Agency are among the matters kept under review as part of the Government's efforts to improve efficiency and enhance value for money in the provision of Government accommodation. In the event of changes in those responsibilities, an announcement would be made at the appropriate time.

Nuclear Forces

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Prime Minister, further to her answer of 7 December 1987, *Official Report*, column *9*, whether she will convert the comparison she provided in terms of estimated fire power or throw weight intensity and provide comparable figures for NATO as a whole.

The Prime Minister: It is not known what quantities and types of missiles the Soviet Union would retain to meet a 50 per cent. cut in strategic systems. Furthermore, information on missile throw weight and warhead yield is classified.

Africa (Visit)

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Prime Minister what was the total cost of her visit to Kenya and Nigeria; what was her method of travel and who was the carrier; and how many civil servants accompanied her.

The Prime Minister: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the answers I gave yesterday to the hon. Member for Holborn and St. Pancras (Mr. Dobson) at columns *352-53*. I travelled by Royal Air Force VC10.

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Prime Minister what was the charge to journalists who travelled with her to Africa in official transport.

The Prime Minister: Journalists who travelled with me to Africa were charged £1,000. This sum was based on commercial rates.

Government Decisions (Lawyers)

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Prime Minister if she will place in the Library the memorandum to Government Departments about the inclusion of lawyers in key Government policy decisions.

The Prime Minister: It is not my practice to place documents dealing with internal Civil Service management procedures in the Library.

State Security

Mr. Madden: To ask the Prime Minister what consideration has been given to prosecuting under the Official Secrets Act those individuals who sought to induce Peter Wright to disclose information from MI5 files concerning Lord Wilson; and if she will make a statement.

The Prime Minister: Any such matter would be for the prosecuting authorities.

Mr. Madden: To ask the Prime Minister if she has caused inquiries to be made into the identity of individuals who sought to induce Peter Wright to disclose information from MI5 files concerning Lord Wilson; and if she will make a statement.

The Prime Minister: It would be inappropriate for me to comment on matters at issue in the proceedings concerning the Peter Wright case while those proceedings continue.

Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Scotland

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Prime Minister what steps she has taken to ensure that the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Scotland, the hon. Member for Edinburgh, West (Lord James Douglas-Hamilton), has complied with the rules governing ministerial conduct, with particular reference to the divestment of financial interests, in so far as they relate to his dealings with the Housing (Scotland) Bill; and if she will make a statement.

The Prime Minister: I have been advised of the facts and am satisfied that no breach of the rules governing ministerial conduct has occurred.

Conduct of Ministers

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Prime Minister if she will place in the Library the rules regarding the conduct of Ministers, with specific reference to their financial and other interests.

The Prime Minister: It has been the practice of successive Governments not to make Cabinet documents public or to release them to Parliament. So far as Ministers' financial interests are concerned, I refer the hon. Gentleman to my reply of 26 November 1987 to the hon. Member for Bradford, South (Mr. Cryer) at column *261*.

DEFENCE

Army Equipment Exhibition

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to his reply to the hon. Member for Roxburgh and Berwickshire (Mr. Kirkwood) on 13 November 1987, *Official Report*, column *333-34*, why the British Army equipment exhibition, scheduled to be held at Aldershot from 27 June to 1 July, will not be open to the public.

Mr. Sainsbury: The British Army equipment exhibition is designed for professional and technical experts, not for the general public.

Surplus Property

Mr. Gow: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many houses and flats owned by his Department are surplus to requirement; in how many cases the Property Services Agency has been instructed to sell such properties; and how many properties remain unsold *(a)* more than four months, *(b)* more than eight months and *(c)* more than 12 months after the Property Services Agency was instructed to sell them.

Mr. Freeman: At 30 November 1987, the most recent date for which statistics are available, a total of 2,397 houses and flats had been declared surplus to MOD's requirements and were still owned by the Ministry of Defence. Of these, PSA had been instructed to sell 844 and a further 384 were in the process of sale through the discounted sales scheme which offers houses (but not flats) to servicemen at a discount of 30 per cent. The remaining 1,169 properties were still being processed by the PL(Lands) division at the Ministry of Defence as part of the normal process prior to sale. Each year PL(Lands) processes about 2,000 properties.

I regret that the information required to identify the number of the properties remaining unsold after four, eight and 12 months is not available to the PSA and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Military Flying

Mr. Ieuan Wyn Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if, pursuant to the answer to the hon. Member for Ynys Môn of 16 November 1987, *Official Report*, column *452*, he will place copies of the standing instructions relating to military flying in the Library.

Mr. Freeman: No. The document in question, the "United Kingdom Military Low Flying Handbook," is classified.

Ship Disposals

Mr. Spearing: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) on what grounds he decided to dispose of HMS Chrysanthemum and HMS President, and what consultations he undertook prior to reaching that decision;

(2) what publicity he gave to his decisions to dispose of HMS Chrysanthemum and HMS President; by what means their prospective sale was publicised; and how many tenders were received for each vessel;

(3) how many tenders he received for the sale of HMS Chrysanthemum and HMS President, respectively, and what was the price received for each.

Mr. Sainsbury: HM ships Chrysanthemum and President currently house the London division royal naval reserve. It was decided to dispose of them, as the headquarters is due to move to new shore accommodation next month and no alternative use within the Royal Navy had been identified.

Normal disposal procedures were followed. A number of representations concerning their possible future use after disposal were received from organisations outside the Ministry of Defence.

The sale of HM ships President and Chrysanthem was advertised in *Lloyd's List* on 17-18 July 1986 addition, invitations to tender were invited fro standard panel of ship repairers-breakers. A total o inquiries were received, following which three tenders submitted for each vessel. As a result the sale price ag with the highest bidder covering both ships is £100,000.

RNAD Coulport

Mr. McFall: To ask the Secretary of State for Def (1) pursuant to the answer given on 8 December 1 *Official Report*, column *142*, how many jobs will be each year as the facilities progress towards the elimina of Polaris and the installation of Trident;

(2) pursuant to the answer of 8 December 1987, *Of Report*, column *142*, how many jobs he anticipates c be generated by the alternative forms of employ under consideration for workers at RNAD Coulport; if he will make a statement;

(3) pursuant to the answer on 8 December 1987, *Of Report*, column *142*, what types of alternative employ are actively being considered for those workers presently service the Polaris missiles at RNAD Coul and who will be affected by the demanning involved i changeover to Trident; and what steps have been tak research the feasibility of these alternative jobs.

Mr. Sainsbury: I refer the hon. Member to the an I gave on 8 December at column *142*. The phasing o Polaris is currently the subject of detailed planning w MOD. Until this work is completed, it is not possib be specific about the timing of any resultant job loss RNAD Coulport. Assessments of how many new job likely to be created at the depot are similarly depe upon the outcome of this work, which, because c complexity, will not be concluded for some conside time. The investigation into any other possible em ment will similarly take a considerable time to comp

Vacant Properties

Mr. Gow: To ask the Secretary of State for De how many empty houses and flats were owned b Department on the latest available date; and how were owned on the same date in each of the past years.

Mr. Freeman: Statistics showing the number of e service houses and flats and the number of empty owned civilian houses and flats are held separately.

As at 30 November 1987 (the latest date for w figures are available) the total number of service h and flats vacant was 15,801. Statistics showing the nu of empty service houses and flats throughout the last years are only available for each year as at 31 July. information is:

	Number
31 July 1980	19,400
31 July 1981	14,850
31 July 1982	13,200
31 July 1983	14,670
31 July 1984	14,527
31 July 1985	14,235
31 July 1986	14,381
31 July 1987	15,529

The number of MOD civilian houses and flats vacant on 31 March 1987 (the latest date for which these figures are available) was 353. Figures for the previous seven years are shown below:

	Number
31 March 1980	313
31 March 1981	421
31 March 1982	334
31 March 1983	678
31 March 1984	496
31 March 1985	427
31 March 1986	361

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Thefts

Mr. Cryer: To ask the Lord President of the Council, how many items have been reported as stolen from the *(a)* offices, *(b)* corridors, *(c)* family room, *(d)* Library and *(e)* refreshment rooms of the Commons section of the Palace of Westminster in 1986 and 1987 to the most recent practicable date; and how many items have been recovered for each period.

Mr. Wakeham: Cases of theft from areas in the House of Commons which were reported to the head of security were as follows:

	1986	*1987*
Offices	10	4
Corridors	1	Nil
Families' Room	Nil	2
Library	Nil	Nil
Refreshment Rooms	5	2

One item, stolen in 1987 has been recovered, but investigations into the remaining cases are continuing.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Romania

Mr. Butler: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what action has been taken through the Council of Ministers to condemn police repression in Romania.

Mr. Mellor: Romania's observance of its human rights commitments is unsatisfactory. My right hon. and learned Friend had a detailed discussion of this with the Romanian Foreign Minister, during his visit to London in November. Both the United Kingdom delegation and the European Community Presidency have referred to these issues frequently at the Vienna CSCE meeting. We shall continue, with our Community partners, to draw attention to the need for Romania to respect human rights.

Human Rights

Mr. Dicks: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations he has made to the Government of Zimbabwe regarding the affront to civilised values revealed in the recent report by Amnesty International on the abuse of human rights in Zimbabwe, a copy of which has been sent to him; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Chalker: None. We are concerned at human rights violations wherever they occur. While there continue to be occasional reports of ill treatment of prisoners, we have noted a recent general improvement in the human rights situation in Zimbabwe as reflected in the Amnesty report itself, particularly the release of large numbers of opposition detainees. Significantly the African Association on Human and People's Rights in Development was established in the presence of a Zimbabwe Minister in Harare on 31 August 1987.

Mr. Dicks: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations he has made to the Government of Zambia regarding the affront to civilised values revealed in the recent report by Amnesty International on the abuse of human rights in Zambia, a copy of which has been sent to him; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Chalker: The importance we attach to respect for human rights is well-known to the Zambians and is regularly expressed at the United Nations, and other international fora.

Mr. Dicks: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations he has made to the Government of Uganda regarding the affront to civilised values revealed in the recent report by Amnesty International on the abuse of human rights in Uganda, a copy of which has been sent to him; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Chalker: Amnesty International's 1987 report noted a "significant" improvement in respect for human rights in Uganda. The Government of Uganda are publicly committed to respect for human rights. We have regular contacts with them.

Mr. Dicks: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (1) what representations he has made to the Government of Nigeria regarding the affront to civilised values revealed in the recent report by Amnesty International on the abuse of human rights in Nigeria, a copy of which has been sent to him; and if he will make a statement;

(2) what representations he has made to the Government of Ghana regarding the affront to civilised values revealed in the recent report by Amnesty International on the abuse of human rights in Ghana, a copy of which has been sent to him; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Chalker: We continue to monitor closely the human rights situation in west Africa as elsewhere and regularly make clear in appropriate fora our view that human rights must be respected in accordance with internationally agreed standards.

In respect of the 1987 Amnesty International report, no representations have been made to the Governments of Ghana or Nigeria. In general, the human rights situation in these countries has improved over recent years.

Mr. Dicks: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations he has made to the Government of India regarding the affront to civilised values revealed in the recent report by Amnesty International on the abuse of human rights in India, a copy of which has been sent to him; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Eggar: None. We have noted the contents of Amnesty International's 1987 report. We regularly make clear our views on the need for all governments to respect human rights.

Mr. Dicks: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations he has made to the Government of Bangladesh regarding the affront to civilised values revealed in the recent report by Amnesty International on the abuse of human rights in Bangladesh, a copy of which has been sent to him; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Eggar: We have noted the contents of the 1987 Amnesty International report. We regularly make clear our views on the need for all governments to respect human rights and have on several occasions raised with the Bangladesh Government at the highest levels the concern felt in this country for human rights in Bangladesh.

Mr. Dicks: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations he has made to the Government of Kenya regarding the affront to civilised values revealed in the recent report by Amnesty International on the abuse of human rights in Kenya, a copy of which has been sent to him; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Chalker: Kenya's human rights record has been good since independence. In the context of the Amnesty International report, President Moi has given a number of public undertakings that human rights will continue to be respected. In his speech at the official banquet for my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister on the 5 January he said,

"Our law is clear on the question of protection of human rights . . . we cannot betray our struggle for Independence by denying our people the very same rights we fought for so hard".

We have made our view clear on this issue.

Council of Social Affairs Ministers

Mr. Leighton: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what have been the main decisions of the European Community Council of Social Affairs Ministers in the last five years.

Mr. Cope: I have been asked to reply.

I refer the hon. Member to the six-monthly White Papers on developments in the European Community, which have been laid before Parliament and debated in the House of Commons. For the decisions of the Council of Labour and Social Affairs Ministers from June 1983 to June 1987, the references are set out in the table.

Council of Labour and Social Affairs Ministers White Papers

2 June 1983—Cmnd. 9043 September 1983.
2 December 1983—Cmnd. 9214 March 1984.
7 June 1984—Cmnd. 9348 September 1984.
13 December 1984—Cmnd. 9485 May 1985.
13 June 1985—Cmnd. 9627 September 1985.
5 December 1985—Cmnd. 9761 March 1986.
5 June 1986—Cmnd. 9911 October 1986.
11 December 1986—Cm. 122 April 1987.
26 May 1987—Cm. 205 September 1987.

Joint Council of Education and Social Affairs Ministers

3 June 1983—Cmnd. 9043 September 1983.

I refer the hon. Member to the reply of 17 December 1987 of my hon. Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Employment to my hon. Friend the Member for Batley and Spen (Mrs. Peacock), the Council of Labour and Social Affairs Min on 1 December 1987.

AIDS

Mr. Gar[illegible]h Wardell: To ask the Secretary o Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will the *Official Report* those countries for Department recommends visitors to take a precautions to avoid contracting the AIDS vir

Mr. Eggar: AIDS is a worldwide prob countries had reported AIDS cases to the Wo Organisation as of 12 January 1988. The DH "Protect Your Health Abroad" gives general hea (including advice on AIDS) for people travelling

The travel inquiries unit of the For Commonwealth Office's consular department ca similar advice, and where available official in issued by other countries. Travellers are advised the mission in London of the country which visiting for more specific information or on contact the nearest British mission which ca provide a list of local medical practitioners, but course, provide medical advice.

Sexual Harassment

Ms. Richardson: To ask the Secretary of Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs wha Department's policy on sexual harassment whether guidance on reporting complaints has b to all members of staff; how many complaints reported in the past five years; and what di action has been taken.

Mr. Eggar: Civil Service policy on sexual h is set out in the programme of action opportunities for women in the Civil Service v published by the Cabinet Office (Manage Personnel Office) in 1984. Sexual harassment a not tolerated and may be dealt with as a di matter through the usual diplomatic service or h Service complaints procedure.

Guidance on reporting complaints has be available to all staff in the diplomatic and aid wi have been no official complaints in the past fiv the diplomatic wing. In the aid wing, one resulted in the offender's being reprimanded.

Kenya and Nigeria (Prime Minister's Vi

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what additi were incurred by Her Majesty's high commi Kenya and Nigeria arising from the visit to those by the Prime Minister.

Mrs. Chalker: Costs incurred by Brit commissions in Kenya and Nigeria are as follo

	£
(a) Kenya	563
(b) Nigeria	2,500

Afghanistan

Mr. Gregory: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what information he has as to what discussions have taken place to ensure that representative sections of the Mujahideen will participate in the peace proposals for Afghanistan.

Mr. Eggar: It is clear that the peace process cannot succeed without participation by the Mujahideen. The European Council statement of 5 December 1987 called on the Soviet Union to recognise that the participation of the Afghan resistance is essential to a comprehensive political settlement.

Mr. Gregory: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent representations have been made by Her Majesty's Government to the Government of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics concerning the timing of withdrawal of Soviet troops stationed in Afghanistan.

Mr. Eggar: We regularly raise these issues with the Soviet Government, most recently on 7 December when my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister expressed to Mr. Gorbachev the hope that there would be a Soviet withdrawal in 1988.

Kenya (Detentions without Trial)

Mr. Bowis: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (1) what representations he has made, or intends to make, to the Government of Kenya on the arrest in May 1986 and again in July 1986 and the subsequent detention without trial of Dr. George Katema Mkangi;

(2) what representations he has made, or intends to make, to the Government of Kenya on the arrest in March 1986 and subsequent detention without trial of Francis Kariuki Gathitu;

(3) what representations he has made, or will make, to the Government of Kenya on the arrest in July 1986 and again in October 1986 and the subsequent detention without trial of Wanyiri Kihoro;

(4) what representations he has made or will make to the Government of Kenya on the arrest in May 1986 and again in July 1986 and the subsequent detention without trial of David Mukuru Ng'ang'a.

Mrs. Chalker: Kenya's overall human rights record has been good since independence. The Kenyan authorities are well aware of our view on the importance of maintaining this record and our concern over prolonged detention without trial. We raise such cases with them on appropriate occasions.

Peter Karanja

Mr. Bowis: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations he has made, or will make, to the Government of Kenya on the seven-hour interrogation on 11 January of Judge Marvin Frankel and Dr. Robert Kirschner, both international observers at the inquest into the death in custody of Peter Karanja.

Mrs. Chalker: My right hon. and learned Friend has no plans to raise this matter with the Government of Kenya.

Mr. Ozker Ozgur (Libel Damages)

Mr. Corbett: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if, in the light of the implied threat to the legitimate activities of a legal opposition party and those who oppose the integration of northern Cyprus into mainland Turkey, he will make an official protest to the Turkish Government over the award of £100,000 damages against Mr. Ozker Ozgur, the leader of the Republican Turkish Party in Cyprus, for an alleged libel of Mr. Rauf Denktash.

Mrs. Chalker: It would not be appropriate for us to make representations over a civil case of this kind. Nor do we believe that the Government of Turkey are involved in this matter.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Radio Call Signs

Mr. Warren: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster for what reasons the indentities of the holders of radio call signs are secret; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Butcher: The identities of civil radio licensees are not classified, but many users of radio such as the police and security firms have very good reasons for not wanting to make unauthorised reception of their transmissions easier. There are also commercial reasons for many other users not wishing to have their call signs made available. Radio amateurs are specifically asked upon issue of their licence whether they wish to have their call sign details published; I respect their decisions.

All licence details kept on computer are subject to the provisions of the Data Protection Act.

Economic Prospects

Mr. Butler: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster whether he will make a statement on the economic prospects for the north-west.

Mr. Atkins: I refer to the Autumn Statement given by my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer on 3 November 1987 *Official Report*, columns 783-86, when he forecast that for the United Kingdom as a whole there was likely to be a continuation of steady growth, low inflation and falling unemployment in 1988. I would expect the economy in the north-west to share in this increasing prosperity. Unemployment in the region is already falling steadily and there is much evidence of rising investment and output from an increasingly competitive industrial base. I am confident that, thanks to the sound fiscal policies and measures to promote enterprise adopted by the Government, the economy of the north-west now has better prospects for sustained growth than for many years. I am also sure that the enterprise initiative which my right hon. and learned Friend the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster announced on 12 January, *Official Report* columns 145-47, will give an added impetus to economic growth in the north-west by allowing the talents and energies of companies and people in the region to be harnessed even more effectively than in the past.

Courtaulds

Mr. Steinberg: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what has been the total of grants paid by his Department to Courtaulds in respect of its Belmont factory since its inception: when the last grant payment was made; if, in view of the closure of the factory, Courtaulds will be repaying grant; what advance notice was given to his Department of the closure of the factory: and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Atkins: Details of assistance paid to individual companies are published in "British Business" in accordance with established procedures. Assistance paid to Courtaulds in respect of its Belmont factory has been mainly by way of regional selective assistance, most of which was paid in 1975 and 1976. No assistance has been paid since 1986. The question of any repayment of grant is a matter for consideration by my Department in negotiation with the company. My Department was notified of the proposed closure the day before the press announcement on 11 December. While the closure is, of course, regrettable, it is a matter for the commercial judgment of the company.

Regional Development Grants

Mr. Cummings: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if he will list the levels of regional development grant to private licensed mines and opencast mines in the counties of Durham and Northumberland in the last year for which figures are available.

Mr. Atkins: Mining is not a qualifying activity for regional development grant.

Corby (Advanced Manufacturing Projects)

Mr. William Powell: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what are the total payments made of support for advanced manufacturing project planning and implementation in each year since 1980 within the Corby travel-to-work area.

Mr. Atkins: The following payments have been made under the support for advanced manufacturing project planning and implementation studies scheme within the Corby travel-to-work area:

Year	*£*
1986-87	20,320
1987-88	2,835

Regional Aid

Mr. Speller: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster which of the measures outlined in his publication "DTI—the department for Enterprise" (Cm 278) will be applicable to areas which do not at present have either regional or assisted area status.

Mr. Atkins: Many of the measures outlined in "DTI — the department for Enterprise" (Cm 278), apply throughout Great Britain; such measures include those on competition policy, and improving business and education links. Innovation programmes, including the new collaborative research initiatives in superconductivity and information technology, apply throughout the country, with the exception of the new innovation g firms which will be available only in the areas.

Independent firms with fewer than 500 eligible for support of half of the cost o projects to improve marketing (including e ing), design, quality management, manufact and, from April, business planning and information systems. The rate of support is the cost in assisted areas and urban progra

The English Industrial Estates Corpora priority to a programme of managed work s in inner city locations.

Counterfeiting of Goods

Mr. Cryer: To ask the Chancellor of Lancaster if he will introduce legislati counterfeiting of goods a criminal offence by way of trade or not; and if he will mak

Mr. Butcher: In the Copyright, Designs a which has now completed its Committee st place, we have already proposed a new trade punishable by up to 10 years imprisonment counterfeiting. The offence would apply in a a trade mark is fraudulently applied to goo labelling or advertising material, either for intent to cause loss to another person.

Manufactured Goods

Mr. Cryer: To ask the Chancellor of Lancaster what was the balance of tra manufactured goods with the EEC in 1987

Mr. Alan Clark: Figures for the whole o yet available. The latest information is in t

United Kingdom Balance of Trade in Manufactu European Community

	BOP basis
January to September 1987	-7·7
January to November 1987	..

[1] Standard International Trade Classification Se
.. Not available.

Figures on a balance of payments basis only quarterly. On the overseas trade st imports, but not exports, include the cost of freight charges.

Source: United Kingdom overseas tra Department of Trade and Industry.

Photovoltaics

Mr. Speller: To ask the Chancellor of Lancaster if he will give details of his Depar plans for the support of the growing exp photovoltaics.

Mr. Atkins [*holding answer 14 January*
Kingdom companies in the photovoltaic generally of small to medium size and are, t placed to benefit from the recently announ initiative, including the marketing initiative companies to develop a comprehensive mar home and overseas. All United Kin

irrespective of size, will continue to be helped to succeed in the export market through my Department's new export initiative.

Within this framework, my Department will continue to encourage collaboration in research and development including by means of the international photovoltaic energy project established as a result of the Versailles (1982) and Williamsburg (1983) economic summits, participation in European Community-funded research, development and demonstration programmes, and the development of international standards, all of which will contribute to the ability of United Kingdom firms to compete effectively in overseas markets.

Mr. Speller: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if he will provide figures of the support given by the Department of Trade and Industry and any other Government Departments towards the development of photovoltaics during the past five years.

Mr. Atkins [*holding answer 14 January 1988*]: Over the past five years Government Departments have granted financial assistance of £3,320,000 for the development of photovoltaic devices and systems.

ENERGY

NUM Elections

Mr. Hood: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what facilities British Coal will give during the next National Union of Mineworkers elections in particular in the Nottingham area of British Coal.

Mr. Michael Spicer: This is a matter for the management of the British Coal Corporation and I am asking the chairman to write to the hon. Gentleman.

Plutonium

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy, pursuant to the reply to the hon. Member for Colne Valley (Mr. Riddick), *Official Report*, 16 December 1987, column *518*, if he has any plans to publish previous annual production figures for plutonium from electricity from electricity board safeguarded reactors for the period May 1979 to 31 March 1986.

Mr. Michael Spicer: I have no plans to publish this information as it could be produced only at disproportionate cost. It is our intention that from now on information on plutonium produced at Britain's civil nuclear power stations will be published annually.

Nuclear Safeguards

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy, pursuant to his reply to the hon. Member for Newport, West, *Official Report*, 26 November 1987, column *279*, on nuclear safeguards, if he will give the period judged by his Department that would not incur disproportionate cost; and if he will publish the information in the format previously requested for the period from May 1979 to 31 March 1986.

Mr. Michael Spicer: Each year safeguards inspectors from Euratom and-or the International Atomic Energy Agency make frequent visits to United Kingdom civil nuclear facilities.

British Coal, Nottingham

Mr. Meale: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what information he has about the numbers of work employed in British Coal workshops and garages in Nottinghamshire coalfield area for the years 1979 until present, inclusive;

(2) if he will list the numbers and categories of work employed by British Coal in the Nottinghamshire area the years from 1979 until the present, inclusive.

Mr. Michael Spicer: This is a matter for the British C Corporation and I am asking the chairman to write to hon. Member.

Reprocessed Fuel

Mr. Campbell-Savours: To ask the Secretary of St for Energy (1) on what basis the United Kingdom Ato Energy Authority contracted to reprocess fuel from Central Electricity Generating Board and the South Scotland Electricity Board in terms of fixed fuel volum duration of contract and linkage to lifetime of nucl power stations;

(2) whether the original contracts between the Uni Kingdom Atomic Energy Authority and the Cent Electricity Generating Board and South of Scotla Electricity Board were concluded on an individual po station basis; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Michael Spicer: The UKAEA has no contra with the CEGB and SSEB to reprocess nuclear fuel. reprocessing contracts between the authority and boards which existed before the creation of BNFL w transferred to the company.

Mr. Campbell-Savours: To ask the Secretary of St for Energy (1) whether the contracts between Brit Nuclear Fuels plc and the Central Electricity Generat Board and the South of Scotland Electricity Board reprocessing are fixed price contracts; and if he will m a statement;

(2) whether the contracts between British Nuclear Fu plc and the Central Electricity Generating Board and South of Scotland Electricity Board provide for conting costs to cover the additional costs arising out improvements in waste technology; and if he will mak statement.

Mr. Michael Spicer: The terms under which busines conducted between BNFL and the United Kingd generating boards are a commercial matter between parties involved.

Mr. Campbell-Savours: To ask the Secretary of St for Energy what is the cost to date of the thermal ox reprocessing plant at Sellafield.

Mr. Michael Spicer: Recorded expenditure to date the thermal oxide reprocessing plant at Sellafield is in order of £700 million.

Mr. Campbell-Savours: To ask the Secretary of St for Energy what proportions the Sellafield thermal ox reprocessing plant Thorp base load is expected to provided for by overseas business from Japan.

Mr. Michael Spicer: Some 38 per cent. of the Th base load of 6,000 tonnes is expected to be provided by business from Japan.

ATTORNEY-GENERAL

State Security

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Attorney-General if he will make a statement on the outcome of Her Majesty's Government's action over "Spycatcher" in the New Zealand courts.

The Attorney-General: The proceedings before the New Zealand Court of Appeal are part-heard and stand adjourned during the court's long vacation in New Zealand.

Prosecutions

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Attorney-General how many prosecutions under the Official Secrets Act since 1979 have not been proceeded with due to lack of evidence.

The Attorney-General: Separate records are not kept of prosecutions under the Official Secrets Act which are not proceeded with due to lack of evidence, and the information could not be collated without incurring disproportionate cost.

SCOTLAND

Barlinnie Prison

Mr. McTaggart: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what information he has as to the number of working days lost by prison officers at Barlinnie prison during the last year due to stress-related illnesses.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: The information requested is not readily available and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

NHS (Administrators)

Mr. Butler: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will make it his policy to reduce the number of administrators in the National Health Service in Scotland below the level pertaining in 1979.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: We keep tight control of the proportion of total health board revenue which is applied to management and administration; since 1979, it has fallen from 5·5 per cent. to 4·5 per cent. Many administrative staff work directly in support of clinical staff and make an important contribution to patient care. In addition, effective managers make a vital contribution to the efficiency of the Health Service.

Women Civil Servants

Mrs. Fyfe: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what proportion of civil servants at grade 5 level and above in his Department is female.

Mr. Rifkind: The proportion in my departments, excluding the prison service, is 6 per cent.

Breach of Confidence

Mr. Maclennan: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what importance he attaches to the early implementation of the recommendatio Commission for reform of the law gove confidence.

Mr. Rifkind: The report by the Commission on breach of confidence (Scc 90) made no conclusive recommendation legislation in this area. I am keeping th breach of confidence under review, bu decided whether to legislate to supplem law or to leave development of the law t

School Rolls (East Kilbrid

Mr. Ingram: To ask the Secretary of S if he will list the East Kilbride projected the primary and secondary sectors, b denominational and non-denomination each of the next 10 years.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: Information school rolls in individual schools is not pr

Environmentally Sensitive A

Mr. Hood: To ask the Secretary of St pursuant to the reply to the hon. Mem South-West (Mrs. Shephard) of 17 *Official Report*, column 723, how much the environmentally sensitive areas will g areas.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: The level of Scottish environmentally sensitive areas w number of farmers wishing to join the sch when three new areas will be introduced that expenditure could be about £1·5 mi

Scottish National Meat Ce

Mr. Wray: To ask the Secretary of S what financial support Her Majesty's give to the Scottish national meat centr make a statement.

Mr. Lang: Proposals for setting up a meat centre are at a very early stage a private sector support is not yet clear. It possible to say at present whether any support is required or appropriate.

WALES

Social Workers

Mr. Barry Jones: To ask the Secret Wales what information he has as to h workers are employed in each of the Wales; and what is the average number per 100,000 head of population for the la each of the last four years.

Mr. Grist: Information about the n social workers, social workers, comm trainee social workers and social work (v is given in the table:

Social Workers Employed at 30 September

Local authority	1982 No. of WTE	1982 Rate per 100,000 population	1983 No. of WTE	1983 Rate per 100,000 population	1984 No. of WTE	1984 Rate per 100,000 population	1985 No. of WTE	1985 Rate per 100,000 population	1986 No. of WTE	1986 R... pop...
Clwyd	141·8	36·0	159·3	40·3	169·0	42·6	161·0	40·5	165·0	
Dyfed	134·1	40·2	144·0	42·9	149·0	44·5	148·0	44·1	159·1	
Gwent	210·5	47·8	209·6	47·6	213·6	48·6	205·6	46·7	225·6	
Gwynedd	97·9	42·2	97·9	42·2	101·5	43·6	107·7	46·1	110·4	
Mid Glamorgan	278·0	51·6	294·5	54·9	311·8	58·4	324·3	60·7	331·0	
Powys	44·5	40·2	44·0	39·8	43·7	39·5	43·8	39·3	41·1	
South Glamorgan	217·5	55·8	230·9	58·9	243·3	61·7	236·1	59·8	250·1	
West Glamorgan	171·5	46·6	179·0	48·8	184·0	50·5	197·0	54·1	194·5	
Wales	1,295·9	46·2	1,359·2	48·4	1,415·9	0·4	1,423·5	50·6	1,476·8	

Mr. Barry Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will make a special financial allocation to Clwyd county council to enable it to recruit more social workers.

Mr. Grist: The total amount of rate support grant made available for 1988-89, and the principles underlying its distribution between authorities, are published in the Welsh rate support grant report 1988-89. The allocations were approved by the House on 15 December, and there is no scope for extra allocations.

It is for individual authorities to determine spending priorities for their areas. However, in setting current expenditure provision for Wales for 1988-89, an increase of £9·9 million or 7·1 per cent. was allowed for personal social services (including port health).

Trainee Nurses

Mr. Gareth Wardell: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will publish in the *Official Report* the number of trainees entering nursing for the state registered nurse and registered general nurse course in Wales for each of the last 10 years.

Mr. Grist: The information is not available centrally in the form requested. The Department holds information only on the number of people in training at any one time. Information on the number in training in September in each year is given in the following table:

	State Registered Nurse	State Enrolled Nurse
1978	2,168	1,284
1979	2,347	1,227
1980	2,306	1,294
1981	2,676	1,378
1982	2,641	1,256
1983	2,661	1,080
1984	2,670	983
1985	2,639	852
1986	2,693	776
1987	2,769	879

Trainee Therapists and Midwives

Mr. Gareth Wardell: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will publish in the *Official Report* the number of (i) trainee physiotherapists, (ii) trainee speech therapists, (iii) trainee occupational therapists and (iv) trainee midwives (Royal College of Midwives) entering courses in Wales during each of the past 10 years.

Mr. Grist: The information requested for t... physiotherapists, trainee occupational therapists ... trainee midwives is not available centrally on an all-... basis. Information on the number of first year en... into speech therapy courses at colleges of higher educ... is available for Wales from 1979-80 and is as follow...

	Number
1979-80	10
1980-81	14
1981-82	14
1982-83	15
1983-84	17
1984-85	15
1985-86	15
1986-87	15

Cardigan Bypass

Mr. Geraint Howells: To ask the Secretary of Sta... Wales what are the latest developments regardin... Cardigan bypass; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Wyn Roberts: Following the public inquiry h... July 1987, line, side roads and compulsory purchase ... were made in December. Subject to the satisfa... completion of statutory procedures and engineering ... and the availability of resources, the scheme is expec... start in the period January 1988 to December 1990.

Welsh Language Bill

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for ... when he expects the submissions made to his Depar... during his consultation exercise on the case for ... Welsh Language Bill during 1986-87 to be made ava... to the public for inspection.

Mr. Wyn Roberts: As soon as my right hon. Frien... I have completed our further consideration of ... related to the Welsh language.

Regional Selective Assistance

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for ... how many offers there have been, and of what total ... against which a first payment was made of *(a)* re... selective assistance of (i) less than £5,000 and (ii) £5,... more by his Department in each financial quarter ... 1985-86 in (1) Holyhead, (2) Bangor/Caernarfo... Pwllheli, and (4) Portmadog Ffestiniog travel-to... areas, respectively; and *(b)* regional development ... of (i) less than £5,000 and (ii) 5,000 or more ... Holyhead travel-to-work area.

Mr. Peter Walker: There have been no offers of regional selective assistance since 1985-86 against which a first payment has been made in the travel-to-work areas of Holyhead, Pwllheli and Porthmadog and Ffestiniog. In the Bangor and Caernarfon TTWA, there have been no such offers of less than £5,000. Details of those for £5,000 or more are set out in the table.

In the case of regional development grant, details of offers in the Holyhead TTWA against which a first payment has been made are given in the table for the period 1 April 1985 to 31 December 1987 as a whole. In order to protect confidentiality on individual projects which do not meet the standard criteria for publication, the information is not broken down into financial quarters.

I envisage more regional development grant during 1988-89 and thereafter an increase in demand for regional selective assistance in the area.

(i) RSA offers—1.4.85 to 31.12.87 (where a first payment has been made).
Bangor and Caernarfon TTWA

Period	*Offers of £5,000 or more*	
	Number	*Total Value* £
1 April 1985-30 June 1985	1	5,000
1 July 1985-30 September 1985	1	24,000
1 October 1985-31 December 1986	—	—
1 January 1987-31 March 1987	2	54,000
1 April 1987-31 December 1987	—	—
Total	4	83,000

(ii) RDG offers—1 April 1985 to 31 Decem
payment has been made
Holyhead TTWA

Offer Value	
Less than £5,000	
£5,000 or more	
Total	

Access Groups

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary o
which planning authorities in Wale
access groups concerning the needs of
people;

(2) if he will list those Welsh plannir
have appointed access officers either or
time basis.

Mr. Grist: Information on thos
authorities which have appointed acce
which regularly consult access groups i

Physically Disabled Pe

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary
how many people in Wales and in
counties have physical disabilities; an
percentage of the population they rep

Mr. Grist: The information reque
table:

Persons on the register of handicapped people at 31 March 1987

	Deaf with speech	*Deaf without speech*	*Handicap Hard of hearing*	*Blind*	*Partially sighted*	
Clwyd						
Number	61	138	709	1,077	688	
per cent. of population[1]	0·015	0·034	0·177	0·270	0·172	
Dyfed						
Number	78	44	195	1,375	755	
per cent. of population	0·023	0·013	0·058	0·406	0·223	
Gwent						
Number	182	187	184	1,475	1,070	
per cent. of population	0·041	0·042	0·042	0·334	0·242	
Gwynedd						
Number	44	57	351	801	339	
per cent. of population	0·019	0·024	0·150	0·341	0·144	
Mid Glamorgan						
Number	173	194	437	1,849	1,271	
per cent. of population	0·032	0·036	0·082	0·346	0·238	
Powys						
Number	60	35	232	249	144	
per cent. of population	0·053	0·031	0·206	0·222	0·128	
South Glamorgan						
Number	169	103	222	807	516	
per cent. of population	0·043	0·026	0·056	0·204	0·130	
West Glamorgan						
Number	221	274	355	870	833	
per cent. of population	0·061	0·075	0·098	0·239	0·229	

	Deaf with speech	Deaf without speech	Hard of hearing	Handicap Blind	Partially sighted	General classes[2]
Wales						
Number	988	1,032	2,685	8,503	5,616	119,478
per cent. of population	0·035	0·036	0·095	0·301	0·199	4·235

[1] Based on Registrar General's mid-year population estimates for 1986.
[2] Excluding those whose sole disability is a mental disorder.

Disabled and Visually Handicapped People

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what guidance his Department has issued to planning authorities in Wales concerning the needs of the disabled and visually handicapped in planning; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Grist: Separate guidance to planning authorities on the provision of access for the disabled is given in development control policy note No. 16 "Access for the Disabled" and in Welsh Office circular 21/82 "Disabled Persons Act 1981".

Students (Special Educational Needs)

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many students with special educational needs regularly attend courses run by colleges of further and higher education in Wales and in each of the Welsh counties.

Mr. Wyn Roberts: This information is not held centrally.

Artificial Limb and Appliance Service

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales when he hopes to announce the results of his Department's consultation process on the consultative document on the future of the artificial limb and appliance service in Wales; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Grist: Our decision to confirm the preferred option, set out in the consultation document, was announced on 26 November 1987; management responsibility will be vested in the Welsh health Common Services Authority from 1 April 1988. For north Wales our proposals in respect of the limb service remain as set out in Welsh health circular 87/11.

Horne Committee

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will make a statement on the implementation in Wales of the recommendations of the Horne committee.

Mr. Wyn Roberts: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the reply given to him today by my hon. Friend the Under-Secretary of State for Transport and confirm that such legislation would apply equally in Wales.

Disabled Students

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales whether he is considering commissioning a survey of disabled students in higher and further education in Wales similar to the survey commissioned on the situation in England by the Department of Education and Science and published in 1987.

Mr. Wyn Roberts: It is not intended to com survey on this subject in Wales, but plans developed to collect information on students w educational needs at Welsh institutions of fu higher education in the public sector annually, ing in academic year 1988-89.

Meningitis

Mr. Geraint Howells: To ask the Secretary o Wales what steps he is taking to prevent, contai outbreaks of meningitis in Wales; and if he w statement.

Mr. Grist: Facilities for treating pati meningitis exist in all district general hospitals are well-established procedures for contact traci provision of prophylactic antibiotic treatment. I to advice that the Chief Medical Officer issue 1987, the consultant regional epidemiologist ha the literature and has recently provided professional guidance to all specialists in c medicine in Wales. Further professional guida issued shortly.

Speed of treatment is crucial in dealing wit meningococcol meningitis and this can be determinant of the outcome. It is important, that the symptoms and signs are known to a Department will be making available urgently a suitable information leaflet.

ENVIRONMENT

Enterprise Zones

Mr. Anderson: To ask the Secretary of Sta Environment whether he proposes an imm tapered cut-off of benefits when the enterprise z comes to an end; and if he will make a statem

Mr. Trippier: When the period for which designated as an enterprise zone comes to a financial benefits arising from enterprise zone cease immediately.

Caravan Sites

Mr. Gareth Wardell: To ask the Secretary o the Environment when he hopes to anno conclusions of the study of provision of carava gipsies under the Caravan Sites Act 1986: and make a statement.

Mrs. Roe: I refer the hon. Member to the repl hon. Friend gave to my hon. Friend the M Hornsey and Wood Green (Sir H. Rossi) on 6 last at column *856*.

Hostels

Mr. Harry Barnes: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) what are his estimates of the effects of the abolition of the hostel deficit grant on the occupancy of hostels which have been in receipt of the grant;

(2) what are his estimates of the effects of the proposed abolition of the hostel deficit grant on the cash flow position of small voluntary groups running hostels;

(3) what are his estimates of the effects of the proposed abolition of the hostel deficit grant on the financial position of voluntary organisations responsible for the management of special needs housing and hostels;

(4) what plans he has for consulting voluntary organisations directly responsible for the management of special needs, housing and hostels over the proposed abolition of the hostel deficit grant;

(5) what transitional arrangements are planned following the proposed abolition of the hostel deficit grant.

Mr. Waldegrave: My right hon. Friend has no plans to abolish hostel deficit grant. The Housing Bill will enable payments of such grant to continue as a form of revenue support for registered housing associations.

Mr. Harry Barnes: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what consultations will be held on redesigning the hostel finance system and reassessing proposed board and lodging ceilings; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Waldegrave: We intend to issue a consultation paper on possible future arrangements for the funding of hostels run by registered housing associations. The paper will be widely distributed and the views of interested organisations and individuals will be welcome.

Board and lodging payment levels are the responsibility of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Social Services.

Sexual Harassment

Ms. Richardson: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what is his Department's policy on sexual harassment at work; whether guidance on reporting complaints has been issued to all staff; how many complaints have been reported in the past five years; and what disciplinary action has been taken.

Mr. Ridley: The Civil Service policy on sexual harassment is set out in the programme of action to achieve equal opportunities for women in the Civil Service, which was published by the Cabinet Office (Management and Personnel Office) in 1984. Sexual harassment at work is not tolerated and is dealt with as a disciplinary matter through departmental complaints procedures. Guidance on reporting complaints has been issued to all staff. No central record of complaints was kept until mid-1986. Since then there have been four complaints which have been fully investigated. It is not the Department's practice to publish the disciplinary action taken in individual cases.

Landlord and Tenant Act 1987

Mr. Pawsey: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment when he expects to bring into force the remaining sections of the Landlord and Tenant Act 1987.

Mr. Waldegrave: We aim to make a further commencement order in March 1988 for parts II, III and IV (dealing respectively with the appointment by the court of managers, the compulsory acquisition of the landlord's interest in certain circumstances and the variation of leases) and to bring the remaining provisions into force as soon as possible thereafter.

Nature Reserves (County Durham)

Mr. Cummings: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what provisions he is making to privatise Castle Eden Dene, Hawthorn Dene and other nature reserves in the county of Durham; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Moynihan: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment has asked the Nature Conservancy Council to consider whether there is scope for national nature reserves to be held in private ownership under appropriate conservation safeguards. The council's advice is expected later this year.

Hawthorn Dene site of special scientific interest is already in private ownership. I understand that part of the site is managed by a local conservation trust, but it is not designated as a national nature reserve.

Recycled Grant, Hertfordshire

Mr. Robert B. Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will set out a table showing the amount of rate support grant-recycling received in 1987-88 by Hertfordshire county council and each district council in Hertfordshire; and whether that recycled grant was spent.

Mr. Chope: There was no recyling in the 1987-88 rate support grant settlement.

Rating Reform

Sir Charles Morrison: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) if he will publish, for every London borough, metropolitan district and non-metropolitan district, the proportion of income which would be taken by community charge in 1987-88 consistent with his figures of 17 November 1987 for community charges with no safety net for a married couple whose joint gross income was *(a)* £4,000, *(b)* £5,000, *(c)* £7,500, *(d)* £10,000, *(e)* £15,000, *(f)* £20,000, *(g)* £30,000, *(h)* £50,000, and *(i)* £100,000, on the assumption in each case that the couple was not entitled to any social security support;

(2) if he will publish, for every London borough, metropolitan district and non-metropolitan district, the proportion of income which would be taken by community charge in 1987-88 consistent with his figures of 17 November 1987 for community charges with no safety net, for a single person with a gross income of *(a)* £3,000, *(b)* £4,000, *(c)* £5,000, *(d)* £7,500, *(e)* £10,000, *(f)* £15,000, *(g)* £20,000, *(h)* £30,000, *(i)* £50,000, and *(j)* £100,000, on the assumption in each case that the individual was not entitled to any social security support.

Mr. Howard: I am writing to my hon. Friend.

Property Services Agency

Mr. Gow: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how many employees of the Property

Services Agency (full-time equivalents) are engaged in selling real property (leasehold or freehold) owned by Government Departments.

Mr. Chope: PSA controls the disposal programme estimated to bring in £124 million in 1987-88 for all surplus MOD and Government civil estate property. A central disposals unit of eight professional estates staff handles major MOD cases. Other disposals work is the responsibility of regional estates staff as part of their management activities. The time spent on disposals represents the equivalent of about 45 of these staff. Actual marketing of property is conducted by appointed agents.

Mr. Gow: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment whether he will list those clients other than Government Departments, for whom the Property Services Agency carried out work during the year ended 31 December 1987.

Mr. Chope: Following is a list of organisations other than Government Departments which paid in the year ending 31 December 1987 for works and estates services provided by PSA. Services for most of these clients were incidental to PSA's normal operations and the payments were small.

The Oil and Pipeline Agency
Hensol Hospital District
Agricultural and Food Research Council
Crown Agents
Plymouth Navy Days Committee
Welsh Health Common Services Authority
Birmingham International Airport
Oftel
Building Services Research and Information Association
Royal Commission, Environmental Pollution
Government Communications Bureau
Royal Mint
Devonport Management Ltd.
British Board of Agrément
British Gas
Hong Kong Government
Brunei Government
Gibraltar Government
Royal Navy Museum Portsmouth
RAF Museum Hendon
Fleet Air-Arm Museum
North West Regional Health Authority
Liverpool Airport Merseyside County Council
North Yorkshire Area Health Authority
TAVR
Council of Medical Education
REME Training Centre Aborfield
Federal German Armed Forces
PAN AM
Services Sound and Vision Corporation
Inland Revenue Sports Association
NAAFI
Royal Scottish Academy
The Sailors Fund
West Yorkshire Police
Air Training Corps
Falkland Islands Government
HQ Air Cadets
Falkland Islands Development Commission
Royal Bank of Scotland
Local Government Boundaries Commission
Civil Service Sports Council
Roe Motors
BBC
British Nuclear Fuels Ltd.
Humberside Communications Equipment Ltd.
Automobile Association
Kilnwick Agrochemicals
Yorkshire Water Authority
Bristol County of Avon
Post Office
British Telecom
Wessex Water Authority
Carrick District Council
Greenwich Hospital
Royal College of Art
Western European Union
Scottish Research Reactor Centre
WRVS Ltd.
UKAEA
NATO
Forestry Commission
Natural Environment Research Council
Science and Engineering Research Council
Royal Ordnance Factories plc
Royal Society of Chemistry
United States Armed Forces
Fire Insurers research and Test Organisation
Scottish Health Service Common Services Agency
European School Culham
Royal Hospital Chelsea
Hydraulics Research Station
Remploy
Historic Buildings and Monuments Commission for England
Chatham Historic Dockyard Trust
Armouries HM Tower of London
National Army Museum Chelsea
Trox Bros Ltd.
Portways-Vitaluscin
ACE Filtration Ltd.
Spantile Ltd.
The Associates of the V and A
P and S Speritex SRL
The Law Society
British Academy
The Keep Britain Tidy Group
Bondina Industrial
Camfil Ltd.
ITN TV
BBC (Outside Broadcasts)
Westminster City Council
Epping Forest District Council
Automet Filtration Ltd.
TCA (UK) Ltd.
Macbream Investments Ltd.
Hunter International Ltd.
Eastern Elecricity Board
AJEX
London Docklands Development Corporation
Tesco Stores Ltd.
Commonwealth Secretariat
Windsor Festival Society Ltd.
Glasfloss Europe SA
Social Security Appeals Tribunal
Universal Filters
Interfilter Ltd.
Filter Supply and Manufacturing Co Ltd.
Derbyshire County Council
Vokers Ltd.
Catt Ewater Harbour Commissioners
County of Cambridgeshire
British National Oil Corporation
Audit Commission
British Airport Authority
British Aerospace Ltd.
25 Next of Kins for War-Grave Headstones

Mr. Gow: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how many people were employed by the Property Services Agency on 31 December 1987 and on the last day of each of the preceding eight years.

Mr. Chope On 31 December 1987 25,743 non-industrial and industrial staff were employed by the Property Services Agency (including staff in the Crown Suppliers and engaged on work for the United States forces). I regret that it is not possible, in the time available, to provide staff

numbers for the last day of each of the preceding eight years. The numbers employed on 1 April in those years, however, were:—

	Number
1979	40,095
1980	36,626
1981	34,763
1982	31,512
1983	30,077
1984	28,747
1985	27,779
1986	27,009
1987	26,379

Mr. Gow: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what proposals he has to reduce the numbers employed by the Property Services Agency.

Mr. Chope From 1 April 1988 the number employed by the agency will depend on changes in the workload for client Departments and the money voted for resource costs, of which manpower costs are a part. The agency will continue to seek opportunities to reduce staff by contracting out more work to the private sector where that would result in better value for money.

Mr. Gow: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how many employees of the Property Services Agency have been prosecuted for fraud, theft or corruption during each of the past eight years; how many of those have been convicted; and how many have been disciplined but not prosecuted for such offences.

Mr. Chope The information requested (in respect of both non-industrial and industrial staff) is as follows:

(1) Year	*(2) Number of Officers Prosecuted*	*(3) Number of Officers Convicted*	*(4) Number of Officers Disciplined but not Prosecuted*
1979	4	4	2
1980	5	5	6
1981	1	1	6
1982	11	10	8
1983	2	2	10
1984	5	5	9
1985	6	4	19
1986	5	3	4
1987	3	3	9
1988	1	1	—

Notes:
1. The year in column 1 is that in which action on the cases was completed. There are six outstanding cases where officers have been charged but the prosecutions are not completed.
2. Column 4 includes a number of minor cases where the offence involved travel and subsistence claims or abuses of working hours rules etc.

Mr. Gow: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what steps he is taking to eliminate fraud, theft and corruption in the Property Services Agency.

Mr. Chope: The Wardale report, published in 1983 drew attention to a number of weaknesses in the agency's defences against fraud and corruption. In 1984 there were allegations of major contractual irregularities in certain PSA London district works offices which culminated in the recent conviction of a number of PSA officials and contractors at the Central Criminal Court. Further trials relating to those allegations are pending.

In the period since 1984 the agency has taken a number of steps to combat both contractual and other forms of fraud, theft and corruption. In the contractual field detailed contract audits have been carried out across the whole of the agency's organisation and new procedures, including computerised records of all tenders, have been set up in key areas. Systematic and regular monitoring and inspections now take place in all district works offices. A special unit has been established to investigate suspected cases of fraud, theft and corruption and to undertake random inspections of individual PSA offices. A restructuring of the agency's regional organisation has included the strengthening of management control of district works offices.

By these various means I am sure that the agency has improved its defences against fraud, theft and corruption, but continued vigilance is essential and will be maintained.

Sale of Property

Mr. Gow: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment in respect of how many houses and flats which Property Services Agency has received instructions from Government Departments to sell contracts for sale have not yet been exchanged; and how many of those houses and flats remain unsold more than *(a)* four months, *(b)* eight months and *(c)* 12 months after instructions to sell were received by the Property Services Agency.

Mr. Chope: As at 31 December, 43 dwellings on the Government civil estate accepted for disposal by the Property Services Agency had not yet reached an exchange of contracts. The breakdown of this figure is:

	Number
With PSA for less than 4 months	3
With PSA for more than 4 months but less than 8 months	17
With PSA for more than 8 months but less than 12 months	3
With PSA for more than 12 months	20

Information about dwellings on the defence estate is being provided separately by the Ministry of Defence.

Water Authorities (Sale of Land)

Mr. Gow: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment whether water authorities are required by him to sell freehold or leasehold land which is surplus to operational requirements; and how much surplus land has been sold by each of the nine water authorities in each of the past eight years.

Mr. Moynihan Yes. The sales of unused or underused land in each year from the land register in acres are as follows. Disaggregated information is not available before 1984.

	1981-82 (inclusive)	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987
Anglian Water	270	221	10	178	74	7
Northumbrian Water			3	17	3	15
North West Water			14	25	1	10
Severn Trent Water			3	nil	27	nil
Southern Water			4	nil	nil	nil
South West Water			2	21	10	21
Thames Water			7	44	nil	65
Wessex Water			6	nil	10	nil
Yorkshire Water			nil	12	1	nil

Water Authorities (Surplus Land)

Mr. Gow: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how many acres of land suplus to operational requirements are owned, whether freehold or leasehold, by each of the nine water authorities.

Mr. Moynihan: The acreage of unused or underused land on the land register held by each English water authority at 31 December 1987 was:

	Acres
Anglian Water	242
Northumbrian Water	126
North West Water	390
Severn Trent Water	185
Southern Water	344
South West Water	22
Thames Water	542
Wessex Water	9
Yorkshire Water	422

Sir Christopher Wren (Museum)

Ms. Quin: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he has any plans to initiate or provide funds for a museum to commemorate the life and work of Sir Christopher Wren; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Moynihan: I have no plans to set up such a museum, and am not aware of proposals from others to do so.

AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FOOD

Sexual Harassment

Ms. Richardson: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what is his Department's policy on sexual harassment at work; whether guidance on reporting complaints has been issued to all members of staff; how many complaints have been reported in the past five years; and what disciplinary action has been taken.

Mr. Donald Thompson: The Civil Service policy on sexual harassment is set out in the programme of action to achieve equal opportunities for women in the Civil Service which was published by the Cabinet Office (Management and Personnel Office) in 1984. Sexual harassment at work is not tolerated and is dealt with as a disciplinary matter through the usual Civil Service complaints procedures. Guidance on reporting complaints has been issued to all staff.

Three formal complaints have been reported centrally to personnel division in the last five years; all were investigated and disciplinary action was taken as appropriate.

Pesticides

Mr. Wray: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what specific steps he is taking to make sure that farmers and agricultural workers are aware of the new controls on the use of pesticides, as from 1 January.

Mr. Donald Thompson: My Department has distributed some 200,000 copies to date of the leaflet "Pesticides—Guide to the New Controls", which will continue to be made available at suitable agricultural shows and events. This will be supplemented before this year's spraying season with a further publication drawing particular attention to the measures coming into force in both 1988 and 1989. We plan to publish at about the same time a revised list of centres providing training appropriate to certification requirements for pesticides users. We will also be publishing a new draft of a code of practice for the agricultural and horticultural industry.

The Ministry's publicity efforts are not being carried out in isolation. The Agricultural Training Board and the proficieny tests councils are giving prominence to the training requirements and many sections of the industry are helping to get the message across.

Citrus Fruits (Chemical Spraying)

Mrs. Ray Michie: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what plans he has to introduce the labelling of EEC citrus fruit coming into the United Kingdom which has been sprayed with the chemicals thiabendazol or ortophenilphenol; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Donald Thompson *[holding answer 14 January 1988]:* Strict controls on the levels on which these chemicals may be used as preservatives on fruit are laid down in the regulations following advice from independent experts. There is no requirement in the food labelling regulations that such fruit should be labelled and I have no plans at present to alter that situation.

EMPLOYMENT

Sexual Harassment

Ms. Richardson: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what is his Department's policy on sexual harassment at work; whether guidance on reporting complaints has been issued to all staff; how many complaints have been reported in the past five years; and what disciplinary action has been taken.

Mr. Nicholls: The Civil Service policy on sexual harassment is set out in the programme of action to achieve equal opportunities for women in the Civil Service which was published by the Cabinet Office (Management

and Personnel Office) in 1984. Sexual harassment at work is not tolerated and is dealt with as a disciplinary matter through the usual Civil Service complaints procedures. The DE group's policy was agreed on this basis. It was issued to all staff in December 1984 with guidance on the reporting and handling of complaints. We have monitored this policy since July 1985 and in the 18 months to December 1986 (the last date for which figures are available) 31 cases have been reported. Appropriate action has been taken in all cases. Disciplinary penalties imposed have ranged from a written warning to a transfer at the offending officer's own expense.

Community Programme

Mr. Nicholas Bennett: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what representations he has received concerning the effect of the community programme in competing with private building companies for work; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Lee: Following representations from the building industry in 1986, the Manpower Services Commission agreed procedures for ensuring that existing jobs and activities are not put at risk by community programme objects.

Labour Statistics

Mr. William Powell: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will list in the *Official Report* the number of persons out of work and claiming benefit in each parliamentary constituency in *(a)* August 1984 and *(b)* April 1987 and the percentage charge revealed by these figures for each constituency.

Mr. Lee: I am sending my hon. Friend the information requested which is also available in the Library.

Local Enterprise Agencies (Corby)

Mr. William Powell: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what are the total payments made under the programme of assistance to local enterprise agencies in the Corby development area in each year since 1980.

Mr. Cope: None. No agency in the Corby development area has applied for a local enterprise agency grant, nor for approval under the terms of section 48(4) of the Finance Act 1982.

Settle to Carlisle Railway

Mr. Cryer: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment when he expects the joint report for the Manpower Services Commission-Jarvis plc study into job creation and promotion along the Settle to Carlisle railway corridor to be received; whether it will be circulated to all interested parties; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Lee: The final report of the feasibility study is expected at the end of January. Ministers and those with an interest will be sent a copy.

Mr. Cryer: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will publish the joint report of the Manpower Services Commission-Jarvis plc study into job creation and promotion along the Settle to Carlisle railway corridor; whether copies will be made available for all the local authorities assisting in financing the local se along the Settle to Carlisle railway; and if he will m statement.

Mr. Lee: Copies will be made available for comme local authorities, and I shall arrange for copies to be p in the Library.

Disabled Workers

Mrs. Fyfe: To ask the Secretary of State Employment what information he has on the perce of disabled workers employed in *(a)* the public secto *(b)* the private sector.

Mr. Lee *[pursuant to the reply 3 December c. 600]:* I regret that there was an error in line 4 c original text and the figure 8 per cent. should read 0 cent. The correct text should read as follows:

"The only information available is about the exte which employers covered by the quota scheme meet obligation under that scheme. On 1 June 1986, 0·8 per of public sector employees, and 1 per cent. of private employees, were registered disabled."

Fit for Work Scheme

Mrs. Fyfe: To ask the Secretary of State Employment how many employers in *(a)* the public and *(b)* the private sector have gained the Manp Services Commission's Fit for Work award in each of the award to 1986.

Mr. Lee: I refer the hon. Member to the reply giv my hon. Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secreta State on Wednesday 2 December, *Official Report* col *600-1*

The Fit for Work award is now a Departme Employment responsibility adminstered by the em ment service.

Mrs. Fyfe: To ask the Secretary of State Employment if he will make a statement on the awards in the Manpower Services Commission's F Work scheme.

Mr. Lee: The Fit for Work award scheme is Department of Employment responsibility adminis by the employment service. The national reception f 1987 award winners took place at Lancaster house December 1987. 100 awards have been made in 1987 the names of the 100 winners were announced on that

Unemployment Benefit Claims

Ms. Short: To ask the Secretary of State Employment if he will publish up-to-date figues sho *(a)* the total number of new benefit claims unemployed people since the beginning of 1987, *(b)* many of these claims resulted in a benefit award, breakdown of the difference in the two figures showi numbers deemed unavailable for work, those de voluntarily unemployed, withdrawn claims and any reasons and (4) the number of appeals against b decisions, distinguishing between different type decision, together with the results of such appeals.

Mr. Portillo [*holding answer 7 December 1987*]: I been asked to reply.

In the first 10 months of 1987 some 4·1 million c to unemployment benefit were made. It is estimate

40 per cent. of all new claims result in payment of unemployment benefit only, 10 per cent. in payment of both unemployment benefit and supplementary allowance and 35 per cent. in payment of supplementary allowance only. The remaining 15 per cent. do not attract any benefit but a large proportion of these claims result in an award of credits.

Of claims not attracting unemployment benefit, about 5 per cent. are disallowed unemployment benefit on the grounds of unavailability for work, 30 per cent. are disallowed on the basis that the claimant became unemployed voluntarily and 65 per cent. for other reasons, such as the receipt of a payment in lieu of notice, dismissal for misconduct or delayed claim.

The latest available figures for appeals are for the quarter ending 31 March 1987:

Reason for disallowance

	Non-availability and limited availability for work	*Voluntarily unemployed*	*Other*
Number of appeals heard	716	1,002	3,161
Number decided in appellant's favour	251	426	976

SOCIAL SERVICES

Ante-natal Provision (Crewe and Nantwich)

Mrs. Dunwoody: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what measures have been taken in the Crewe and Nantwich health district to ensure that the ante-natal provision complies with the recommendations of the report "Maternity Care in Action" of the Maternity Services Advisory Committee.

Mrs. Currie: The Maternity Services Advisory Committee's report provides health authorities with a guide to good practice to be used to improve the quality of maternity care. It is for individual health authorities to examine with all concerned the way ante natal care is provided locally and the hon. Member may therefore wish to contact the chairman of the Crewe health authority for the information she seeks.

Consultants' Reports (Lothian and the Borders)

Mr. Kirkwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what is the average time it takes in the Lothian and the Borders health board areas for a full medical consultant's report to come if it is called for in making an assessment of a person's eligibility for industrial disablement benefit.

Mr. Scott: This information is not recorded centrally and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Charities

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will break down how the £15 million to be donated to charities following the adjustment to benefits announced on 18 November was arrived at.

Mr. Nicholas Scott: The amount announced on 18 December of £10 million to £15 million to be donated to charities was an initial estimate. We now expect that around £14·5 million will be available. About half of this represents the underspend on social security expenditure after the special payments have been made, and the remainder underspend on public sector pensions.

Benefits

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services how many claimants will receive no increase in their benefit following the adjustment being made due to the error in the retail prices index.

Mr. Scott: It is estimated that about 4·5 million people who receive a social security benefit that is affected by the error in the retail prices index will not be included in the February special payments exercise.

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Social services what would have been the additional cost of adjusting all benefits following the errors in the retail prices index.

Mr. Scott: As I announced in my statement to the House on 18 December, we estimate that £109 million will have been underspent as a result of the error in the calculation of the retail prices index. This is equal to the sum which will be disbursed in the form of special payments to social security beneficiaries and donations to charities. Administrative costs would have been considerably higher if we had attempted to calculate and pay each individual loss.

Child and Family Allowances

Sir Brandon Rhys Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will publish a table showing for each year since 1958 the combined value of child tax allowance after clawback and family allowance or child benefit expressed in November 1987 prices for the first, second and third child in standard rate tax paying families.

Mr. Scott: Comparison of values at dates other than upratings can be misleading. The figures up to the last general benefit uprating date of April 1987 are given in the table. They will be updated when the movement in the retail price index over the 12 months to April 1988 is known. Until the mid-1960s, the value of support, including child tax allowances, was substantially more for families paying standard rate income tax than for families on average earnings.

Value of child support[1] for each child in standard rate tax-paying families expressed at April 1987[2] prices (£)

Date[3]	*Children under age 11*			*Children under age 11-15*			*Children aged 16 and over*		
	1st child	*2nd child*	*3rd child*[4]	*1st child*	*2nd child*	*3rd child*[4]	*1st child*	*2nd child*	*3rd child*[4]
April 1958	6·77	8·92	9·58	8·42	10·65	11·15	10·16	12·30	12·88
April 1959	6·20	8·43	9·01	7·69	10·00	10·58	9·26	11·49	12·15
April 1960	6·15	8·37	9·03	7·63	9·93	10·50	9·19	11·41	12·06

Date[3]	Children under age 11			Children under age 11-15			Children aged 16 and ov	
	1st child	2nd child	3rd child[4]	1st child	2nd child	3rd child[4]	1st child	2nd child
April 1961	5·99	8·15	8·79	7·43	9·67	10·23	8·95	11·10
April 1962	5·67	7·71	8·31	7·03	9·15	9·68	8·47	10·51
April 1963	6·37	8·37	8·96	7·70	9·85	10·30	9·11	11·18
April 1964	6·24	8·20	8·78	7·55	9·66	10·09	8·93	10·96
April 1965	6·26	8·18	8·60	7·63	9·49	9·97	9·01	10·87
April 1966	6·04	7·90	8·30	7·37	9·16	9·63	8·70	10·49
April 1967	5·87	7·67	8·06	7·16	8·90	9·35	8·44	10·19
April 1968	5·62	7·04	7·47	6·85	8·27	8·64	8·09	9·44
April 1969	5·32	6·96	7·37	6·49	8·13	8·54	7·66	9·30
April 1970	5·04	6·59	6·98	6·15	7·70	8·09	7·25	8·81
April 1971	5·87	7·44	7·79	6·78	8·40	8·76	7·74	9·31
April 1972	5·52	7·00	7·33	6·38	7·90	8·24	7·28	8·76
April 1973	5·01	6·28	6·58	5·93	7·15	7·45	6·67	7·89
April 1974	5·75	6·81	7·08	6·62	7·61	7·91	7·34	8·33
April 1975	5·04	6·97	6·97	5·75	7·68	7·68	6·38	8·34
April 1976	5·28	6·93	6·93	5·89	7·53	7·53	6·44	8·06
April 1977	5·08	5·81	5·81	5·59	6·33	6·33	6·04	6·75
April 1978	6·05	6·05	6·05	6·52	6·52	6·52	6·91	6·91
April 1979	7·50	7·50	7·50	7·50	7·50	7·50	7·50	7·50
November 1980	6·96	6·96	6·96	6·96	6·96	6·96	6·96	6·96
November 1981	6·87	6·87	6·87	6·87	6·87	6·87	6·87	6·87
November 1982	7·20	7·20	7·20	7·20	7·20	7·20	7·20	7·20
November 1983	7·63	7·63	7·63	7·63	7·63	7·63	7·63	7·63
November 1984	7·67	7·67	7·67	7·67	7·67	7·67	7·67	7·67
November 1985	7·43	7·43	7·43	7·43	7·43	7·43	7·43	7·43
July 1986	7·41	7·41	7·41	7·41	7·41	7·41	7·41	7·41
April 1987	7·25	7·25	7·25	7·25	7·25	7·25	7·25	7·25

[1] The combined value of child tax-allowances after Clawback and Family Allowance/Child Benefit.
[2] Based on the movement in the General Index of Retail Prices at April 1987.
[3] Child Tax Allowance ceased after the 1978-79 Tax Year end and up-rating dates are shown from 1979 onwards.
[4] And subsequent children.

NHS (Restrictive Practices)

Mr. Butler: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what plans he has to reduce restrictive practices within the National Health Service.

Mrs. Currie: We always seek to ensure the most effective and efficient working practices within the National Health Service to secure the best possible service to patients.

Nurse Training

Mr. Gareth Wardell: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will publish in the *Official Report* the number of trainees in England entering nursing for the state registered nurse registered general nurse course for each of the last 10 years.

Mr. Newton: The information is:

Intakes to Registered General Nurse Training England: Year Ending 31 March

	Number
1978	14,490
1979	17,290
1980	15,970
1981	15,020
1982	15,430
1983	14,600
1984	13,620
1985	14,900
1986	14,210
1987	14,010

Notes:
[1]All figures rounded to the nearest 10.
[2]England only figures not available prior to 1984, therefore figures have been assumed to be 95 per cent. of England and Wales total.

Social Fund

Mr. Ieuan Wyn Jones: To ask the Secretary of S Social Services whether he proposes to make additional grants from the social fund in res community care needs.

Mr. Scott: Community care grants are intended certain priority groups who are receiving income meet exceptional expenses. The social fund is not of weekly maintenance and help will be provided of lump sum payments. At present we do not pro alter these arrangements.

Personal Allowances and Premiums

Mr. Ieuan Wyn Jones: To ask the Secretary of S Social Services when he hopes to announce the l personal allowances and premiums operating fro

Mr. Scott: The rates are set out in the Income (General) Regulations 1987 and the Housing (General) Regulations 1987 which were made November1987.

As I made clear in my reply to my hon. Fri Member for Salisbury (Mr. Key) on 3 November columns *705-6*, these rates are the same as the p rates announced on 27 October 1987.

Housing Benefits

Mr. Ieuan Wyn Jones: To ask the Secretary of S Social Services whether he intends to place an up on housing benefit in respect of rents.

Mr. Portillo: I refer the hon. Member consultation paper (a copy of which is in the l issued jointly by the Department and the Depart the Environment in October 1987 on the housing

implications of the Government's proposals for deregulation of new private sector lettings. This paper proposes a number of measures to ensure that, with an increasing proportion of rents in future not subject to statutory rent control, rents which attract support from the Exchequer through housing benefit are not unreasonable. These measures include the setting of limits on benefit to be awarded on the most expensive privately rented properties in each local authority area. The intention is to prevent abuse and only a small proportion of accommodation in any area is likely to be covered by this arrangement.

Correspondence

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will now reply to the letter written to him by the hon. Member for Birkenhead on 23 October 1987 about Mr. Kenneth Davies, of 34 Union street, Birkenhead.

Mr. Portillo: My noble Friend wrote to the hon. Member on 30 November 1987 requesting information on his constituent, Mr. Kenneth Davies, to enable him to trace Mr. Davies' papers.

Hospital Waiting List (Bradford)

Mr. Cryer: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what is the current hospital waiting list in Bradford for *(a)* urgent cases, *(b)* urgent cases waiting more than one month, *(c)* non-urgent cases and *(d)* non-urgent cases waiting more than one year; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Newton: The latest information available centrally is given in the table.

In-patient waiting list at 31 March 1987
National Health Service hospitals in Bradford district health authority

All specialties	*Urgent cases*		*Non-urgent cases*	
Total	*All*	*On list more than one month*	*All*	*On list more than one year*
7,172	188	88	6,984	1,535

Health Authorities (Funding)

Mr. Matthew Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what information he has as to regional health authorities' allocations to district health authorities of the extra funds announced on 16 December 1987.

Mr. Newton *[holding answer 11 January 1988]:* Allocations to district health authorities are a matter for the regional health authorities, and we do not yet have detailed information about their decisions.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Crown Properties (Fire Inspections)

Mr. Fraser: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many fire inspectors are in post whose duties include the inspection of Crown properties in England and Wales.

Mr. John Patten: There are currently two officers who are designated by Her Majesty's chief inspector to inspect Crown premises.

Prisons (Private Sector Involvement)

Mr. Butler: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he has any contingency plans to involve the private sector in the running of prisons, in the event of a strike by prison officers.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: It would not be sensible to give details of our contingency plans to maintain prisons and to prevent serious disorder in the event of industrial action by staff.

Strip Searches

Mr. McNamara: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many category A women prisoners there were in Her Majesty's prison Durham in December 1987; and how many strip searches were made on these prisoners in that month, indicating strip searches before and after consultation with legal advisers, after visits and after cell changes, wing searches and cell searches, and listing reasons for searches and illegal contraband or smuggled items found.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: During December, there were three category A women prisoners in Durham prison. The number of occasions on which each was strip-searched during the month is shown in the table:

	Inmate A	*Inmate B*	*Inmate C*
After legal visits	—	—	—
After other visits	2	5	3
At the time of cell changes, and wing and cell searches	3	2	2

No authorised article was found on any of the three women. But, as the hon. Member is aware, strip-searching is a routine security measure to which all inmates—male and female—are subject and its justification lies not only in the fact that staff do discover items (such as drugs, syringes, plastic knives sharpened into daggers, and scissors) which they would not otherwise find, but in the deterrent effect which such searching undoubtedly has.

Rifle and Pistol Clubs

Mr. Onslow: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what are the conditions for the approval of rifle and pistol clubs.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: On the basis of inquiries made by the chief officer of police for the area concerned my right hon. Friend has to be satisfied that:

i. safety certificate for the categories of firearm to be fired are in existence for the ranges to be used;
ii. the security arrangements for the storage of club firearms and ammunition are satisfactory;
iii. the application is being made by, or on behalf of, a bona fide club; and
iv. there are no other considerations that would make the club unsuitable for approval.

Police Manpower

Mr. Warren: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many police officers and civilians have been recruited to date since his announcement of increases in May 1986; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: 10,687 police officers were recruited to all forces in England and Wales including the

Metropolitan police between the end of May 1986 and 31 October 1987, the latest date for which information is available, either to replace officers who retired or resigned or to enable forces to implement increases in establishment. In this period, the strength of the police service, excluding those who are on secondment, increased by 2,692 police officers, from 119,325 to 122,017. Information on civilian recruitment is not held centrally but the number of civilians rose by 1,704 from 39,621 to 41,325 in the same period.

Welsh Language

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what is his Department's policy on the production of civil protection material in the Welsh language; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. John Patten: The question of providing a Welsh language version of the public information on civil protection was carefully considered at the time it was produced, in consultation with my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Wales. We are guided by the criteria of demand, expediency and expense recommended in the 1965 Hughes-Parry Report on the "Legal Status of the Welsh Language". In the light of those criteria, we were not persuaded that there was sufficient demand to justify the considerable costs which would have been involved in the production of a Welsh language version of this material.

Immigration

Dr. Glyn: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) how many applications to adopt children from the Commonwealth have been received; how many were admitted to permanent residence in the United Kingdom since the most recent change in the relevant legislation; and whether he will make a statement;

(2) how many applications for admission for permanent residence have been made for adopted children from the Indian sub-continent, and how many have been granted, since the most recent change in the immigration rules.

Mr. Renton: Information is available centrally only on the numbers of children granted settlement in the United Kingdom in 1986 on the basis of their adoption by a person already settled here. Of a total of 85 such children, 13 were nationals of the Indian sub-continent countries, 23 were Commonwealth citizens (including Bangladesh and India) and 62 were foreign nationals.

Mr. Madden: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many representations he received from hon. Members concerning immigration matters in each year from 1983 to 1987.

Mr. Renton: The available information related to the number of immigration files created following representations by right hon. and hon. Members, and is as follows:

	Number
1983	11,456
1984	13,164
1985	16,024
1986	17,511
1987	11,856

Notes:
1. These figures include a number of letters dealing with general issues rather than individual cases.
2. Representations made on behalf of a single family m as more than one case where the immigration circumst than one member of the family are under considerati
3. Further representations made after reply has been se separately in these figures.
4. Representations received about the same case from right hon. Member or hon. Member are counted sep
5. These figures include representations on after entr as those arising from port refusals where stops on followed by written representations.

Mr. Madden: To ask the Secretary of S Home Department how many representati received in the last year urging that hon. Mem be stopped from making representations to immigration matters; and if he will list the n individuals or organisations who have representations in the last year.

Mr. Renton: None, but I refer the hon. M reply of 27 November to the hon. Member for (Mr. Battle) at columns *366-67*.

Mr. Madden: To ask the Secretary of S Home Department if he will arrange for a suspects index held by immigration officers in the Library; how many names are included suspects index; under what categories are th and what are the definitions of each categor

Mr. Renton: I will write to the hon. Mem

Correspondence

Mr. Madden: To ask the Secretary of S Home Department what is the policy in his on acknowledging correspondence; and average time taken between correspondence b and acknowledgement being made.

Mr. Hurd: The Department deals with co as quickly as possible. Because of the dispar the correspondence received by divisions, an numbers of staff available, practice on ac correspondence necessarily varies. Details o time between receipt and acknowledgeme obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Mr. Madden: To ask the Secretary of S Home Department what is the average time taken by officials in his Department to addressed to his Department; what is the tot unopened letters now awaiting attent Department; and how long he anticipates it deal with the backlog.

Mr. Hurd: The information could be obt disproportionate cost, and would not be sig the amount of correspondence awaiting att considerably from day to day between divisio to the level of incoming work and the staff

The large number of applications for re British citizens received in the latter part of produced delays in dealing with correspondei to the immigration and nationality depar effort is being made to reduce, as quickly a the resultant backlog of work.

Departmental Houses and Flat

Mr. Gow: To ask the Secretary of State Department how many houses and flats c

Department are surplus to operational requirement; and how many have been empty for more than *(a)* four months, *(b)* eight months and *(c)* 12 months.

Mr. Hurd: Of nearly 8,000 dwellings owned by the Department, 218 are currently identified as surplus to operational requirements, 201 have been vacant for more than four (but less than 12) months and 11 for over 12 months. Six are still occupied. The Department is further reviewing its holding of dwellings.

Mr. Peter Wright (Pension)

Mr. Madden: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what representations were received from Mr. Peter Wright before his retirement about his pension entitlement; what representations have been received from Mr. Peter Wright since his retirement about his pension entitlement; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Hurd: There are proper channels through which such representations may be made. I have no further statement.

Citizenship

Mr. Madden: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many applications for registration for British citizenship were received in his Department by 31 December 1987; what policy has been adopted to decide whether or not an application was received by 31 December 1987; if he will now extend the deadline by six months; and how many representations he has received urging the deadline to be extended.

Mr. Renton: We have an estimated 250,000 registration and naturalisation applications awaiting initial consideration. We cannot yet say how many of these are applications for registration. In practice, to take account of postal delays around Christmas, we are treating applications as having been made before the deadline if they had postmarks earlier than 1 January 1988, regardless of when they were delivered; or if they were delivered by post before 7 January provided the declaration on the form was completed by 31 December 1987. There is however no power to extend the 31 December time limit in respect of applications under section 8 of the British Nationality Act 1981 made on the grounds of marriage. The exercise of discretion to accept late applications made by Commonwealth citizens under section 7 of the Act must take account of the special circumstances of each individual case.

We have received representations about the deadline from 17 right hon. and hon. Members, three local authorities and five organisations.

Departmental Telephone System

Mr. Madden: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what was the total cost of installing a new telephone system in his Department, when the new system became operative; and when Ministers took steps to inform hon. Members of their new telephone numbers.

Mr. Hurd: The new system became operative on 11 January. The cost was about £785,000, including VAT. On 13 January, details of Ministers' new numbers were made available through Whips' offices. I am sorry this was not done sooner.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Debt

Mr. McNamara To ask the Secretary of State Northern Ireland (1) what total deductions were m from invalidity benefit in 1987 under the Payments Debt (Emergency Provisions) Act (Northern Irela 1971; and what the breakdown was by health and so services board area;

(2) what total deductions were made from child ben in 1987 under the Payments for Debt (Emerge Provisions) Act (Northern Ireland) 1971; and what breakdown was by health and social services board ar

(3) what total deductions were made from wido benefit in 1987 under the Payments for Debt (Emerge Provisions) Act (Northern Ireland) 1971; and what breakdown was by health and social services board ar

(4) what total deductions were made from supplem tary benefit in 1987 under the Payments for D (Emergency Provisions) Act (Northern Ireland) 1971; what the breakdown was by health and social servi board area;

(5) what total deductions were made from unempl ment benefit in 1987 under the Payments for D (Emergency Provisions) Act (Northern Ireland) 1971; what the breakdown was by health and social servi board area;

(6) what total deductions were made from sickn benefit in 1987 under the Payments for Debt (Emerge Provisions) Act (Northern Ireland) 1971; and what breakdown was by health and social services board ar

(7) what total deductions were made from retirem pensions in 1987 under the Payments for Debt (Emerge Provisions) Act (Northern Ireland) 1971; and what breakdown was by health and social services board ar

Mr. Needham: Information is not available in the fo requested. Deductions made under this legislation for first three quarters of 1987 for which figures are availa were as follows:—

1 January—30 September 1987	
Invalidity Benefit	1,023,05
Child Benefit	52,23
Widows' Benefit	313,89
Supplementary Benefit	727,23
Unemployment Benefit	92,17
Sickness Benefit	9,76
Retirement Pensions	492,36

Mr. McNamara: To ask the Secretary of State Northern Ireland (1) what total deductions were m from criminal damage compensation payments in 19 and what the breakdown was by health and social servi board area, under the Payments for Debt (Emerge Provisions) Act (Northern Ireland) 1971;

(2) what total deductions were made from crimi injury compensation payments in 1987; and what breakdown was by health and social services board ar under the Payments for Debt (Emergency Provisions) (Northern Ireland) 1971.

Mr. Stanley: The information is as follows:

	£
Total deductions from criminal damage compensation payments	112,005
Total deductions from criminal injury compensation payments	106,748

A breakdown by health and social services board area is not readily available and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Mr. McNamara: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the total amount was which was recovered in 1987 under the Payments for Debt (Emergency Provisions) Act (Northern Ireland) 1971; what the total administrative cost was for the recovery of this amount; and what proportion the latter was of the former.

Mr. Stanley: In the period 1 January 1987 to 30 September 1987, some £4·5 million was recovered under this legislation. Information on the total administrative cost is not readily available, and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Mr. McNamara: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what total amounts were deducted to recover each of rate arrears and rent arrears under the Payments for Debt (Emergency Provisions) Act (Northern Ireland) 1971 by each local council in 1987.

Mr. Needham: The collection of rent and rates are the responsibility of the Northern Ireland Housing Executive and the Department of the Environment respectively.

The information concerning moneys deducted under the Payments for Debt (Emergency Provisions) Act (Northern Ireland) 1971 in respect of rent and rates is not recorded in the form requested, and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Mr. McNamara: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what grants payable by Government Departments or agencies are subject to deductions under the Payments for Debt (Emergency Provisions) Act (Northern Ireland) 1971; and what total amounts were deducted from each in 1987.

Mr. Stanley: All grants payable by or on behalf of any Government Department or local or public authority may be subject to deductions under the legislation. Information on total amounts deducted from individual grants is not readily available and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Mr. McNamara: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what total deductions were made from Government payments for conversion of gas heating and cooking services to other means, under the Payments for Debt (Emergency Provisions) Act (Northern Ireland) 1971; and what the breakdown was by health and social services board area.

Mr. Viggers: None.

Mr. McNamara: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what total deductions were made from public sector employees earnings in 1987 under the Payments for Debt (Emergency Provisions) Act (Northern Ireland) 1971; and what the deductions were, broken down by Government Department or agency in which debtors were employed.

Mr. Stanley: The total amount d January 1987 to 30 September 1987 wa information on the breakdown of the Government Departments and other age available and could be obtained only at cost.

Mr. McNamara: To ask the Secre Northern Ireland from what benefits or c state bodies deductions were made under Debt (Emergency Provisions) Act (North in the year 1987; what the total deduct category; and from how many people made in each category.

Mr. Stanley: The benefits and other bodies from which deductions were legislation in the first three quarters of 1 amounts deducted, were as follows:

Supplementary Benefit
Sickness Benefit
Child Benefit
Invalidity Benefit
Unemployment Benefit
Widows' Pension
Retirement Pension
Training Allowance
Personal Injury/Criminal Damage Compensation Claims
Public Liability Compensation Claims
Roads Services
Water Service

On 31 March 1987 the four creditor 127,000 debt cases. Number of pe deductions were made in each categor available.

Mr. McNamara: To ask the Secre Northern Ireland what total levels of d in each category for which deductions debtors in that year under the Pa (Emergency Provisions) Act 1971.

Mr. Stanley: As at 1 April 1987 the in each category for which deductions debtors under this legislation were as f

NIHE (Rent, Rates and District Heating)
NIE (Electricity)
Rating Division
Belfast Gas

Mr. McNamara: To ask the Secr Northern Ireland for what categories were deducted from debtors in 1987 u for Debt (Emergency Provisions) Act 1971; and what the total amounts category were.

Mr. Stanley: The categories of debt f were deducted from debtors under the total amounts deducted in each categor quarters of 1987 were as follows:

1 January 1987 to 30 September 1987

	£
NIHE (Rent, Rates and District Heating)	2,674,489
NIE (Electricity)	1,549,838
Rating Division	107,472
Belfast Gas	104,075

Strip Searches

Mr. McNamara: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many strip searches were made of female prisoners in Her Majesty's prison Maghaberry in December 1987, giving the number of persons involved and number of times each person was searched and if any prison contraband, smuggled item or illegal correspondence was discovered in any search, indicating which items; in how many cases prisoners refused to be searched and had to be restrained while the search was being conducted; and what were the reasons for the search under each of the following headings: making a remand appearance at court, attending trial, inter-prison visit or other reasons.

Mr. Stanley: The information requested is as follows:

	Number
Number of searches	
Total number of searches carried out	24
Total number of inmates searched	16
Number of prisoners searched once	11
Number of prisoners searched twice	4
Number of prisoners searched 5 times	1
Reasons for search	
First admission on remand/awaiting trial	4
First admission on sentence/final discharge	7
Attending Appeal Court	1
Bail Court appearances	
Going on or returning from home leave	
Compassionate home leave	
Inter prison visits	
Visits to outside hospital	
After a visit	
During a search of the prison	

No prohibited article was found during these sear no prisoner refused to be searched.

Plastic Bullets

Mr. McNamara: To ask the Secretary of S Northern Ireland how many plastic bullets were Northern Ireland in the first half of 1987; circumstances; in what location the bullets were fi how many persons were injured as a result of th plastic bullets.

Mr. Stanley: During the first six months of 198 of 1,571 plastic baton rounds were fired in N Ireland; 14 people were allegedly injured as a re

I am writing to the hon. Member with the info he has requested about the circumstances and which the baton rounds were fired. A copy of my l be placed in the Library.

Terrorism

Mr. John D. Taylor: To ask the Secretary of S Northern Ireland what was the total number of who died in Northern Ireland as a result of violence in each of the past five calendar years.

Mr. Stanley *[holding answer 14 January 198* information is as follows:

	1983	*1984*	*1985*	*1986*
Number of persons murdered by terrorists (also includes those murdered as a result of internal disputes)	65	53	48	55
Number of persons believed to be terrorists and assumed to have been killed by their own devices or weapons	1	—	1	—
Number of persons killed believed to be terrorists killed by the security forces	6	7	3	4
Total deaths associated with terrorist activity	72	60	52	59

Mr. John D. Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what has been the trend in the number of deaths and injuries due to terrorist violence since 15 November 1985; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Stanley *[holding answer 14 January 198* information is as follows:

	1985 16 November to 31 December Deaths	*1986 1 January to 31 December Deaths*	*1987 1 January to 31 December Deaths*
Number of persons murdered by terrorists (also includes those murdered as a result of internal disputes)	6	55	80
Number of persons believed to be terrorists and assumed to have been killed by their own devices and weapons	—	—	4
Number of persons believed to be terrorists killed by security forces	—	4	8

	1985 16 November to 31 December Deaths	*1986 1 January to 31 December Deaths*	*1 Jan*
Total deaths associated with terrorist activity	6	59	
Total injuries[1]	86	1,450	

[1] Information on injuries is not collected in a way which allows it to be categorised as for deaths above.

TRANSPORT

Traffic Accidents (Drink-Driving)

Mr. Redwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what proportion of road traffic accidents were related to drink-driving in 1986.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: It is estimated that about one tenth of all injury accidents result from driving with excess alcohol in the blood. There were 247,854 injury accidents in 1986.

In 1985, 1,000 road users died in crashes and collisions where the driver or rider was over the legal limit, representing one fifth of all road deaths in 1985[2].

In 1985, 60 per cent. of drivers and riders who were killed in road accidents between 10 pm and 4 am had a blood alcohol level in excess of the legal limit, compared with 15 per cent. at other times of the day[3].

1. "The facts about drinking and driving", published by the Transport and Road Research Laboratory, 1986.
2. Page 34, "Road Accidents Great Britain 1986 — The Casualty Report", published by HMSO, 1987.
3. Ibid, table C5, page 36.

Bus Deregulation (Cheshire)

Mr. Butler: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what information he has regarding the costs or savings to Cheshire county council in 1986-87 following bus deregulation.

Mr. David Mitchell: Cheshire county council budgeted to spend £5·5 million on revenue support for passenger transport in 1986-87. Following deregulation, I understand that actual expenditure for that year was less than £3·5 million.

Thelwall Viaduct

Mr. Butler: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what is his latest estimate of major works to be undertaken on the Thelwall viaduct.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: We announced on 5 January our plans to widen the M6 between the M56 and M62, including Thelwall viaduct, to dual four lanes with hardshoulders.

The £58 million scheme includes a new viaduct alongside the existing one for southbound traffic and rebuilding the existing structure for northbound traffic. Construction might start in about four years.

National Bus Company

Mr. Butler: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make it his policy not to permit sales of National Bus Company subsidiaries which significantly undervalue the book value of the assets concerned.

Mr. David Mitchell: Each Nation subsidiary has been widely marketed establishing through competitive bi valuation of the business as a going co

Severn Bridge

Mr. Butler: To ask the Secretary of S when he expects to make a decision re level of tolls on the Severn bridge.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: There is nothin to my replies to my hon. Friend on 14 1987 at columns *421-22* and *777*.

Traffic Control

Mr. Janner: To ask the Secretary of S whether he will introduce legislation t turn left at traffic lights when it is accordance with systems long operati states in the United States of America

Mr. Peter Bottomley: No. This prop produced generally at sites where a de could be provided for left turnin conditions are appropriate a left filter t turn only" slip roads with "give wa currently be provided at the discretion highway authority.

Trees

Sir Anthony Grant: To ask the Sec Transport what steps he takes to ensure of trees beside roadways is not a haza

Mr. Peter Bottomley: Our landscap section takes great care when plantin embankments and — or cuttings to fully developed they do not constitut traffic.

In the case of rural or semi-rural carried out over the last 30 years Department's guide lines that no sin planted within 4·5 m the nearside edge unless protected by a safety fence or ot

In the case of the urban or sem greater proportion of individual tre varying width and often close to carriageway. This planting is primar early post-war schemes.

As part of upgrading the pre-war schemes, replacement of the remainin only option available to mitigate the i on the street scene. In such cases, s incorporated in the design so as becoming a traffic hazard.

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Deaths

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Traffic Flows (Kirkby Stephen)

Mr. Jopling: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will publish up-to-date figures for traffic flows, including figures for heavy lorries, for the road passing through Kirkby Stephen between Tebay and Brough; and by how much they have increased in recent years.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: The A685 is a local road for which Cumbria county council is the highway authority. The 1986 annual average daily traffic flows were about 2,900 vehicles to the east of Tebay and about 4,600 just north of Kirkby Stephen, both including approximately 11 per cent. goods vehicles. During the 1980s, flows have increased by about 4 per cent. per annum.

London City Airport

Mr. Spearing: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement concerning the withdrawal of the operators' licences to fly to and from the London City airport and Paris.

Mr. Channon: The Civil Aviation Authority provisionally suspended the operation of flights between London City airport and Paris on 18 December pending the outcome of an inquiry into the safety of these flights in south-east air space. The conclusions of the inquiry, which the CAA announced today, recommend three alternative routes to Paris, and the airline operators concerned have confirmed that they consider themselves competent to operate flights on those routes.

A13 (North Circular Road to Tower Bridge)

Mr. William Powell: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what plans he has to improve the A13 trunk road between the A406 north circular road and Tower bridge.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: A scheme to improve the A13 Newham way-A117 East Ham Manor way junction is in the national roads programme. An interim traffic management scheme there will open this spring.

Two studies are under way to identify other schemes. Consultants are expected to report very shortly on possible improvements to the A13 between Dagenham and Limehouse to relieve congestion and cater for increased traffic arising from regeneration of docklands. Stage II of the East London assessment study covers the western end of the A13.

Tyre Treads

Sir Anthony Grant: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) what consultations he proposes to hold with the police and motoring organisations concerning the current regulations on tyre treads and the EEC proposed directive thereon; what steps he is taking to assess the effectiveness of current regulations; and if he will make a statement;

(2) if he will introduce legislation to require tyre tread depths on motor vehicles to be a minimum of 1·6 mm over the entire width of the tyre.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: The current regulations on tyre tread depths were made in 1983 and specify 1 mm across three quarters of the width of the tyre with visibl the remainder. The regulations were thoroughly two years ago in consultation with the police, the organisations and other interested parties. Th considered the evidence as regards enforceability safety and led to the conclusion that no further c the regulations were needed. The commissior produced new evidence on which it is necessary fresh consultation exercise.

Sir Anthony Grant: To ask the Secretary of Transport how many motor vehicles in each c three years failed the MOT test because of unsa tyres.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: Too many. The mo figures based on a 2 per cent. sample are as foll

Year ending December	*1984*	*1985*
Total vehicles tested	14,436,650	14,415,266
Total vehicles failed	5,537,505	5,463,946
Total vehicles failed due to defective tyres	1,176,100	1,249,822

Figures for 1987 are not yet available.

Woolwich Ferry

Mr. Cartwright: To ask the Secretary of Transport how many scheduled crossings have on the Woolwich ferry since 1 April 1987.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: Too many. Up to 13 about 25,000 crossings have been lost.

Mr. Cartwright: To ask the Secretary of Transport what discussions he has had with th borough of Greenwich about the future operati Woolwich ferry; and with what outcome.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: The Department conti in regular contact with the London borough of G A substantial improvement in service should be if the package of measures arising from the ma review is agreed by the work force.

Mr. Cartwright: To ask the Secretary of Transport when he received the final repo consultants on the future operation of the Woolw and what action he has taken or intends to ta recommendations.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: As I told the hon. Mem October, *Official Report*, column 484, we rec consultant's final report last July. A package of based on the recommendations has been pu ferrymen and their representatives by the London of Greenwich. Negotiations are continuing.

Horne Committee

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for T if he will make a statement on the implementati recommendations of the Horne committee.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: We attach great impo improving the arrangements for the carrying out by public utilities in highways and securing ap reinstatement immediately afterwards.

The Government's response to the Horn published in July 1986, accepted the great majo

recommendations. We are pressing ahead with the detailed technical work required on many of the recommendations. We shall continue to seek a suitable opportunity to bring before Parliament proposals for primary legislation on the lines already announced.

Travis Brow, Stockport (Land Development)

Mr. Andrew F. Bennett: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when he expects the land at Travis Brow, Stockport, which was included in the compulsory purchase order for the M63, to be disposed of; and what delays have occurred to this disposal since the Minister with responsibility for roads and traffic wrote to the hon. Member for Denton and Reddish in November 1987.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: We will dispose of this site as soon as possible after acquiring the two outstanding interests. Some progress has been made since November towards completing the acquisitions. We are considering arrangements for the sale.

Written Answers to Questions

Monday 18 January 1988

EDUCATION AND SCIENCE

Computers

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what funding is given to the study of the psychology of the interface between computers and human operators, with a view to redesigning computers; and what representations he has received from Science and Engineering Research Council and Natural Environment Research Council on this topic.

Mr. Jackson: A variety of work is carried out on the human-computer interface, although not all of it is applicable to the redesigning of computers. The Science and Engineering Research Council has spent some £11·5 million on collaborative research into studies of the interface between computers and human operators over the five years of the Alvey programme. The Medical Research Council is supporting research on the psychology of the interface between computers and human operators, at its applied psychology unit and the MRC-ESRC social applied psychology unit. In 1986-87, the funding on this research was £0·51 million. The economic and social research council has supported research costing in total about £0·25 million over the last three years, largely in support of the cognitive science and information technology initiative. We have received no formal representations from these councils.

Medical Research Council

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what response he has given to the request from Dai Rees, secretary of the Medical Research Council, that the Medical Research Council budget should be increased from £140 million to £180 million.

Mr. Jackson: My right hon. Friend has not received a request from the Medical Research Council for such an increase in its budget.

Medical Research

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what is his assessment of the costs in real terms of the funding of medical research in 1985, 1986 and 1987.

Mr. Jackson: The Government fund medical research through the science budget. The allocations—at 1987-88 constant prices—for 1985-86, 1986-87 and 1987-88 are as follows:

	£ million
1985-86	131·3
1986-87	133·8
1987-88	139·8

Additionally, there is funding through the UGC block grants to universities. Precise attribution to medical research is not possible, since universities' research activities cannot be clearly distinguished from other activities including teaching. The latest notional figures for medical research—1987-88 constant prices—are:

	£ million
1985-86	157·9
1986-87	161·6
1987-88	162·0

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what percentage of the Medical Research Council Alpha programme he funded in 1987; and what percentage he hopes to fund in 1988.

Mr. Jackson: I understand from the Medical Research Council that, in the last award year 1986-87, 63 per cent. of alpha-rated project grant applications were awarded; it is for the council to decide what resources it wishes to allocate to grants in the award year 1987-88.

AIDS

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science whether he is satisfied with the level of funding into the spread of the human immuno deficiency virus in heterosexuals.

Mr. Jackson: The Medical Research Council is supporting research on the spread of human immunodeficiency virus in heterosexuals. Funds for this research come in part from my Department and in part from the Health Departments. The MRC is planning additional work in this area for which it is seeking extra funds. In addition to allocations already announced, my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Social Services has agreed to provide £700,000 in 1988-89 for the MRC's programme of research on the spread of HIV. The Economic and Social Research Council is additionally to launch a programme of research into the social and behavioural aspects of HIV; this programme will concentrate on heterosexual behaviour. United Kingdom researchers also collaborate with scientists working on the problem in other parts of the world.

CERN (Report)

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will make a statement on Her Majesty's Government's response to the Abragam report on CERN; and what is the likely timing of key meetings during 1988.

Mr. Jackson: I refer the hon. Member to my reply to my hon. Friend the Member for Bedfordshire, North (Sir T. Skeet) on 17 December 1987 at column 634. The Abragam report on CERN will be considered at the Council meetings on 23/24 June 1988 and 13/14 October 1988. Discussion will also take place at meetings of subordinate committees before and between these dates.

Ozone Hole

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will give an assessment on the progress of *(a)* British, *(b)* international and *(c)* Falkland Island based research into the ozone hole.

Mr. Jackson: The following is the current position:

a. British Research

The seasonal ozone depletions in the Antarctic were first identified from regular measurements of ozone column amounts undertaken by the British Antarctic survey, now part of the Natural Environment Research Council. Measurements began in 1957. In 1987, with assistance from the Chemical Manufacturers Association (USA), and the Department of the Environment, the survey undertook a programme of ozone measurements using balloon borne instruments. Profiles of the ozone layer were obtained daily from the British research station 'Halley', on the Brunt ice shelf. Between altitudes of 14 and 18 km, a reduction of 97 per cent. in the ozone present took place between 15 August and 13 October 1987.

Apart from this BAS research, modelling studies of Antarctic ozone are being undertaken by the Meteorological Office, and by the Department of physical chemistry, university of Cambridge. Laboratory studies of reactions of the chlorine monoxide radical are being undertaken by the Atomic Energy Research Establishment at Harwell.

The Rutherford-Appleton Laboratory of the Science and Engineering Research Council has relevant collaborative projects with American institutions.

b. International Research

The United States has mounted three major investigations into the Antarctic ozone depletions. Ground-based measurements of the abundances of the various chemical constituents were under-taken at McMurdo station in 1986 and 1987. In August and September 1987, extensive measurements were made from two aircraft based at Punta Arenas, Chile, flying into and underneath the 'ozone hole'. Preliminary results indicate that chlorine compounds are largely responsible for the depletions. Discussion of the full results is planned for May 1988. Laboratory and theoretical studies are being undertaken at many research centres throughout the United States.

Field programmes are also being undertaken by New Zealand, Japan, West Germany and the USSR. Other nations have relevant laboratory or modelling programmes.

There have been several meetings devoted to discussion of the Antarctic ozone depletions, and all have been marked by a spirit of international co-operation.

Attention is now being given to the possibility of an 'ozone hole' over the Arctic and a research programme has recently been announced in West Germany.

c. Falkland Islands upper-air observations

The Meteorological Office makes routine radio-sonde ascents, in support of air operations. Since mid-1987 the data obtained has been made available to the global meteorological network. Research specific to the ozone problem is not undertaken.

Marine Sciences (Redundancies)

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what representations he has had from Hugh Fish, chairman of the Natural Environment Research Council on compulsory redundancies within two years in Natural Environment Research Council laboratories, related to the marine sciences; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Jackson: Mr. Fish wrote to my right hon. Friend on 4 September concerning, inter alia, the future funding of the Natural Environment Research Council. I understand that, at its next meeting on 21 January, the Natural Environment Research Council will consider priorities within its programmes, including marine science, and the staffing implications of those priorities. The Council hopes that any staff reductions can be achieved without recourse to compulsory redundancy.

Education Reform Bill

Mr. Steen: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science how many children he expects to be eligible for a special education school under the Education Reform Bill.

Mr. Dunn: It is for each LEA to determine its own policy in respect of children with special educational needs. Each LEA makes its own decisions on school placements for children with special educational needs in the light of the consultations which lead up to the statement of the school provision they use. My right hon. Friend does not expect any significant change in the numbers of children attending special schools as the result of the Education Reform Bill.

Mr. Steen: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science how many special education schools he estimates will exist once the Education Reform Bill has been fully implemented.

Mr. Dunn: The provision of special schools is not for my right hon. Friend; it is a matter for local determination by each individual LEA. My right hon. Friend sees no reason to believe that the number of special schools will change as a result of the implementation of the Education Reform Bill.

Mr. Steen: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science how many classroom teachers were consulted about the Education Reform Bill.

Mrs. Rumbold: Copies of the consultation papers issued by the Department of Education and Science were sent to all the national teachers' organisations. In addition, copies were freely available from the Department. Many teachers were among the 20,000 respondents who have sent in comments.

GCSE

Mr. Steen: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science how much extra finance is being made available for implementing the general certificate of secondary education curriculum.

Mrs. Rumbold: For the start of the GCSE courses in September 1986, the Government provided directly for some £30 million expenditure on books, equipment and in-service training in England. Our expenditure plans allow for a further £115 million to be spent in the financial year 1987-88, and up to £104 million to be spent in 1988-89, on non-teaching costs and in-service training associated with the introduction of the GCSE. In addition, the Government have provided some £1 million in assistance to the GCSE examining groups in England in the years 1984-85 to 1987-88, mainly to help provide training for teachers and examiners.

Schoolteacher Vacancies

Mrs. Clwyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what information he has as to how many *(a)* primary and *(b)* secondary schoolteacher vacancies have been unfilled for (i) six months or more or (ii) a year or more in each local education authority.

Mrs. Rumbold: Information in the form requested is not available. The table shows the numbers of previously advertised vacancies for full-time permanent appointments to maintained secondary schools, still unfilled by permanent appointment at 15 January 1987.

Teacher vacancies in maintained secondary schools January 1987

Local Education Authority	*Vacancies*
Barking	19
Barnet	50
Bexley	21
Brent	35
Bromley	52
Croydon	17
Ealing	14
Enfield	35
Haringey	19
Harrow	10
Havering	27
Hillingdon	10
Hounslow	8
Kingston	7
Merton	9
Newham	56
Redbridge	14
Richmond	16
Sutton	14
Waltham Forest	4
Birmingham	79
Coventry	14
Dudley	13
Sandwell	14
Solihull	18
Walsall	15
Wolverhampton	15
Knowsley	10
Liverpool	5
St. Helens	5
Sefton	2
Wirral	27
Bolton	2
Bury	0
Manchester	23
Oldham	5
Rochdale	5
Salford	23
Stockport	7
Tameside	15
Trafford	2
Wigan	0
Barnsley	5
Doncaster	11
Rotherham	1
Sheffield	28
Bradford	14
Calderdale	7
Kirklees	17
Leeds	154
Wakefield	40
Gateshead	5
Newcastle upon Tyne	19
North Tyneside	12
South Tyneside	0
Sunderland	8
Isles of Scilly	2
ILEA	381
Avon	35
Bedfordshire	38
Berkshire	0
Buckinghamshire	49
Cambridgeshire	8
Cheshire	31
Cleveland	0
Cornwall	16
Cumbria	22
Derbyshire	79
Devon	41
Dorset	3
Durham	5
East Sussex	16
Essex	50
Gloucestershire	6
Hampshire	57
Hereford & Worcester	19
Hertfordshire	44
Humberside	28
Isle of Wight	0
Kent	91
Lancashire	57
Leicestershire	61
Lincolnshire	29
Norfolk	21
North Yorks	2
Northamptonshire	7
Northumberland	0
Nottinghamshire	59
Oxfordshire	8
Shropshire	2
Somerset	14
Staffordshire	38
Suffolk	24
Surrey	36
Warwickshire	12
West Sussex	23
Wiltshire	42
Clwyd	2
Dyfed	8
Gwent	3
Gwynedd	9
Mid Glamorgan	34
Powys	0
South Glamorgan	0
West Glamorgan	13

Financial Delegation

Mr. Pawsey: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he has yet received the report by management consultants on financial delegation to schools; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Kenneth Baker: The report on "Local Management of Schools" by Coopers and Lybrand Associates is being published today. I welcome the report as an important document. It contains encouraging evidence of the benefits of financial delegation, and valuable advice on the practical steps needed to implement the Government's policies on financial delegation, as embodied in the Education Reform Bill now before the House. The report will be studied carefully by my Department, and deserves to be read by all those with an interest in this field.

I am sending copies to all local education authorities in England and to other interested bodies. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Wales is doing likewise in Wales. I have placed copies in the Libraries of both Houses.

Higher Education

Mr. Bowis: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will give the most recent figures for the

number of young people going on into sixth forms or other further education establishments for *(a)* England and Wales, *(b)* the Inner London education authority, *(c)* Croydon, *(d)* Kingston upon Thames, *(e)* Brent and *(f)* Sheffield; and if he will give each as a total and as a percentage of the total year group for each area.

Mr. Dunn *[holding reply 11 January 1988]:* The number and percentage of 16 and 17-year-olds in full-time education at maintained secondary schools and furth education establishments in the academic year 1986-87 each specified local education authority and in Engla are given below. Pupils in independent schools have be excluded from the answer. Information for Wales is t responsibility of my right hon. Friend the Secretary State for Wales.

Academic year 1986-87

	16 year olds		*17 year olds*	
	Nos. (000s)	*As a percentage[1] of age group*	*Nos. (000s)*	*As a percentage[1] of age group*
England	293·6	46	205·9	31
ILEA[2]	11·7	51	7·7	31
Croydon LB[2]	1·9	49	1·3	31
Kingston-upon-Thames LB[2]	0·9	62	0·6	40
Brent LB[2]	1·7	65	1·2	43
Sheffield MDC[2]	3·2	40	2·2	27

[1] The number of 16 and 17 year olds expressed as a percentage of the total number of 15 year olds in maintained secondary schools o or two years earlier respectively.

[2] Students in Further Education colleges have been reallocated to their normal area of residence and included in the calculation for th authority. Pupils in schools are classified to the LEAs where the schools are situated.

CHURCH COMMISSIONERS

"Crockford's Clerical Directory"

Mr. Chapman: To ask the right hon. Member for Selby, as representing the Church Commissioners, what was the cost to the Church Commissioners of publishing *Crockford's Clerical Directory* for 1985-86; and what is the anticipated cost for the 90th edition, relating to 1987-88.

Mr. Alison: Production costs are shared by the Church Commissioners and the Central Board of Finance. The 1985-86 directory cost £82,000 and revenue from sales and advertising was £96,000. The cost of the 1987-88 edition is expected to be about £80,000 and sales should exceed this.

NATIONAL FINANCE

Corporation Tax

Mr. Neil Hamilton: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will estimate the cost of extending the 27 per cent. small companies rate of corporation tax to the first £100,000 of profits of every company or, as the case may be, group, so that on no profits does the marginal tax rate exceed the 35 per cent. standard rate.

Mr. Norman Lamont: Of the order of £70 million at the rates due for the 1987-88 financial year.

Mr. Neil Hamilton: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, with respect to the small companies rate of corporation tax *(a)* when the £100,000 lower limit and £500,000 upper limit for marginal relief were last changed, *(b)* what the respective limits would be for 1988-89, on present forecasts of inflation, if they were indexed for inflation since the date they were last changed, and *(c)* what would be the cost of increasing the limits to those figures.

Mr. Norman Lamont: The limits were last changed 1983 — in respect of the financial year 1982-83. indexed in line with changes in the RPI, they wou become approximately £130,000 and £650,000 for 1988-8 The cost of indexation would be approximately £ million in a full year at current levels of company incom

Income Tax

Mr. Nicholas Bennett: To ask the Chancellor of t Exchequer what information he has as to the relationsh between income tax levels and tax yields in the Unit Kingdom and in other countries.

Mr. Norman Lamont: The relationship between incon tax levels and tax yields is a complex one, and may affected by changes in the levels of employment, t distribution of income and the level of economic activi over a period of time. Figures for the level of taxes a income tax thresholds for the United Kingdom and number of other OECD countries are given in the annu publication by the Inland Revenue of "Internation comparisons of direct tax on employment income"; t yields are given in "Revenue statistics of OECD memb countries", which is published annually by OECD. Bo publications are available in the Library.

Mr. Gordon Brown: To ask the Chancellor of t Exchequer what was the average income tax paid p household in 1979 and in 1986-87 in *(a)* current prices, *(* 1979 prices and *(c)* 1987 prices.

Mr. Norman Lamont *[holding answer 18 Decemb 1987]:* Information is available only for income ta liabilities of tax units, ie single people and married couple The figures for 1978-79 are from the survey of person incomes of that year; 1986-87 information is based on projection of the 1984-85 survey of personal incomes an is therefore provisional.

Average[1] income tax liability per tax unit[2]

	Current prices		Constant prices[3]	
	(As percentage of average income)		*1978-79 prices*	*1986-87 prices*
	£ per annum	*Per cent.*	*£ per annum*	*£ per annum*
1978-79	960	20·1	960	1,850
1986-87	2,000	18·2	1,040	2,000

[1] Based on 21·5 million taxpaying tax units in 1978-79 and 20·5 million taxpaying tax units in 1986-87.
[2] Counting married couples as one and combining their income.
[3] By reference to movements in the retail prices index.

Value Added Tax

Mr. Curry: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is the current yield from value added tax on standard rated supplies in the construction industry; and if he will estimate the net additional revenue in a full year from the imposition of value added tax at the standard rate on new construction other than housing.

Mr. Lilley: It is estimated that the yield from value added tax on building improvements and alterations will be around £1,250 million in 1987-88. It is estimated that the new additional revenue in a full year from the imposition of value added tax at the standard rate on new construction other than housing would be about £350 million at 1987-88 prices. Because of the uncertainties involved in estimating the effects of such a change on the construction sector, the estimate should be taken as no more than an indicator of the order of magnitude.

Mr. Teddy Taylor: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what estimate he has made of the additional revenue which would accrue to the Treasury in a full financial year if value added tax were levied *(a)* on industry and commerce on the supply of water and sewerage services, *(b)* on information services other than those intended directly for the public or for the production of zero-rated products, *(c)* on the construction of buildings for industrial and commercial use and in the community and civil engineering sectors and *(d)* on supplies of fuel and of protective boots and helmets in so far as they are not supplied to the final consumer at the current uniform value added tax rate; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Lilley *[holding answer 14 December 1987]:* It is estimated that the net additional full year revenue at 1988-89 prices of imposing value added tax at the standard rate of 15 per cent. would be:

	£ millions
(a) Sewarage services and water for industry	negligible
(b) Information services other than those intended directly for the public or for the production of zero-rated products	negligible
(c) Construction of buildings for industrial and commercial use	350
(d) Fuel and Power to industry	25
(e) Protective clothing and footwear to employers	negligible

These estimates provide only a broad indicator of the likely order of magnitude.

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will arrange to publish and place in the Library the relevant parts of the 1952 notes between the Governments of the United Kingdom and the United States of America which exempted maintenance and equipment contracts for United States forces in Britain from value added tax.

Mr. Lilley *[holding answer 14 January 1988]:* The 1952 exchange of notes to which the hon. Member refers was published as Command Paper No. 8497 in March of that year. A copy is in the Library.

Forestry

Mr. Ron Davies: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what representations he has received concerning the reform of forestry taxation policy; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Norman Lamont: As is customary at this time of year, my right hon. Friend has received a number of representations on a wide range of subjects.

Productivity

Mr. Butler: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer by how much productivity has increased in the United Kingdom since 1979.

Mr. Major: In the third quarter of 1987, output per head in the whole economy was 19 per cent. higher than in 1979. In the three months to October 1987 manufacturing output per head was 41 per cent. higher than in 1979.

Cross-border Banking

Mr. Chris Smith: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what information he has received to date from the European Commission as to European Community proposals for cross-border banking activities and securities business; what the response of Her Majesty's Government has been; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Lilley: I understand that the European Commission has adopted a proposal for a directive on banking to put to the Council of Ministers. The directive deals with the conditions on which a bank authorised in one member state would be able to set up in or provide a range of core banking services into another member state on the strength of its home country authorisation. There have been preliminary discussions in a Commission working group, which the United Kingdom attended, but we have not yet seen the final proposals. They will be put before Parliament in the normal way.

Job Creation

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if, further to his answer of 28 October 1987, he will provide his estimate of the short-run effect over a five-year period upon jobs created for the expenditure of £1 billion in *(a)* defence spending, *(b)* public transport,

(c) construction, *(d)* health and *(e)* education, based on the current Treasury model and current underlying assumptions.

Mr. Major: It has not been the practice to publish estimates of the economic effects of changes in public expenditure.

Payroll-Giving Scheme

Mr. Yeo: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many civil servants are now making charitable donations through the payroll-giving scheme.

Mr. Brooke: In most Departments, the necessary forms are in the process of being made available to staff, but the information asked for is not yet available.

Government Data Network

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what commitments and estimated costs Her Majesty's Government have incurred as a result of the signing of the memorandum of agreement to proceed with the Government data network; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Brooke: No commitments to the consortia bidding for the Government data network have been incurred by Her Majesty's Government as a result of the signing of the memorandum of agreement. A decision on whether or not to proceed to contract will be taken after tenders have been evaluated.

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what guarantees are provided for the security of confidential information *(a)* belonging to Government Departments and *(b)* held on individuals in the proposal for the Government data network to be managed privately; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Brooke: It is not planned to transmit classified information across the proposed Government data network. Data will be protected against corruption and unauthorised access while in transit. User Departments are responsible for all their data, and would be responsible for providing any additional protection for sensitive information.

BP Shares

Mr. Campbell-Savours: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) on what day his Department made contact with the Kuwaiti Investment office to discuss purchases of BP shares;

(2) with which representatives of the Government of Kuwait and representatives of the Kuwaiti Investment offices his Department discussed the operation of BP share purchases.

Mr. Norman Lamont: The Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, met the Kuwaiti authorities during the visit to Kuwait from 20 to 23 December 1987.

London City Airport

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many customs officers are involved in duties at London City airport.

Mr. Lilley: There are 12 customs officers involved on duties at London City airport.

Personal Equity Plans

Mr. Carrington: To ask the Chancellor o Exchequer what proposals he has to change the trea for capital gains tax purposes of losses incurred disposal of shares held in a personal equity plan.

Mr. Norman Lamont: It has always beer Government's intention that, provided a personal plan is kept in being for the minimum qualifying p of between one and two years, investments m switched from one qualifying share to another wi creating either a capital gains tax liability or an allo loss. However, the Inland Revenue has now received advice which suggests that, contrary to this inte losses from disposals of shares held in a plan m allowable for capital gains tax purposes.

The Government therefore intend to include a pro in the 1988 Finance Bill ensuring that a disposal of s in a personal equity plan which is kept in being fo minimum qualifying period cannot create an allo loss for capital gains tax purposes.

If enacted, the proposal will apply to any disposal on or after today of shares held in a personal equity

Privatisation

Mr. Gordon Brown: To ask the Chancellor o Exchequer what was the cost to the Exchequer in ea the privatisation flotations undertaken by Her Maj Government since 1980 of the underwriting *(a)* i United Kingdom and *(b)* elsewhere.

Mr. Norman Lamont *[holding answer 18 Dece 1987]:* The cost of underwriting in each of privatisation flotations and residual shares sales since is as follows:

£ m

Company name	*Year*	*United Kingdom offer*	*Overseas offer*
British Aerospace	1981	2·42	—
Cable and Wireless	1981	3·92	—
Amersham International	1982	1·08	—
Britoil	1982	8·49	—
Associated British Ports	1983	0·34	—
British Petroleum	1983	6·95	—
Cable and Wireless	1983	3·61	—
Associated British Ports	1984	0·81	—
Enterprise Oil	1984	6·08	—
Jaguar	1984	4·83	—
British Telecom	1984	57·88	25·99
British Aerospace	1984	6·13	—
Britoil	1985	6·03	1·60
Cable and Wireless	1985	7·57	—
Brtish Gas	1986	52·33	17·72
British Airways	1987	6·78	2·90
Rolls Royce	1987	10·89	—
BAA	1987	13·60	0·24
British Petroleum	1987	41·99	30·60

Notes:

1. Figures shown are exclusive of VAT.
2. Figures do not include underwriting costs for shares offer the company in the 1985 British Aerospace and 1985 Cable Wireless sales. These costs were wholly borne by the company.

In most of the privatisations and residual share sales c were shared with the company. Details of the cost sha agreements negotiated for each sale are not held centr

Privatisation

Mr. Gordon Brown: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will list the money spent on the advertising of privatisation sales, for each sale since 1979.

Mr. Norman Lamont *[holding answer 18 December 1987]:* The total expenditure on advertising for recent privatisation and residual share sales is as follows:

		£m
British Telecom	(1984)	11·7
Britoil	(1985)	3·1
Cable and Wireless	(1985)	3·1
British Aerospace	(1985)	1·8
British Gas	(1986)	11·5
British Airways	(1987)	5·8
Rolls Royce	(1987)	3·0
BAA	(1987)	8·5
British Petroleum	(1987)	23·1

Notes
(1) Advertising costs associated with these sales were shared with the companies concerned. Details of the cost sharing arrangements negotiated for each sale are not held centrally.
(2) Figures include expenditure on corporate advertising, offer for sale advertising and advertising agency fees.
(3) The BP figure is an estimate. Final costs to be confirmed.
(4) Advertising costs for earlier share sales are not held centrally.

Family Income and Allowances

Mr. Gordon Brown: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will estimate, on the same basis as the ready reckoner published in the Autumn Statement, the effect on a one-earner, two-child family of spending in 1988-89 the same sum on *(a)* a one penny cut in the basic rate of income tax, *(b)* raising income tax thresholds above their indexed levels and *(c)* raising child benefit, assuming (i) no change in income support rates and (ii) corresponding changes in income support rates.

Mr. Norman Lamont *[holding answer 17 December 1987]:* The effects of the proposed changes on a one earner, two child family vary according to the level of income of the family. The table contains information based on direct revenue or expenditure cost in a full year at forecast 1988-89 levels for selected, specimen levels of earnings. Each of the measures would cost £1·4 billion in a full year at 1988-89 levels of income—ie, the full-year figure underlying the first-year cost of a 1p cut in the basic rate of income tax, £1·25 billion, shown, in the Autumn Statement.

The income tax changes compared with the 1987-88 tax regime indexed to 1988-89 according to the statutory provisions under the same assumptions about price movements as were used in the Autumn Statement. The income tax calculations assume that all personal allowances and higher-rate thresholds would increase by the same percentage and disregard any changes in social security income-related benefits to which the family may be entitled. It has also been assumed that the only tax relief or allowance available to the married couple is the married man's allowance and that the wife has no earnings.

Increase in income after tax (£ per week) compared with indexation in 1988-89 for married man with two children

	Multiple of Average Earnings[1]						
	½	¾	1	1½	2	5	10
Increase derived from:							
(a) 1p cut in basic rate	0·46	1·07	1·69	2·91	3·60	3·60	3·60
(b) 5 per cent. increase in income tax thresholds	0·99	0·99	0·99	0·99	3·90	10·69	10·69
(c) Increase in child benefit							
(i) £3·40 per week[2]	6·80	6·80	6·80	6·80	6·80	6·80	6·80
(ii) £2·15 per week[3]	4·30	4·30	4·30	4·30	4·30	4·30	4·30

[1] Average earnings assumed to be £244·7 per week, an increase of 6·5 per cent. on 1987-88 in line with the assumptions used by the Government Actuary for reviewing National Insurance contributions (paragraph 3.02 of the Autumn Statement 1987).
[2] Assuming no change in income support rates.
[3] Assuming a corresponding change in income support.

Income and Taxes

Dr. Cunningham: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will publish in the *Official Report* a table showing, for each decile of persons, households or tax units (i) the average annual income and the amount thereof paid in *(a)* direct taxes, *(b)* indirect taxes and *(c)* household rates and (ii) the percentage of annual income such payments represent for each decile.

Mr. Major *[holding answer, 13 January 1988]:* The information requested is given in the table in respect of 1985, the latest year for which estimates are available. The unit of analysis is the household and gross income represents income from all sources.

Households ranked by Gross Income, 1985

	Decile Groups									
	Bottom	*2nd*	*3rd*	*4th*	*5th*	*6th*	*7th*	*8th*	*9th*	*Top*
(i) (£ per year)										
Gross income	2,401	3,447	4,618	6,294	8,160	10,029	12,049	14,491	17,950	28,218
Income tax[1]	4	49	119	425	794	1,094	1,518	1,985	2,799	5,380
National Insurance contributions	6	11	50	196	390	547	698	866	1,048	1,358
Domestic rates[2]	131	171	221	292	337	369	389	445	465	577
Indirect taxes	491	691	988	1,308	1,568	1,847	2,029	2,492	2,796	3,865

	Bottom	2nd	3rd	4th	Decile Groups 5th	6th	7th	8th	
(ii) (percentages of gross income)									
Income tax[1]	0·2	1·4	2·6	6·8	9·7	10·9	12·6	13·7	1
National insurance contributions	0·2	0·3	1·1	3·1	4·8	5·5	5·8	6·0	
Domestic rates[2]	5·5	5·0	4·8	4·6	4·1	3·7	3·2	3·1	
Indirect taxes	20·4	20·0	21·4	20·8	19·2	18·4	16·8	17·2	1

[1] Net of tax relief at source on mortgage interest and life assurance premiums.
[2] Net of the rate rebate element of housing benefit.
Source: CSO estimates based on the 1985 Family Expenditure Survey.

Revenue Collection

Mr. O'Brien: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what action he intends to take to ensure that tax collection offices are adequately staffed to obviate second applications and final demand notices being sent to taxpayers in error.

Mr. Norman Lamont *[holding answer 14 January 1988]:* Tax collection offices are complemented according to the work they are required to do, and I have no reason to believe that these offices are inadequately staffed. Furthermore, there is no evidence to suggest that errors in the issue of applications for tax is a widespread problem, but if the hon Member has evidence to the contrary I will look into the matter.

Mr. O'Brien: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many *(a)* second application and *(b)* final demand notes for income tax payments have been sent out by the Inland Revenue in error during the last 12 months.

Mr. Norman Lamont *[holding answer 14 January 1988]:* Statistics on the number of second applications or final demand notes issued in error are not available.

Tax Allowances

Mr. Wareing: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what representation he has received seeking the abolition of the married man's income tax allowance; and what response he has made.

Mr. Norman Lamont *[holding answer 14 January 1988]:* My right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer continues to receive a wide range of correspondence on this subject. Replies have referred to the Green Paper, "The Reform of Personal Taxation", which outlined a possible new system of independent taxation of husband and wife with a standard personal tax allowance transferrable between spouses, and to the fact that we are now exploring the possibility of a halfway house to the Green Paper approach.

Jobs Dispersal

Mr. Ingram: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he intends to commission a further report on the dispersal of Civil Service jobs, in the light of the improvements in communication, information technology and the transport network, since the Hardman report was first published.

Mr. Brooke *[holding answer 15 January 1988]:* The programme of dispersal announced in 1979 is nearing completion. The Government are preparing and will announce in due course a policy to succeed it. This policy will reflect the factors mentioned by the hon. M the potential benefits to the Civil Service localities concerned of siting work in areas w supply conditions and costs are favourable.

EC (Payments)

Mr. Cryer: To ask the Chancellor of the what was the net payment made to the EEC by Kingdom Government for 1987.

Mr. Brooke *[holding answer 15 January 198* that the outturn figure is not yet available.

THE ARTS

Museums and Galleries

Mr. Faulds: To ask the Minister for the A he will publish in the *Official Report* the attend for 1987 reported by the national museums a in England for which he is responsible, broke the individual institutions but comprising t tions, with figures in each case of the percent or decrease on the attendance figures for whether, in the case of such museums or galleri for admission, he will in addition specify the tickets sold.

Mr. Luce: I will reply substantively to the h as soon as information on 1987 attendance fi national museums and galleries is available.

Mr. Faulds: To ask the Minister for the Ar to his answer of 14 December 1987, *Offic* column *376*, whether *(a)* the sales of item national museums to which he refers took pla auction in the United Kingdom and *(b)* the the vendors of these items were specified in t sale catalogues.

Mr. Richard Luce: The information requ follows:

Institution	(a) Items sold by public auction in the United Kingdom	Identi specif s
British Museum	Yes	
British Museum (Natural History)	No	N
National Maritime Museum	No	N
Victoria and Albert Museum	Yes	

The British museum (natural history) sold a Victorian bound volumes of fern specimens

Zealand in December 1987. Due to the specialised nature of the collection, the volumes were offered to selected individuals known to have an interest in the subject.

The national maritime museums sold a duplicate chart of the Orkney Islands (c. 1946) to Thames Television in January 1987, and a microscope to the Whipple museum of the history of science, Oxford in December 1987. This item had been on loan to the museum for some time.

Objects in Lieu of Tax

Mr. Faulds: To ask the Minister for the Arts whether he will specify the allocations made to public institutions in the United Kingdom during the half year ended 31 December 1987 of individual works of art and muse objects pre-eminent for national, scientific, historic artistic interest which have been accepted in satisfactio inheritance tax or capital transfer tax, together w information, where applicable, as to conditions or wis expressed in the matter of allocation by testators executors; whether he will list the works of art museum objects which are still awaiting allocation, w the respective dates of their acceptance in satisfactio inheritance tax or capital transfer tax; and whether a p notice will be issued from the Office of Arts and Libra covering the information given in his reply.

Mr. Luce: The information is as follows:

Items Allocated since 1 July 1987

Item	*Conditions or Wishes Expressed*	*Recipient Institution*
Chattels at Hagley Hall	Conditional	City of Birmingham District Council, to remain in situ Hagley Hall
Still life painting by Breughel	Wish expressed—to go to National Galley	Castle Museum, Norwich
Two still life paintings by Van der Ast	Wish expressed—to go to National Gallery	Temple Newsam House, Lee
Derby Commemorative Jug	Wish expressed—to go to Temple Newsam House, Leeds	Temple Newsam House, Lee
"Deux Pierreuses" by Toulouse-Lautrec	Unconditional	National Museum of Wales
Two paintings by Bellotto	Wish expressed—to go to City of Bristol Museum and Art Gallery	City of Bristol Museum and Gallery
"Weeping Woman" by Picasso	Conditional	Tate Gallery

Items Awaiting Allocation

Item	*Conditions or Wishes expressed*	*Date of Acceptance*
Portrait by Sir Thomas Lawrence	Conditional on its remaining in situ at Sledmere House	9 April 1986
Portrait by Sir William Beechey	Conditional on its remaining at Norton Conyers	23 July 1986
Clark Archive	Wish expressed—to go to Tate Gallery	14 July 1987
Ten portrait miniatures	Wish expressed—to go to Victoria and Albert Museum	26 November 1987
Portrait of John Gray of Carntyne by Sir Henry Raeburn	Wish expressed—to go to a museum or gallery in Scotland	3 December 1987

A press notice covering this information has been issued today.

Works of Art (Export Licences)

Mr. Faulds: To ask the Minister for the Arts whether he will list the items for which the issuing of export licences was withheld on the recommendation of the Reviewing Committee on the Export of Works of Art during the half year ended 31 December 1987, specifying in each case the valuation and whether an item was eventually exported or retained, with particulars in the latter event of the acquiring institution; whether he will list any items for which licences have been withheld but the final disposal of which is not yet decided, specifying in each case *(a)* the valuation and *(b)* the relevant time limit; and whether a press notice will be issued from the Office of Arts Libraries covering the comprehensive information giv his reply, in accordance with past practice.

Mr. Luce: My right hon. and Noble Friend Secretary of State for Trade and Industry accepted recommendation following consideration by Reviewing Committee on the Export of Works of A defer making for a specified period a decision on an ex licence application in respect of the items listed. valuation has been omitted in one case when the o wished it to remain confidential. Details of the items l were given in press notices issued at the time the Secr of State decided to accept the recommendation; how a further press notice will be issued.

Description of item	*Valuation £*	*Outcome*
Painting 'Self Portrait as St. Matthew' by Sir Anthony van Dyck	430,000	Decision deferred for 4 months until 16 November 1987. Licence granted
George II Centrepiece by David Willaume and Anne Tanqueray	—	Decision deferred for 6 months until 16 January 1988, with a review after 3 months. Purchased by Temple Newsam House, Leeds
Sketchbook by J. M. W. Turner	1,050,000	Decision deferred for 3 months until 16 October 1987. Licence granted following review of situation after one month

Description of item	*Valuation* £	*Outcome*
Drawing 'The Martyrdom of St. Justina' by Veronese	623,250	Decision deferred for 6 months until 9 March with review after 2 months
Drawing 'The Ramparts near the Bulwark beside the St. Anthoniespoort' by Rembrandt	1,426,250	Decision deferred for 6 months until 13 1988. Licence granted following review situation after 2 months
Roman marble portrait bust of the Empress Livia	156,100	Decision deferred for 3 months until 13 Dec 1987. Purchased by the National Museum Galleries on Merseyside
Drawing 'The Madonna del Popolo' by Barocci	1,784,000	Decision deferred for 6 months until 12 April Licence granted following review of situ after 2 months
Drawing 'The Death of St. Peter, Martyr' by Pordenone	567,500	Decision deferred for 6 months until 9 March Licence granted following review of situ after 2 months
A German giltwood throne armchair	23,415	Decision deferred for 4 months until 13 Dec 1987. No decision has yet been reached whether a licence should be granted
Silver Plaque 'The Adoration of the Shepherds' by Paulus Van Vianen	475,000	Decision deferred for 4 months until 12 Feb 1988
Drawing 'A Farmhouse with a Dovecote and a Hayrick among Trees' by Rembrandt	557,500	Decision deferred for 6 months until 12 April Licence granted following review of situ after 2 months
The Clifford Family papers relating to 'The Secret Treaty of Dover' c.1670	317,775	Decision deferred for 6 months until 12 April
Pair of 18th century carved wood and gilded sarcophagus shaped wine coolers	120,000	Decision deferred for 4 months until 18 April with review after 6 weeks
Pair of Regency mahogany chairs of 'Klismos' shape	40,000	Decision deferred for 3 months until 12 Jan 1988. Chairs purchased by Birming Museum and Art Gallery and the Victoria Albert Museum
Mid-Victorian ebony and ivory inlaid display cabinet of concave semi-circular shape	20,070	Decision deferred for 3 months until 21 Febr 1988
Album of designs for 'Objects de Vertue' relating to Charles Ouizille and Pierre Francois Drais c.1750-1795	50,625	Decision deferred for 4 months until 4 April
Painting 'The finding of Moses' by Nicolas Poussin	7,250,000	Decision deferred for 6 months until 21 May 1 with review at 1 month
Plaster model for the monument to Archbishop Tillotson by Joseph Wilton	275,000	Decision deferred for 4 months until 4 April
Pair of slap soled ladies shoes	21,185	Decision deferred for 3 months until 4 March
Pair of paintings 'Classical Landscapes' by Jakob-Philip Hackert	900,000	Decision deferred for 3 months until 18 Ma 1988

ATTORNEY-GENERAL

Family Courts

Mr. David Nicholson: To ask the Attorney-General what representations he has received from the Family Court Campaign since 11 June 1987; and what meetings have taken place, or are planned, with representatives of that campaign.

The Attorney-General: There is no record of any representations having been made since 11 June 1987 by the Family Courts Campaign. No meetings have taken place or are planned with representatives of the campaign.

State Security

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Attorney-G account Her Majesty's Government take of time which has elapsed since the original p material by current or former members of services in deciding whether *(a)* to seek restraining further publication of the same different form or in a different medium and for an account of profits against the origina publishers; and if he will make a statement.

The Attorney-General: The Government take such account of that factor as is appropriate in all the circumstances.

Mr. Mullin: To ask the Attorney-General if he will list the legal actions initiated by his Department since 1979 with a view to preventing in whole or in part the publication or broadcasting of newspapers articles or radio or television programmes.

The Attorney-General: Since 1979, with the Attorney-General acting in his capacity as nominal plaintiff on behalf of the Government or as a law enforcement officer representing the public interest, the following actions have been initiated, directed specifically to restraining in whole or part the publication of particular articles in newspapers or periodicals or the broadcasting of particular radio or television programmes:

Attorney-General v New Statesman (1986)
(Ambassador's valedictory dispatch)

Attorney-General v BBC (1987)
(My Country Right or Wrong)

Attorney-General v Channel 4 (1987)
(Court Report—The Birmingham 6)

Attorney-General v Observer and Sunday Times (1988)
(Cavendish)

On the other relevant actions against the media, I refer the hon. Member to my answer to his other question of today.

Mr. Campbell-Savours: To ask the Attorney-General (1) whether he intends to prosecute under section 2 of the Official Secrets Act Mr. Rodney Dennys for revealing information which is officially secret to Mr. Anthony Cave Brown for use in his book "The Secret Servant"; and if he will make a statement;

(2) whether he intends to prosecute under section 2 of the Official Secrets Act Sir James Easton for revealing information which is officially secret to Mr. Anthony Cave Brown for use in his book "The Secret Servant"; and if he will make a statement;

(3) whether he intends to prosecute under section 2 of the Official Secrets Act Sir Patrick Reilly for revealing information which is officially secret to Mr. Anthony Cave Brown for use in his book "The Secret Servant"; and if he will make a statement;

(4) whether he intends to prosecute under section 2 of the Official Secrets Act Colonel Felix Cowgill for revealing information which is officially secret to Mr. Anthony Cave Brown for use in his book "The Secret Servant"; and if he will make a statement.

The Attorney-General: Any evidence submitted to the Director of Public Prosecutions tending to establish that an offence under that section may have been committed will be considered.

Mr. Campbell-Savours: To ask the Attorney-General whether he intends to seek an injunction against the publishers Michael Joseph to prevent the publication of the book "The Secret Servant" by Anthony Cave Brown; and if he will make a statement.

The Attorney-General: The matter is under consideration.

"Spycatcher"

Mr. Mullin: To ask the Attorney-General if he
all the legal actions initiated by his Departm
connection with the publication of Mr. Peter W
book "Spycatcher" and the cost in each case.

The Attorney-General: The list of the proceedin
the approximate amount of costs expended to date
fees and travelling and subsistence where relevan
follows:

CIVIL PROCEEDINGS FOR BREACH CONFIDENTIALITY

AUSTRALIA:
Attorney-General v. Heinemann (Australia) and Wri
Legal fees: £460,000. Travelling and subsistence: £6

NEW ZEALAND:
Attorney-General v. Wellington Newspapers and Othe
Legal fees: £68,000. Travelling and subsistence: £13,

ENGLAND AND WALES:
Attorney-General v. Guardian, Observer and Sunday
Legal fees: £41,500.

HONG KONG:
Attorney-General v. South China Morning Post
Legal fees: £1,200.

PROCEEDINGS FOR CRIMINAL CONTEM COURT
Attorney-General v. Independent
Legal fees: £8,100.
Attorney-General v. Sunday Times (including for injur
restrain threatened contempt)
Legal fees: £750.
Attorney-General v. Sunday Telegraph; News on
London Daily News; Evening Standard
Legal fees: £250.

Prosecution Policy

Mr. Campbell-Savours: To ask the Attorney-
(1) what is his policy on the prosecution of perso
claim the protection of a prerogative right of the
in cases where an infringement of the criminal
alleged to have occurred;

(2) if he will make it his policy to prosecute any
employed by the Government who is alleged
committed a criminal offence.

The Attorney-General: The relevant criteria are
in the code for Crown prosecutors, which is
pursuant to section 10 of the Prosecution of Offe
1985.

DEFENCE

Safariland Lodge, Lake Naivasha, Keny

Mr. Mullin: To ask the Secretary of State for
what was the cost of the 50m extension to the jet
Safariland lodge on Lake Naivasha, Kenya,
soldiers of the First Battalion, the Royal H
Fusiliers, during their stay in the area in Novemb
and who paid.

Mr. Freeman: The materials were provided
Safariland lodge. The jetty was built by soldier
First Battalion, the Royal Highland Fusilie
volunteered to undertake the task during one of t
periods. No costs were incurred by defence votes

Mr. Mullin: To ask the Secretary of State for
what was the cost of the dinner for the band of

Battalion, the Royal Highland Fusiliers and their friends at the Safariland lodge on Lake Naivasha in Kenya on the weekend of 21 November 1987; and who paid.

Mr. Freeman: The dinner for the band of the First Battalion, the Royal Highland Fusiliers and two members of the unit responsible for administering the camp at Lake Naivasha was proposed by the Safariland lodge. No costs were incurred by defence votes.

First Battalion, Royal Highland Fusiliers (Kenya Visit)

Mr. Mullin: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what was the purpose of the visit by the First Battalion, the Royal Highland Fusiliers to Kenya in November 1987; how long they stayed; what was the cost; and who paid.

Mr. Freeman: The battalion deployed to Kenya on a major overseas training exercise from 20 October 1987 to 3 December 1987. The in-country cost of the exercise was about £170,000 and was met from defence funds.

Trident

Mr. Kaufman: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the answer to the hon. Member for Islington, South and Finsbury (Mr. Smith) on 11 January, *Official Report*, column 69, when the arrangement came to an end whereby the purchase of the Trident missile system would be at an exchange rate of $1·50 to the pound sterling.

Mr. Sainsbury: The dollar cost in the Trident estimate announced to Parliament each year by my right hon. Friend is given at the exchange rate used in recosting the current defence long-term programme. The estimate of £9,265 million, announced in January 1987, was thus based on an exchange rate of $ 1·50 to £1 sterling. The cost of dollar expenditure in the United States is governed by the exchange rate prevailing at the time of puchase of those dollars.

Home Defence Exercises

Mr. O'Neill: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) what role 3 Commando Brigade will play in the district home defence exercises to be held from September to November;

(2) what role 5 Airborne Brigade will play in the district home defence exercises to be held from September to November;

(3) what is the maximum number of *(a)* military personnel and *(b)* brigades due to participate in the district home defence exercises to be held from September to November;

(4) if United Kingdom-based infantry brigades taking part in the district home defence exercises to be held from September to November will participate in exercises in military districts other than their own.

Mr. Freeman: Of the four home defence brigades, three will participate in their own district exercises, while 5 Airborne Brigade will give some exercise support to South-east district and Wales. The aggregate number of troops participating in nine separate exercises at various times over a nine week period is aproximately 60,000. No district will have more than 6,500 troops in the field in any one day.

Mr. O'Neill: To ask the Secretary of S
(1) if the wartime headquarters of the
commanders-in-chief committee will be
the district home defence exercises to
September to November;

(2) if the wartime headquarters of
land forces will be activated during th
defence exercises to be held from Septemb

(3) on what date planning was commen
of military district home defence exercises
United Kingdom from September to Nov
changes have taken place in the pr
command of the exercises since then;

(4) what is the collective title given
military district home defence exercises
September to November.

(5) if a district home defence exercis
Northern Ireland this autumn; and if
statement;

(6) if a district home defence exercis
Scotland this autumn; and if he will mak

Mr. Freeman: Between September and
year, there will be military home defence
military districts except Northern Ire
commenced in July 1986 following the ho
in chief's endorsement of the United King
commander's policy for home defence
instructed district commanders to hold di
1988. There is no collective title since these
exercises under the independent com
appropriate general officer commanding.
no changes to the proposed level of
planning began and there are no plans
headquarters at Headquarters United
Forces or for the United Kingdom comm
committee.

SSIXS Equipment

Mr. O'Neill: To ask the Secretary of S
how many United Kingdom-owned and U
operated SSIXS shore terminals in Britai
installed and *(b)* are planned.

Mr. Sainsbury: A number of United K
and operated RN SSIXS satellite commun
have been installed ashore; the need f
systems is kept under regular review. It wo
national interest to reveal precise number

Mr. O'Neill: To ask the Secretary of St
pursuant to his reply to the hon.
Clackmannan on 7 December 1987,
column 88, what weapon systems other th
submarines have been fitted with SSIXS

Mr. Sainsbury: I refer the hon. Membe
given on 11 January 1988 at column 64.

Mr. O'Neill: To ask the Secretary of St
whether Royal Navy Trident submarines w
the SSIXS system.

Mr. Sainsbury: It is not the policy to re
equipment fit of Royal Navy Trident sub

Defence Contracts

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if, pursuant to his answer of 26 November 1987, *Official Report*, column *281*, he will give the names of the companies under investigation for alleged fraud in connection with defence contracts.

Mr. Sainsbury: No. It would be inappropriate to provide this information whilst police inquiries are continuing.

Army Equipment Exhibition

Mr. Wallace: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will itemise all the estimated costs to be incurred by his Department in relation to the British Army equipment exhibition from 26 June to 1 July in Aldershot.

Mr. Sainsbury: All additional costs incurred in relation to the British Army equipment exhibition are recovered from the companies participating in it.

Mr. Wallace: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many military personnel will be on duty at the next British Army equipment exhibition in Aldershot.

Mr. Sainsbury: Some 750 military personnel will be on duty in support of the British Army equipment exhibition 1988.

Mr. Wallace: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if any firepower and mobility demonstrations are planned in conjunction with the next British Army equipment exhibition at Aldershot; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Sainsbury: In conjunction with the 1988 British Army equipment exhibition, there will be mobility demonstrations but no firepower demonstrations.

British Nuclear Test Programme (Report)

Mr. Churchill: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when he received the National Radiological Protection Board's report on those members of Her Majesty's Forces who were the victims of the British nuclear test programme; and when he expects it to be published.

Mr. Sainsbury: I expect to receive the final report of the NRPB into the mortality and cancer incidence in the United Kingdom participants in the United Kingdom atmospheric nuclear weapon tests and experimental programmes very shortly. I understand that the NRPB intends to publish the report towards the end of the month.

OVERSEAS DEVELOPMENT

Simon Armstrong

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs for what reasons Simon Armstrong, general manager, has asked to resign from the Falkland Islands Development Corporation; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Chris Patten: As the Falkland Islands Development Corporation has already explained, Mr. Armstrong has asked to be transferred from the Falkland Islands because of an irreconcilable conflict of personalities within the local administration.

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Recycled Paper

32. **Mr. Janner:** To ask the Lord President Council if he has any proposals for measures to i the quantity of recycled paper used in the House.

Mr. Wakeham: I refer the hon. and learned Me the answer I gave to the hon. Member for Southw Bermondsey (Mr. Hughes) on 12 November last a when I indicated that the Accommodatio Administration Sub-Committee will be reconside use of recycled paper in the House in the near fu

Mineral Waters

Mr. Neil Hamilton: To ask the Lord Presiden Council (1) if he will take steps to ensure that the waters sold by the Refreshment Department a British owned, fully meet the requirements of the Mineral Water Regulation 1985 and conform to E Community directive No. 80/778; and if he will statement;

(2) what information he has as to which of the mineral waters it is proposed to sell in the House meet the requirements of EC directive No. 80/778 he will make a statement.

Mr. Wakeham: The Catering Sub-Committee i to decide which mineral waters are in future to be p for sale in the House; and I am sure that in reac conclusions it will take account of the requiremen regulations and the EC directive.

Scottish Standing Committee

Mr. Home Robertson: To ask the Lord Preside Council what information he has as to the nu occasions since 1958 on which hon. and rig Members representing constituencies outside S have been nominated to serve on the First or Scottish Standing Committee.

Mr. Wakeham: Members representing consti outside Scotland have been nominated to the Second Scottish Standing Committees on the fo occasions:

Session	*Number of times*
1958-59	1
1959-60	15
1961-62	7
1962-63	6

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMISSION

Reports

Mr. Allen: To ask the Chairman of the Public A Commission how many reports the Public A Commission has presented to the House; and i make a statement.

Sir Peter Hordern: Since it was first established the Public Accounts Commission has presente reports pursuant to section 2(3) of the National A

National Audit Office

Mr. Allen: To ask the Chairman of the Public Accounts Commission if he receives a copy of the National Audit Office's annual programme of work; and if he will make a statement.

Sir Peter Hordern: The National Audit Office's programme of economy, efficiency and effectiveness reports and investigations is submitted to the Committee of Public Accounts, which advises the Commission on the National Audit Office's estimates. The Commission also considers the National Audit Office's corporate plan.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Firearms (Police Use)

Mr. Canavan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many people have been killed or injured by police using firearms in each year since 1979; and how many of those had neither been convicted of any offence, nor were being pursued by the police in connection with any alleged offence.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: The available information is as follows:

Year	*Injuries*	*Deaths*
1979	—	1
1980	4	1
1981	1	—
1982	3	—
1983	3	—
1984	5	—
1985	3	1
1986	1	—
1987	5	5
TOTAL	25	8

Of these, three persons who were injured, and two persons who were killed, were not being pursued by the police in connection with any alleged offence. The information relating to the number of those injured or killed who had not been convicted of any offence could not be obtained without disproportionate cost.

Firearms

Mr. John M. Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what representations he has received in response to his recent White Paper on "Firearms Control".

Mr. Douglas Hogg: Since the White Paper was published we have received about 900 letters from right hon. and hon. Members and about 1,500 from members of the public, secretaries of rifle and pistol clubs, shooting organisations, and a number of other bodies. They have raised a variety of points on our proposals.

Mr. Atkinson: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what representations he has received regarding the possible effects of his proposals in the Firearms (Amendment) Bill on British participation in international shooting events; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: The only international shooting events in which British participation will be affected by the Bill are practical shooting events involving the use of full bore self-loading rifles. We have received representations from shooting organisations opposing the change concerned, but my right hon. Friend is not persuaded that the limited sporting use of these weapons justifies their continued possession by private individuals.

Mr. Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will set out the basis for his estimate that the manpower effects of the Firearms (Amendment) Bill will be 80, mainly civilian, additional personnel.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: It is our rough assessment after consulting the police of the additional police resources required to administer the provisions of the Firearms (Amendment) Bill, mainly in relation to changes in the shotgun controls. This represents 60 civilian staff for England and Wales, and 20 for Scotland.

Political Asylum

Mr. Dicks: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) how many applicants awaiting a decision on their application for political asylum were released into the community during 1987; and if he will list the country of origin of those released;

(2) how many applicants awaiting a decision on their application for political asylum have been released to sponsors or others living in Hayes and Harlington during 1987; and if he will list their countries of origin.

Mr. Renton: Information is not readily available in the form requested. However, during 1987 some 1,615 persons applied for asylum on arrival at Heathrow, Dover and Gatwick. Their principal countries of origin were:

	Number
Sri Lanka	577
Iran	284
Iraq	139
Uganda	161

During 1987, 449 asylum applications were detained for periods of more than 14 days. On 31 December 1987, 59 remained in detention. Information relating to the whereabouts of those granted temporary admission is not kept centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Amusement Arcades

Mr. Roy Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Home Affairs (1) if he has any plans to amend the Gaming Act 1968 so as to restrict access to amusement arcades or centres to persons over the age of 16 years;

(2) if he has any plans to give local authorities greater controls over the proliferation and operation of amusement arcades and centres;

(3) if he has yet received a report of his research unit on young people's addiction to amusement machines; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he expects to receive the report on the review of legislation pertaining to amusement machines; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. John Patten: The unit is preparing a report taking account of the results of research which we have now

received. The question of legislation is among those which we shall consider when we have completed our assessment of the findings.

Female Prison Officers

Mr. Rooker: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list the male prison establishments to which his Department has invited female officers to move.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: In May 1977 female prison officers were invited to apply for posts at the male prison listed in column A for deployment to Crown courts to receive female offenders surrendering to bail. In November 1987 female prison officers were invited to apply for posts at the male establishments listed in column B for deployment to Crown courts as above, on searching duties and on additional tasks which do not impinge upon consideration of privacy and decency.

Column A

HMP Canterbury
HMP Exeter
HMP Leicester
HMP Lincoln
HMP Norwich
HMP Swansea
HMP Winchester

Column B

HMP Gartree
HMP Lincoln
HMP Leicester
HMP Bedford
HMP Shrewsbury
HMP Wormwood Scrubs
HMP Albany
HMP Parkhurst
HMP Lewes
HMP Norwich
HMP Long Lartin
HMP Oxford
HMP Gloucester
HMP Dorchester
HMP Bristol
HMP Hull
HMP Leeds
HMP Manchester
HMP Frankland
HMP Wakefield
HMP Brixton
HMP Reading

Winson Green Prison

Mr. Rooker: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many persons have served prison sentences of less than one week at Winson Green prison, Birmingham, since August 1987.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: According to the records held centrally, about 25 persons were initially received into Birmingham prison in the period 1 September to 30 November 1987 to serve sentences of less than one week.

Shirley Ann Bovell

Mr. Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when his Department will answer the letter dated 15 November 1985 addressed to his right hon. and learned Friend the Parliamentary Secretary to the Treasury on the subject of the admission to England of Shirley Ann Bovell, a citizen of Trinidad and Tobago; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Renton: I regret that the relevant papers have been mislaid. I am writing to the hon. Member about this and his letter of 11 January in order that the matter may now be resolved as quickly as possible.

Oakham Police Station

Mr. Latham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he will now give a date for authorising the Leicestershire police authority to start the construction of a new police station in Oakham.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: We hope to be able to give approval in November for work on the new Oakham police station to start in 1991-92.

Official Secrets Act

Mr. Stern: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he expects the work on finding effective, enforceable and reasonable provision to replace section 2 of the Official Secrets Act to be complete.

Mr. John Patten: As my right hon. Friend announced on 15 January, at columns 581-587, he hopes to lay before Parliament in June a White Paper setting out proposals for the reform of section 2.

Deportations

Mr. Madden: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department in how many cases the courts have given leave to move for judicial review of any decision to depot an individual from the United Kingdom in each of the last 10 years; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Renton: I regret that this information is not available.

Gaming Machines

Mr. Fearn: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he now has any plans to introduce legislation to control the proliferation of gaming machines and similar devices in shopping centres and to protect young people from them; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. John Patten: We shall make our views known as soon as we have assessed the findings of the research which we have recently had done on this subject.

Firearm Certificates

Mr. Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what is the average length of time for the issue and renewal of firearm certificates by the Metropolitan police.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: The information requested is not held centrally and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost. I understand from the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis that for renewals a reminder notice to certificate holders is issued 10 weeks before the date of expiry, and that the necessary administrative procedures are normally carried out within this time.

Mr. Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list for each police authority the average length of time for the issue and renewal of firearm certificates.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: This information is not held centrally and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Neighbourhood Watch Schemes (Durham)

Mr. Cummings: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what information he has about the number of neighbourhood watch schemes in the county of Durham and in particular within the sub-divisions of Seaham and Peterlee.

Mr. John Patten: I understand that there are now 149 such schemes in the county of Durham with 12 in the sub-division of Peterlee and six in the sub-division of Seaham.

London City Airport

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many immigration officers are involved in duties at London City airport.

Mr. Renton: Currently one chief immigration officer and six immigration officers.

Remands in Custody

Mr. Matthew Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many people have been remanded in custody awaiting trial for more than six months; and what percentage this is of the total number of people remanded in custody in each of the years from 1983 to 1987.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: The readily available information is of the estimated length of time spent by the population of untried prisoners on 30 June since the first remand in custody, but it includes any intervening time spent on bail. These figures are published annually in "Prison Statistics England and Wales"—table 2(c) of the latest volume, 1986, Cm. 210—copies of which are in the Library. Figures for 1987 are not yet available.

Dogs

Mr. Meale: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he has considered funding a public education programme for the purpose of highlighting the need for good dog care.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: The Government applaud the work done by the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, and by other animal welfare organisations, in promoting a responsible attitude towards animals and pet ownership. In areas where they have been appointed dog wardens can assist in promoting responsible dog ownership. We have no plans, however, to extend the use of public money for these purposes.

PRIME MINISTER

LINK Programme

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Prime Minister what representations the Cabinet Office have had from the Medical Research Council for the LINK programme, to develop ties between academia and industry, in particular with a view to establishing co-operation between pharmaceutical companies and universities to investigate new forms of drug delivery; and if she will make a statement.

The Prime Minister: The Cabinet Office has not received any representations from the Medical Research Council concerning the LINK programme.

Non-departmental Public Bodies

Mr. Blunkett: To ask the Prime Minister if she will list by name all non-departmental public bodies in existence on 1 June 1979 and those in existence on 31 December 1987.

The Prime Minister: Appendix A to the report on non-departmental public bodies (Cmnd. 7797) published in January 1980 lists by name 2,112 non-departmental public bodies in existence in September 1979. A list of the 1,643 bodies in existence on 1 April 1987 is to be found in "Public Bodies 1987", publication of which was announced by my right hon. Friend the Minister of State, Privy Council Office, on 2 December 1987, at column 575. Information relating to the dates requested could only be provided at disproportionate cost.

Crown Prerogative

Mr. Campbell-Savours: To ask the Prime Minister if she will make a statement on the exercise of the prerogative rights of the Crown in relation to the conduct of Government employees.

The Prime Minister: No.

Mr. Campbell-Savours: To ask the Prime Minister if any actions in exercise of a prerogative right of the Crown have been taken since 1979.

The Prime Minister: Innumerable actions in exercise of prerogative power have been taken since 1979; these range from the signature of treaties to the grant of the royal pardon.

Mr. Campbell-Savours: To ask the Prime Minister what representations Her Majesty's Government have received concerning exercise of prerogative rights of the Crown in respect of actions which could otherwise be subject to criminal proceedings.

The Prime Minister: None so far as I am aware.

Mr. Campbell-Savours: To ask the Prime Minister if she will introduce legislation to permit a servant of the Crown to carry out a criminal act in the exercise of a prerogative right of the Crown.

The Prime Minister: No.

Mr. Campbell-Savours: To ask the Prime Minister what proposals she has for precisely defining the conditions under which the powers are exercisable under prerogatives of the Crown.

The Prime Minister: None.

Regional Policy

Mr. Alan Williams: To ask the Prime Minister how the announced changes in regional policy in "DTI—the Department for Enterprise" will affect future total Government regional spending in *(a)* England, *(b)* Wales and *(c)* Scotland.

The Prime Minister: The White Paper "DTI—the Department for Enterprise" (Cm. 278) indicates that the

changes in regional policy do not reduce the planned level of spending on regional industrial measures. Specific information on Departments' expenditure plans for the next three years will be set out in the public expenditure White Paper to be published on 20 January.

Nature Conservancy Council

Mr. Home Robertson: To ask the Prime Minister if she will make a statement on co-ordination between the Secretaries of State for Scotland and the Environment in relation to their responsibilities for the Nature Conservancy Council; and if she will list the precise responsibilities of each of those Ministers in relation to the control and management of national nature reserves in Scotland and in England, respectively.

The Prime Minister: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the reply given by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment to the hon. Members for Copeland (Dr. Cunningham), for Linlithgow (Mr. Dalyell), and for Wentworth (Mr. Hardy) on 13 January 1988 at column 281. My right hon. Friend carries out these responsibilities in consultation and co-operation with his ministerial colleagues, including my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Scotland.

Mr. Hugh Gaitskell

Mr. Winnick: To ask the Prime Minister whether, pursuant to her answer of 13 January, *Official Report*, column 270, she is prepared to arrange for the file on Mr. Hugh Gaitskell, dating from 1957, to be made available for inspection on Privy Councillor terms; and if she will make a statement.

The Prime Minister: As a matter of normal practice, I do not propose to confirm or to deny whether briefings on Privy Councillor terms are envisaged or have taken place, even in those cases where no such briefing is planned or has occurred.

British Politicians (Files)

Mr. Winnick: To ask the Prime Minister, pursuant to her answer of 13 January, *Official Report*, column 270, what is her policy towards holding files in her office on British politicians; what information she has as to when this practice started; how many such files there are of this nature; and if she will make a statement.

The Prime Minister: No such policy is needed. As part of normal office procedure, files are opened on any subject arising in the course of public business for papers which may be received or generated on that subject. Such files form part of the public record and are considered for release at the appropriate time under the rules laid down.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Turkey

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the implications for the United Kingdom's relations with Turkey of the human rights situation in that country.

Mrs. Chalker: We believe that considerable progress has been made in recent years towards the restoration of human rights and democracy in Turkey. Our relations with Turkey, which is an important NATO ally, are excellent. We take every appropriate opportunity to raise the subject of human rights with the Turks. We welcome the announcement on 7 January that Turkey would sign the European convention for the prevention of torture.

Bahrain

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations Her Majesty's Government have made to the Bahrain authorities about allegations of torture, ill-treatment of political prisoners and other human rights abuses in the light of the 1987 Amnesty International report, a copy of which has been sent to him; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Mellor: Her Majesty's ambassador in Bahrain has made representations at senior levels to the Bahraini authorities who are in no doubt about our views on torture and abuse of human rights. They are also aware of the legitimate interest taken by Amnesty International in these matters. A team from Amnesty International visited Bahrain in April and June 1987. They were well received and have entered into a dialogue with the Government of Bahrain.

British Consulates (Loans)

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what conveniently available figures in *(a)* one year terms and *(b)* percentage terms he has available to him, demonstrating the amounts of money lent by British consulates to British citizens abroad which have not been repaid as promised; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Eggar: Figures for the amount of money lent to British nationals in distress abroad, and the amounts repaid, for the years 1975-87 are shown in the table.

Repayment is often made by instalments over a period of months or years and does not necessarily relate to the year when expenditure occurred. Under a new scheme introduced on 1 January 1987 for on-the-spot small advances from public funds, £9,851 was lent in 1987 by British Consulates. Only £3,480 has so far been repaid.

The continuing reduction in the amount of public money lent and the number of persons assisted reflects a general policy of self-help and the application of stricter criteria to British nationals requesting public funds for repatriation or financial assistance. They are required to demonstrate genuine destitution and a lack of other available sources of funds.

Financial assistance for repatriation

Year	Number of persons assisted[1]	Expenditure	Recoveries	Percentage recovered
		£	£	
1975-76	4,808	458,000	256,034	56
1976-77	2,550	362,811	270,303	75
1977-78	2,178	311,150	233,549	75
1978-79	2,132	261,892	231,630	88
1979-80	1,936	187,176	191,101	102
1980-81	1,696	190,406	198,187	104
1981-82	1,650	202,276	168,882	83
1982-83	1,001	210,276	146,231	70
1983-84	527	92,807	126,504	136
1984-85	468	83,720	92,660	111
1985-86	443	[2]189,225	126,911	67
1986-87	432	72,662	71,925	99
Totals	19,821	2,622,407	2,113,977	81

[1] It is not clear from the records but in some years this figure may include those for whom the FCO acted as a channel for private funds bu not repatriation.
[2] Including funds for Aden evacuation.

Mordecai Vanunu

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if on his recent visit to Israel the Minister of State the hon. and learned Member for Putney (Mr. Mellor) specifically raised with the Foreign Minister Israel the current trial of Mordecai Vanunu and his disappearance from the United Kingdom in 1986, the issue of nuclear weapons deployment in the region or the reported claims of Israeli nuclear weapon capability.

Mr. Mellor: My discussions with Mr. Peres were confidential.

Zambia (Personal Remittances)

Mr. Latham: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what progress has been made since 20 July 1987 in his contacts with the Government of Zambia regarding blocked personal remittances lawfully due to British subjects formerly resident in Zambia, but now living in the United Kingdom; and whether he will make a statement.

Mrs. Chalker: My right hon. and learned Friend and I both raised the subject of blocked funds with Prime Minister Musokotwane of Zambia when he visited Britain in September. He regretted the situation and stated that individual cases of hardship would be considered. Mrs. Mavis Muyunda, Zambian Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, reiterated this assurance to me in November last.

Indonesia

Mr. Mullin: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, if he will list all the official delegations and Government-sponsored individuals and parties from Indonesia who visited the United Kingdom during 1987, stating in each case the purpose of the visit.

Mr. Eggar: The principal visits in 1987 were as follows:

February

Dr. Radius Prawiro, Minister of Finance; to open the new offices of Bank Negara (State Bank) in London.

March

Delegation from the Indonesian House of Representatives; to visit Parliament.

Professor Marsono Taroepratjeko, Vice-Rector of th Institute of Technology in Bandung; for discussions wit United Kingdom academics.

Professor Dr. Mohammed Adna, Vice-Rector of th University of Gaja Mahadah in Jogjakarta; to develop link with Universities.

May

Mr. Bamban Kesowo, Head of Legal Section of th Cabinet Secretariat; to discuss copyright matters.

Mr. Rahradi Ramelan, Deputy Chairman, BPPT (Agency for Assessment and Application of Technology); to discuss science and technology with officials and companies.

Professor Dr. Harsja Bactiar, Head of Office of Educational and Cultural Planning, Ministry of Education and Culture; for familiarisation.

July

Dr. B. J. Habibie, Minister of Research and Technology; for discussions with Ministers, and with United Kingdom companies involved in aircraft manufacture, shipping and heavy engineering.

Mr. Sulema Wiriadidaja, Technical Director of P T PAL (Indonesian Shipbuilding Organisation); for discussions with United Kingdom companies.

November

Chief of Staff of Indonesian Army, General Tri Sutrisno; for discussions with the Chief of the General Staff.

Professor Molejono, Rector of the University of Diponegoro at Samarang; to visit Universities.

Professor Amran Halim, Rector of University of Stiwijaya; to visit United Kingdom Universities.

Mr. Mullin: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will list all the occasions during 1987 when United Kingdom Government or military officials visited Indonesia, stating in each case the purpose of the visit.

Mr. Eggar: The principal visits in 1987 were as follows:

April

Mr. W. E. Mason, Deputy Under-Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture; to discuss food policy and regulations.

May

Vice-Chief of Defence Staff; for discussions on defence matters, as part of a South-East Asian tour.

September

Lord Glenarthur, Minister of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs; for discussions with the Indonesian Government.

October

Mr. Christopher Patten MP, Minister for Overseas Development; for discussions on the United Kingdom aid programme.

Mr. Tim Sainsbury MP, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Defence Procurement; for discussions on defence equipment matters.

November

United Kingdom delegation to the Anglo-Indonesian joint working group on economic co-operation.

Afghanistan

Mr. Gregory: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if the United Kingdom will be officially represented at the negotiations over the future of Afghanistan.

Mr. Eggar: The only formal negotiations are the proximity talks which take place at Geneva under the auspices of the United Nations Secretary General's personal representative. They involve the Kabul regime and the Government of Pakistan. The United Kingdom is not represented.

Dr. Jack Mapanje

Mr. Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representation he has made to the Government of Malawi about the fate of Dr. Jack Mapanje of the English department of the University of Malawi.

Mrs. Chalker: We have no standing to intervene directly, since Dr. Mapanje is a Malawi citizen. The Malawian Government are however well aware of our views on detention without trial.

Mr. Albert Flearmoy

Mr. Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what information he has on the fate of Mr. Albert Flearmoy, British citizen, arrested in New York last autumn.

Mr. Eggar: Following his arrest in New York on 21 April 1986, Mr. Flearmoy was charged with 17 others in connection with the illegal sale of arms to Iran. He was released on bail on 24 November 1986. He subsequently returned to the United Kingdom where, as far as we know, he remains.

European Commission (United Kingdom Staff)

Mr. Teddy Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what information he has as to how many United Kingdom nationals are employed in the European Commission's national offices in other Community countries.

Mrs. Chalker: Three United Kingdom citizens are employed in press and information offices of the European Community Commission in European Community states other than the United Kingdom.

Mr. Jorgen Hansen

Mr. Teddy Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will raise with the European Commission the implications for its policy on the appointment of staff to senior positions in its national offices of the appointment of Mr. Jorgen Hansen to a post in its Welsh office; what is Mr. Hansen's salary; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Chalker: There is no reason to raise the appointment of the new head of the European Community Commission's press and information office in Wales with the Commission. Such appointments are an internal matter for the Commission. The salary will be £1,998 per month.

Wildlife Conservation

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (1) how many officials in Hong Kong are employed to inspect local restaurants to ensure that endangered species of animals are not served as food;

(2) if, pursuant to the reply of 13 January, *Official Report*, column *285*, he will give details of the 14 seizures made in 1987 by the authorities in Hong Kong, following inspections at local restaurants;

(3) if, pursuant to the reply of 13 January, *Official Report*, column *285*, he will give details of the 136 seizures made in 1987 by the authorities in Hong Kong of illegally imported animals and plants;

(4) if, pursuant to the reply of 13 January, *Official Report*, column *285*, he will explain why only 80 restaurants were visited in Hong Kong during 1987.

Mr. Eggar: We are making inquiries of the Hong Kong Government and I will reply as soon as possible.

Youth Exchange Schemes

Mr. Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (1) what is the total budget for youth exchanges between Britain and Europe; and if he will make a statement on the effect on this total of contributing to the Youth for Europe scheme;

(2) how many people are covered by youth exchange programmes between Britain and Europe; how many schemes there are; how many of these are administered by the British Council; within the total how many places relate to each of Scotland, Northern Ireland and the North of England; and how many places relate to each of *(a)* the disabled, and *(b)* ethnic minorities.

Mr. Eggar: The information requested is not readily available. I will reply to the hon. Member as soon as possible.

Mr. Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many youth exchange places there are between Britain and Comecon countries.

Mr. Eggar: Britain's Government-sponsored youth exchanges are demand-led by British youth organisations. There are, therefore, no set number of places allocated each year. In 1986-87, a total of 1,902 young people were funded by Her Majesty's Government, to take part in exchanges with Comecon countries. The total grant amounted to £90,418.

ENERGY

Home Insulation

Mr. Butler: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what estimates have been made by his Department with regard to the proportion of public expenditure designed to encourage home insulation which is technically assessed as deadweight.

Mr. Peter Morrison: In public expenditure terms, my energy efficiency office's main scheme to promote insulation in the home is the community insulation projects, for which total Government funding, in 1987-88 is estimated at some £45 million. The projects provide a free or low-cost basic insulation service for low-income households. An independent academic study commissioned by the Department in 1985 found "no evidence of the free rider effect".

Private Coal Mining

Mr. Butler: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy whether he has any proposals to help to expand the private coal mining industry.

Mr. Michael Spicer: As I explained during the debate on the coalfield communities on 20 Novembe 1987 at columns 1362-3, the Government are committed to the development of a prosperous private sector for coal and are considering whether to raise the statutory limits applied to the licensed sector. If it was decided to present such proposals to the House, legislation would take time, and in the meantime I have been discussing with Sir Robert Haslam the scope for greater flexibility and transparency within existing legislation.

Sizewell B

Mr. Harry Barnes: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what developments have taken place since April 1987 in the implementation of recommendation 13 of the Sizewell B report.

Mr. Michael Spicer: Recommendations 13(a) and 13(c) were addressed in the decision letter issued by my right hon. Friend the Member for Worcester (Mr. Walker) on 12 March 1987, copies of which were placed in the Library of the House. As regards recommendation 13(b), I refer the hon. Member to the answer given on 16 December 1987 at column 516 by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State to the hon. Member for Colne Valley (Mr. Riddick).

Mr. Harry Barnes: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy if he has any plans to ask the chairman of the Central Electricity Generating Board to halt the development of Sizewell B pressurised water reactor pending the recruitment of a full complement of inspectors by Her Majesty's Nuclear Installations Inspectorate.

Mr. Michael Spicer: I am advised by the Health and Safety Executive that the present staffing level of the NII is sufficient to discharge its responsibilities for Sizewell. Following the recent campaign to recruit more nuclear inspectors, the staffing level is increasing and is expected to reach the agreed complement of 120 inspectors by 1 April 1988.

Heysham 2

Mr. Harry Barnes: To ask the Secretary of S Energy whether he plans to ask the chairma Advisory Committee for the Safety of Installations and the director of Her Majesty's Installations Inspectorate to carry out an en review of the design and construction of the Electricity Generating Board Heysham 2 nuclear

Mr. Michael Spicer: The Health and Safety Exe nuclear installations inspectorate has, as part of its licensing process, been reviewing and inspecting th and construction of the CEGB's Heysham 2 nuclea Following the consent of the inspectorate, fuel h loaded into the reactors. Consent for power ra expected when the remaining safety assessments ha cleared. There are no plans for ACSNI to look int is essentially a routine licensing matter.

Fast Breeder Reactor (Lyons)

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for what information he has about the closure since Ma of the fast breeder reactor at Creys-Malville, east of France; whether it has any implications for the Kingdom; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Michael Spicer: The French Governmen announced that they have agreed, in principle Superphenix can be restarted subject to studies bein on how to load the reactor core without using th storage vessel. Discussions have confirmed that the no implications for the United Kingdom, sinc Dounreay prototype fast reactor does not posse design feature which caused the problem in Superp

Nuclear Safety

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for E what steps he has taken to satisfy himself that s managers who assume the role of emergency cont during a serious incident at a nuclear installation sufficient time to carry out both their duty to resto plant to a safe condition and their functions in relati co-ordinating monitoring of a radioactivity, adv emergency services on the need for evacuation determining whether potassium iodate tablets shou distributed; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Michael Spicer: All major nuclear sites in United Kingdom have offsite co-ordination centres main purpose of which is to relieve the emerg controller at the site of the responsibility for advisin the need for offsite counter-measures. Such centres part of the site emergency plans, which are approve HM nuclear installations inspectorate, in whose pres they are regularly rehearsed.

Coal Firing Scheme, Corby

Mr. William Powell: To ask the Secretary of State Energy what are the total payments made under the firing scheme in the Corby development area in each since 1980.

Mr. Michael Spicer: There have been no paym made under the coal firing scheme in the Co development area.

Pit Closures

Mr. William Powell: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy if he will list in the *Official Report* the pits closed by British Coal since 1 March 1985 and the date of closure.

Mr. Michael Spicer: The information requested is as follows:

Colliery	*Date of closure*
Ackton Hall	5 July 1985
Moorgreen	19 July 1985
Pye Hill	9 August 1985
Savile	23 August 1985
Bedwas	31 August 1985
Celynen South	6 September 1985
Markham	20 September 1985
Treforgan	30 September 1985
Aberpergwm	7 October 1985
Penrikyber	8 October 1985
Abertillery	9 October 1985
Yorkshire Main	11 October 1985
Wolstanton	18 October 1985
Brenkley	25 October 1985
Brookhouse	25 October 1985
Cortonwood	25 October 1985
Bold	15 November 1985
Sacriston	15 November 1985
Herrington	22 November 1985
St. John's	22 November 1985
Haig	26 November 1985
Fryston	6 December 1985
Garw	13 December 1985
Emley Moor	20 December 1985
Bates	25 February 1986
Horden	28 February 1986
Glasshoughton	28 March 1986
Polkemmet	10 June 1986
Whitwell	27 June 1986
Whitwick/South Leicester	4 July 1986
Kinsley	11 July 1986
Comrie	19 September 1986
Tilmanstone	21 October 1986
Hucknall/Babbington	31 October 1986
Ledston Luck	31 October 1986
Cadeby	7 November 1986
Nantgarw	7 November 1986
Birch Coppice	28 November 1986
Cwm	28 November 1986
Bersham	12 December 1986
Whittle	9 January 1987
Newstead	20 March 1987
Wheldale	16 October 1987
Nostell	23 October 1987
Snowdown	23 October 1987
Woolley/Redbrook	22 December 1987

Nuclear Installations

Mr. John D. Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy if he will list the nuclear installations constructed within 100 miles of the western coastline of Great Britain; and if he will make a statement on their safety.

Mr. Michael Spicer: The following civil nuclear installations are situated within 100 miles of the western coastline of Great Britain:

CEGB
- Hartlepool
- Heysham
- Berkeley
- Oldbury
- Hinkley Point
- Trawsfynydd
- Wylfa

SSEB
- Hunterston
- Torness

Amersham International
- Amersham
- Harwell
- Cardiff

UKAEA
- Dounreay
- The Harwell Laboratory
- Atomic Energy Establishment—Winfrith
- Windscale Nuclear Laboratories
- Springfields Nuclear Laboratories

BNF plc
- Sellafield
- Calder Hall
- Drigg
- Capenhurst
- Springfields
- Chapelcross

Other sites
- Rolls Royce and Associates Ltd.—Derby
- Rolls Royce Nuclear—Derby
- Vickers—Barrow
- Universities Research Reactor—Risley
- ICI—Billingham
- Scottish Universities Research and Reactor Centre—East Kilbride

These installations have an excellent safety record and reflect the rigorous standards of safety which are maintained.

Alternative Energy Sources

Mr. Speller: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy at what level of energy cost long-shot renewable energy technology becomes a viable prospect for the purposes of his Department.

Mr. Michael Spicer: The original aim of the Department's renewables research and development programme, which was initiated in 1974, was to assess the potential contribution that all the renewable technologies could make to United Kingdom energy supply. That objective was largely achieved by 1985, and the broad aims of the Department's programme now are to encourage the uptake of those renewable technologies that have been shown to be commercially attractive and to increase our understanding of the economics of those that are "promising but uncertain". Technologies which are now classed as "long-shot technologies" have in most cases already been the subject of considerable R and D investment during the first phase of our work in this area. They have been classed as "long-shot technologies" because on all reasonable expectations about future fuel prices and about the minimum likely cost of exploiting the energy source once the technology has been developed, they are not expected to make an economic contribution to our future energy supply—under a wide range of economic scenarios—and on the time scale considered (2030).

A watching brief is maintained on all the "long shots" and if, as a result of new ideas or new information, it is judged that a particular technology could possibly make an economic contribution it would be reclassified as "promising but uncertain". As yet, this has not happened. Regular reviews of both the economic and technical potential of all the renewable technologies are carried out as part of our programme. The latest of these reviews was

carried out in 1987 as part of a comprehensive appraisal of United Kingdom energy research, development and demonstration. This appraisal was published as energy paper 54, copies of which are in the Libraries of the House.

Coal Industry

Mr. Cummings: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy (1) how many workers are employed in *(a)* public and *(b)* private mines and opencast sites in the north-east area of British Coal;

(2) if he will list the names and locations and levels of productivity in *(a)* private and *(b)* public opencast and licensed mines in the north-east area of British Coal.

Mr. Michael Spicer: Comprehensive information in the form requested is not readily available. I will, however, ask the chairman of the British Coal Corporation to write to the hon. Member.

Sexual Harassment

Ms. Richardson: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what is his Department's policy on sexual harassment at work; whether guidance on reporting complaints has been issued to all staff; how many complaints have been reported in the past five years; and what disciplinary action has been taken.

Mr. Parkinson: The Civil Service policy on sexual harassment is set out in the programme of action to achieve equal opportunities for women in the Civil Service which was published by the Cabinet Office (Management and Personnel Office) in 1984. Sexual harassment at work is not tolerated and is dealt with as a disciplinary matter through the usual Civil Service complaints procedure.

Guidance on reporting complaints of sexual harassment has been issued to all staff in my Department.

One complaint has been reported in the past five years. This was substantiated and a formal reprimand was given to the offending officer.

Combined Heat and Power

Mr. Ieuan Wyn Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what progress has been made in promoting combined heat and power schemes since the Energy Act 1983; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Morrison: Since 1983, the Government have provided £750,000 towards the costs of further studies on major urban CHP schemes by consortia in Belfast, Edinburgh and Leicester. The Leicester consortium has published a report on its findings and has formed a company, Leicester Energy Limited, to take the work forward. Reports from Belfast and Edinburgh are expected shortly.

Under the Department's energy efficiency demonstration scheme, £3 million has been committed to the support of 22 industrial and commercial projects. My Department has also provided £102,000 under the energy efficiency survey scheme, which provides grants of up to a maximum of £10,000 towards 50 per cent. of the costs of employing independent consultants for feasibility studies of non-domestic CHP schemes.

Private Electricity Generation

Mr. Ieuan Wyn Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what has been the change in total output from private electricity generators in the United Kingd 1983; and whether his Department has m assessment of the likely changes in the future.

Mr. Michael Spicer: From 1983 to 1986, t output from private electricity generators in Grea increased from 12·8 terawatt hours to 13·7 terawa The Government intend to stimulate competit encourage private generation in privatising the el supply industry.

Electricity Meters

Mr. Ieuan Wyn Jones: To ask the Secretary of S Energy what progress is being made in replacing c prepayment electricity meters with token-operate by the electricity boards; and if he will make a sta

Mr. Michael Spicer: This is a matter for the el supply industry. I have asked the chairman Electricity Council to write to the hon. Member information requested.

Fuel Disconnections

Mr. Ieuan Wyn Jones: To ask the Secretary of S Energy (1) what has been the percentage chang number of domestic households disconnected f payment of electricity bills in *(a)* the United Ki *(b)* Wales, *(c)* Scotland, *(d)* England, *(e)* each standard English regions and *(f)* Northern between 1979 and 1987;

(2) how many domestic households' electricity was disconnected for non-payment of electricity *(a)* the United Kingdom, *(b)* Wales, *(c)* Scotla Northern Ireland, *(e)* England and *(f)* each standard English regions during the last year fo figures are available; what are the corresponding for each year since 1979; and in each case what per of all domestic users these figures represent.

Mr. Michael Spicer: This is a matter for the ele supply industry. I have asked the chairman Electricity Council to write to the hon. Member w information requested in respect of England and Electricity disconnections in Scotland and N Ireland are matters for my right hon. and learned the Secretary of State for Scotland and my righ Friend the Secretary of State for Northern respectively.

Plutonium

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for if he will list in the *Official Report* the dates statements made over the past six months by him Parliament on the past and future uses of civil plutonium; and if he will place a copy of the text such statement in the Library.

Mr. Michael Spicer: Neither I nor my right hon. the Secretary of State has made any special stateme this subject.

Media Statements

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for what is his practice towards responding to stateme accusations made on television, radio or in the Pr those areas for which his Department has responsi

Mr. Parkinson: I consider carefully any statement that comes to my attention and make any appropriate response.

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy if he will list any occasions since May 1979 when Ministers in his Department have made statements in Parliament, or answered parliamentary questions, arising from information on nuclear energy matters broadcast on television or radio, or published in the Press.

Mr. Michael Spicer: Statements made to the House have reflected important developments in Government policy, matters of interest expressed by Members or areas of obvious public concern.

Electricity Costs

Mr. Hood: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what information he has as to the average increase in the cost of electricity for domestic consumers, for each year since 1975, in *(a)* the Federal Republic of Germany, *(b)* France, *(c)* Italy, *(d)* Holland and *(e)* Sweden; and what are the figures for the United Kingdom.

Mr. Michael Spicer: The reply of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Energy to the hon. Member for Kingston upon Hull, East (Mr. Prescott) on 18 November included information about increases in the average price of electricity for domestic consumers in the United Kingdom since 1974. I will ask the chairman of the Electricity Council to provide the further information the hon. Member seeks.

CEGB Sites (Access)

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy if he will direct the Central Electricity Generating Board to ensure access with prior permission by the public to its nuclear power station sites.

Mr. Michael Spicer: The CEGB already actively encourages visits by members of the public to all its nuclear power station sites.

NUM President (Election)

Mr. Hood: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy if he will make a statement about the facilities which British Coal is giving to the National Union of Mineworkers for the election of its president; and in which areas they are being provided.

Mr. Michael Spicer: This is a matter for the management of the British Coal Corporation, and I am asking the chairman to write to the hon. Member.

Miners' Welfares

Mr. Hood: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy if he will make a statement on the closure of Hucknall and Linby miners' welfare, announced on 26 December 1987; and what is his policy on subsidising miners' welfares in Nottingham.

Mr. Michael Spicer: This is a matter for the trustees of the Hucknall and Linby miners' welfare.

Brae C Field, North Sea

Mr. MacDonald: To ask the Secretary of State Energy when he expects to authorise the development he Brae C field in the North Sea.

Mr. Peter Morrison: It is not my practice to comm on the timing of any eventual approval of spec development plans being considered by my Departme

EMPLOYMENT

Departmental Responsibilities

Mr. Kirkwood: To ask the Secretary of State Employment if he will list in the *Official Report* those are of his departmental responsibility which extend Scotland.

Mr. Fowler: Except as detailed here, all departmental responsibilities extend to Scotland. Scottish employment and training matters, I act consultation with my right hon. and learned Friend Secretary of State for Scotland who is responsible approving the plans of the Manpower Servic Commission for its programmes in Scotland and w answers questions on the operation of MSC a employment programmes in Scotland. My right hon. a learned Friend has ministerial responsibility for the sm firms service in Scotland and for tourism in Scotland.

Official Overseas Visits

Mr. Leighton: To ask the Secretary of State f Employment what official overseas visits Ministers in h Department have made over the last five years.

Mr. Fowler: A total of 25 official overseas visits we made by Ministers in my Department during the perio January 1983 to December 1987, excluding short-ter visits made specifically to attend conferences held b international bodies, eg. EC, OECD, ILO.

Details are as follows:

Dates	*Country visited*
19 July-29 July 1983	Netherlands
23 September-28 September 1983	France
1 October-7 October 1983	United States of America
17 October-20 October 1983	Federal Republic of Germany and Germany
20 November-22 November 1983	Federal Republic of Germany
25 September-5 October 1984	Hong Kong and Japan
11 December-8 February 1984	France
7 February-8 February 1985	Italy
3 July-5 July 1985	Republic of Ireland
25 August-3 September 1985	Federal Republic of Germany/ Switzerland/Denmark
15 November-20 November 1985	United States of America
11 December-15 December 1985	Hong Kong and China

Wages Council Regulations (Infringements)

Mr. Martyn Jones: To ask the Secretary of State fo Employment how many companies were prosecuted fo infringement of Wages Council Regulations *(a)* in Clwyd and *(b)* in Wales in 1986.

Mr. Nicholls: In 1986 there were no prosecutions in Wales for offences under wages council legislation. In 1987, one employer in Clwyd was prosecuted. There were no other prosecutions in Wales.

Deptford Skill Centre

Mr. Cartwright: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how much accommodation is available at the Deptford skill centre; how much of this is currently in use for training activities; and how much is currently unused.

Mr. Cope: The accommodation at Deptford skill centre comprises 10,154 sq m. The training workshops total 8,478 sq m, of which 6,408 sq m are currently in use and 2,070 sq m are unused. The use of space varies with courses on offer at any particular time.

Mr. Cartwright: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will list the courses currently offered at the Deptford skill centre, indicating the take-up on each.

Mr. Cope: As at 11 January, the latest date for which figures are available, the information requested was as follows:

Course	*Places Available*	*Places Occupied*
Bricklaying	28	26
Carpentry and Joinery	28	27
Group Electronics	36	30
Heavy Vehicle Repair and Maintenance	10	8
Kitchen Fitting	12	11
Light Fabrication and Welding	8	4
New Technology Access	48	38
Painting and Decorating	12	11
Plastering	14	13
Plumbing	10	10
Silk Screen Printing	12	10
Work Related Skills and Assessment	36	26
Total	265	222

There was no recruitment for a period of three weeks over Christmas; hence some shortfall between places available and places occupied.

Low Earnings

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how many *(a)* full-time males on adult rates, *(b)* full-time females on adult rates and *(c)* full-time employees on adult rates earned (i) £110 per week or less and (ii) £120 per week or less, in England and each of the standard English regions, during the last year for which figures are available; and what are the corresponding figures for each year since 1979.

Mr. Lee: Information on the distribution of earnings by regions is published, for males and females separately, in table 113 of part E of the annual reports of the new earnings survey, copies of which are available in the Library for the years requested including 1987. The same information is not available for all employees prior to 1984 but the data from 1984 onwards are as follows:

Full-time employees on adult rates of pay who
affected by absence

	1984	*19*
Percentage earning less than £110 p		
South East	21·2	17
East Anglia	31·0	24
South West	32·0	26
West Midlands	30·2	25
East Midlands	31·8	26
Yorkshire and Humberside	30·9	25
North West	30·5	24
North	31·0	25
England	27·1	22
Percentage earning less than £120 p		
South East	28·1	23
East Anglia	38·7	31
South West	39·4	33
West Midlands	37·5	32
East Midlands	39·5	34
Yorkshire and Humberside	38·4	32
North West	37·8	32
North	38·4	32
England	34·4	28

Safety

Mrs. Fyfe: To ask the Secretary Employment whether he will impose a sta of 80 dB for exposure to noise at wor introduces the forthcoming noise regulat

Mr. Nicholls: I expect the Heal Commission to make proposals for new noise at workplaces, in the light of comm proposals published recently in a consult

Mrs. Fyfe: To ask the Secretary Employment what estimate he has made denial of the statutory right of safety re paid leave from work to attend approved carry out their duties.

Mr. Nicholls: The safety representat Committees Regulations 1977 provide for tatives to present a complaint to an indu the event of an employer's failure:

(i) to permit a safety representative from work to carry out his fun regulations or to undergo training
(ii) to pay a safety representative in acc requirements of the regulations in t time off.

The number of applications registere tribunals on these matters in the past follows:

Applications	*1983*	*1984*	*1985*
(i) Failure to Permit Time Off	7	6	4
(ii) Failure to Pay for Time Off	13	4	2
Total	20	10	6

Information on the results of these ap only be obtained at disproportionate cost

Mrs. Fyfe: To ask the Secretary Employment whether, in view of the haza

arnings were not

1986	*1987*
week	
13·1	10·1
19·4	16·2
21·4	18·4
21·1	17·2
22·0	18·2
21·4	17·4
20·2	16·6
21·3	17·0
17·9	14·4
week	
17·9	14·3
25·6	21·7
27·9	24·0
26·7	22·6
28·3	24·1
27·8	23·6
26·5	22·4
27·3	22·3
23·6	19·6

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1986	*1987*
4	2
1	1
5	3

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f State for
in shipyards

of dangerous staging; he will bring this work under the same controls as apply to scaffolding in the construction regulations.

Mr. Nicholls: No. The existing provision in the Health and Safety at Work Act and the Shipbuilding and Ship-Repairing Regulations 1960 adequately provide for hazards in shipyards arising from the use of staging.

Mrs. Fyfe: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will take steps to ensure that advice booklets on workplace hazards are made more widely available and at a cost working people can afford.

Mr. Nicholls: The Health and Safety Executive actively seeks every opportunity to publicise its extensive range of publications and to keep prices low. It publishes many leaflets and other material on workplace hazards free of charge.

Mrs. Fyfe: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will make it his policy, in providing fuller inspection of building sites, to pay particular attention to unsafe scaffolding; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Nicholls: It has been, and will continue to be, the policy of the Health and Safety Executive to pay particular attention to unsafe scaffolding during the inspection of building sites.

Mrs. Fyfe: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will make it his policy that the Health and Safety Executive guidance note on hazardous substances be updated annually.

Mr. Nicholls: I understand that the hon. Member is referring to the Health and Safety Executive's "Guidance Note EH40—Occupational Exposure Limits". This is already updated and published annually and there are no plans to change those arrangements.

Mrs. Fyfe: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what steps he takes to monitor the extent to which employers carry out their statutory duty to have a regularly updated safety policy for their workplace.

Mr. Nicholls: Inspectors of the Health and Safety Executive examine employers' safety policies as an integral part of HSE's enforcement of health and safety legislation. When necessary, inspectors require employers to update safety policies.

Mrs. Fyfe: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment whether he is taking any measures to deal with the problem of safety on building sites where lump labour is employed.

Mr. Nicholls: The Health and Safety Executive is currently giving priority to the control exercised by main contractors over all aspects of work carried out by sub-contractors, including labour-only sub-contractors.

Job Release

Mr. Janner: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment (1) if he will list the Government's expenditure on publicity for the job release scheme for each year in which it has existed;

(2) if he will list the number of new participants in the job release scheme for each year in which it has existed.

(3) if he will list the Government's total expenditure on the job release scheme for each year in which it has existed.

Mr. John Lee: I am afraid that the inform expenditure on publicity for the scheme is av at disproportionate cost. In addition some pub job release scheme is impossible to separate f action for jobs publicity. However, the i requested on new entrants and scheme costs i the tables.

Table 1: New entrants onto the job release scheme 1987-88

	Numbers
1976-77	9,979
1977-78	14,529
1978-79	25,643
1979-80	68,164
1980-81	24,239
1981-82	38,674
1982-83	46,134
1983-84	44,045
1984-85	14,895
1985-86	11,960
1986-87	12,046
1987-88	[1]8,226

[1] April to December 1987.

Table 2: Cost of the job release scheme 1976-77 to

	£ million
1976-77	2·00
1977-78	15·30
1978-79	21·70
1979-80	85·40
1980-81	135·95
1981-82	134·14
1982-83	211·77
1983-84	258·20
1984-85	280·00
1985-86	187·40
1986-87	[1]109·55
1987-88	[2]83·80

[1] Provisional outturn.
[2] Supply estimate.

Ladbrokes plc

Mr. Meale: To ask the Secretary of Employment how many industrial tribunals he years 1979 to 1987 inclusive involved the Ladb group of companies.

Mr. Nicholls: Information on cases heard is n available and could only be provided at disprop cost. The number of registered applications to tribunals involving Ladbrokes plc (not associated companies) for the period 1 April 19 last available date is as follows:

Period	
1 April 1986 to 31 March 1987	
1 April 1987 to 31 December 1987	

Information for the period before 1 April 19 readily available and could only be pro disproportionate cost.

Industrial Tribunals (Betting and Racin

Mr. Meale: To ask the Secretary of Employment how many industrial tribunals hea years 1979 to 1987 inclusive involved the horse racing industries and betting industries.

Mr. Nicholls: Records of tribunal applications are not classified by industry. The information is therefore not available.

Dock Workers

Mr. Gregory: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment (1) how many permanent registered dock workers in each year from 1980 to 1986 have been dismissed by their employer for an offence justifying summary dismissal under the disciplinary provisions of the dock labour scheme; and how many of these men have been reinstated by order of local dock labour boards and appeal tribunals;

(2) how many permanent registered dock workers in each year from 1980 to 1986 have been suspended from work without pay under the disciplinary provisions of the dock labour scheme; and how many of these suspensions have been reduced in severity and how many totally withdrawn upon appeal to local dock boards;

(3) how many registered employers employing permanent workers have gone out of business in the years 1975 to 1986; how many registered dock workers they employed; how many of these dock workers were then allocated by the National Dock Labour Board to other employers; and how many of these employers had no work for them.

Mr. Nicholls: The information is not readily available in the form required without considerable and detailed research at local board level.

Mr. Patnick: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment which ports give preference to the sons and other relatives of dock workers already in employment when recruiting registered dock workers through the National Dock Labour Board to ports covered by the dock labour scheme.

Mr. Nicholls: Ports currently known to be giving preference to relatives of dock workers already in employment when recruiting registered dock workers through the national dock labour scheme are as follows:

Middlesbrough
Hartlepool
Hull
Goole
Grimsby
Immingham

Wisbech
Yarmouth
Lowestoft
Ipswich

Aberdeen
Dundee
Burntisland

Newcastle
North Shields
Sunderland

Mr. Patnick: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what is the average age of registered dock workers *(a)* in each port and *(b)* for all ports covered by the dock labour scheme.

Mr. Nicholls: The average age of registered dock workers in each of the scheme ports, as reported in the last available annual age group survey in July 1986, was as follows:

Port	
Newcastle	
North Shields	
South Shields	
Blyth	
Sunderland	
Seaham	
Middlesbrough	
Hartlepool	
Hull	
Goole	
Grimsby and Immingham	Comm. / Fish
Boston	
Wisbech	
King's Lynn	
Yarmouth	
Lowestoft	
Ipswich	
London	
Rochester	
Sittingbourne	
Sheerness	
Southampton	
Poole	
Weymouth	
Plymouth	
Fowey	
Par	
Charlestown	
Falmouth	
Penzance	
Bristol	
Sharpness	
Gloucester	
Newport	
Cardiff	
Barry	
Port Talbot	
Swansea	
Liverpool and Birkenhead	
Garston	
Salford	
Ellesmere Port	
Runcorn	
Weston Point	
Fleetwood	
Whitehaven	
Workington	
Silloth	
Barrow	
Ayr	
Ardrossen	
Hunterston	
Greenock	
Glasgow	
Aberdeen	Comm. / Fish
Dundee	
Mathil	
Kirkcaldy	
Burntisland	
Grangemouth	
Leith	

The average age for registered dock wo
labour scheme ports in this annual age
46·3 years.

Mr. Key: To ask the Secretary of State
what was the average under-employm
dock workers in ports covered by the do
in each year for the period 1967 to 1
account of sickness and holidays,
percentage of the national register.

Average Ages 1986	(1985)
50·3	(49·3)
44·9	(44·1)
47·3	(46·5)
50·0	(50·4)
42·3	(43·7)
52·3	(52·7)
42·9	(42·4)
46·6	(46·7)
50·4	(49·8)
50·8	(50·9)
42·4	(42·1)
45·4	(44·4)
52·7	(52·1)
56·6	(55·2)
49·8	(49·4)
45·1	(47·0)
41·3	(41·6)
49·1	(48·2)
48·7	(48·2)
40·6	(40·3)
41·7	(43·7)
46·5	(45·7)
45·5	(45·3)
41·0	(40·3)
46·6	(47·1)
42·9	(42·9)
47·5	(46·5)
48·8	(47·8)
34·0	(33·0)
45·3	(44·3)
41·7	(42·0)
39·7	(40·4)
41·2	(42·7)
54·8	(53·8)
44·2	(44·8)
42·7	(43·0)
43·7	(42·8)
51·4	(51·2)
48·7	(49·5)
47·1	(47·2)
43·3	(42·7)
48·3	(46·5)
46·5	(46·2)
43·1	(42·2)
44·6	(-)
42·9	(41·9)
45·4	(44·4)
44·3	(43·3)
38·5	(36·0)
46·5	(45·5)
48·1	(47·1)
50·2	(49·2)
39·1	(38·1)
41·8	(40·8)
46·7	(46·0)
46·5	(45·9)
42·6	(42·6)
46·0	(45·7)
47·0	(46·0)
56·0	(55·0)
49·3	(48·3)
41·6	(40·7)
52·7	(51·9)

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Mr. Nicholls: The average under-employment of registered dock workers in ports covered by the dock labour scheme in each year for the period 1967 to 1986, after taking account of sickness and holidays, expressed as a percentage of the national register is as follows:

Year	Average Under-Employed	Average National Register	Percentage Under-Employed
1967 (37 weeks)	5,173	60,144	8·6
1967 (15 weeks)	3,649	57,505	6·3
1968	3,340	56,563	5·9
1969	3,964	52,732	7·2
1970	2,336	46,912	5·0
1971	4,790	45,491	10·5
1972	3,137	41,247	7·6
1973	1,938	34,509	5·6
1974	3,303	34,582	9·6
1975	4,951	33,638	14·7
1976	3,632	31,062	11·7
1977	2,605	29,470	8·8
1978	3,802	28,680	13·3
1979	3,460	26,898	12·9
1980	4,103	24,492	16·8
1981	3,828	21,022	18·2
1982	2,018	16,788	12·0
1983	1,744	14,631	11·9
1984	1,669	13,403	12·5
1985	1,814	12,193	14·9
1986	1,354	11,168	12·1

Mr. Key: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what were the maximum severance payments available to registered dock workers in each year from 1972 to 1986 in the ports covered by the dock labour scheme.

Mr. Nicholls: The relevant figures are:

	£
1971-74	[1]2,330
1975-76	5,250
1977	7,000
1978	[2]7,000
1979	8,500
1980	10,500
1981	16,000
1982-83	22,500
1983	22,500
1984	25,000
1985	25,000
1986	[3]25,000

[1] £4,000 for a limited period 1972-73.
[2] £8,500 in London only.
[3] £35,000 agreed under special schemes in London and Liverpool.

SCOTLAND

Further and Higher Education

Mr. Kirkwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will make a statement on his plans to encourage wider access to further and higher education in Scotland.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: The White Paper "Higher Education: Meeting the Challenge" (Cm. 114, April 1987) stated the Government's objective to increase participation rates in higher education and invited institutions to respond accordingly. We need to increase participation both by encouraging more young people school and gain entrance qualification education and by making it easier for the school early to progress to higher educatio further education system.

With the prospect of a marked decline ov years in the size of the under-21 age group education institutions in Scotland have beg increase participation by those without entrance qualifications for higher educa including mature students. Recent figures about 6,000 entrants a year, or about one total entrants to higher education in Scotl over 21.

My Department is encouraging closer between the further and the higher educ particularly directed at identifying best encouraging students capable of progressi education who may have left school wit entrance qualifications. The growing use o national certificate will help in this.

Progression from further to higher educ made easier by better articulated courses diploma and degree level, to allow credits to accumulated at one level and transferred a at the next. This will also make part-time st those in employment who wish to progress t It will also make it easier to for those who fa a course at a higher level to leave with som qualification at a lower level.

Forestry Commission

Mr. Warren: To ask the Secretary of State what has been the total Government investm prices in the Forestry Commission since 19 is the value of the assets of the commission

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: S Government investment in the forestry operations of the Forestry Commission has £1,527 million at current prices. The a enterprise at 31 March 1987 were valued at £1

Ex-Offenders (Employment)

Mr. Worthington: To ask the Secretary Scotland if he has any proposals for using Services Commission schemes for enhancing ment prospects of ex-offenders.

Mr. Lang: Ex-offenders along with others the wide range of Government training and measures. Specific provision is made within s as YTS, new job training scheme and the programme to cater for the needs of ex-offen

Icelandic Electricity (Imports)

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State what information he has on recent talks betwe of Scotland Electricity Board and th ambassador to the United Kingdom concerni for importing electrical power by cable from what consideration has been given by his De any such imports of Icelandic electricity.

Mr. Lang: I am aware that there has speculation about the possiblility of importi

from Iceland by submarine cable, but I have no knowledge of any discussions with the Scottish electricity boards and I have received no firm proposals. However, I understand that the Icelandic Minister of Industry is planning to visit Scotland shortly and that the question of exporting electricity to the United Kingdom may be among the topics he wishes to explore.

Ibrox Park Stadium

Mr. John D. Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland when he last made an official visit to a Glasgow Rangers football match at Ibrox park stadium; whether he has received any report from the Strathclyde police concerning crowd control arrangements at Ibrox park; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: My right hon. and learned Friend has not been invited to the stadium. He has not received a report from Strathclyde police on crowd control arrangements there, nor does he see a need to ask for one.

Administration of Justice

Mr. Wallace: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what proportion of reports submitted by the police to procurators fiscal were marked "no proceedings" by reason of resources not being available to deal with them within the judicial system, in each fiscaldom in Scotland in respect of each full year since 1984 and in 1987 up to the date for which information is available.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: This information is not available.

Mr. Wallace: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many reports submitted by the police to procurators fiscal were marked for no proceedings in each fiscaldom in Scotland in respect of the years 1984, 1985 and 1986 and to the most recently available date in 1987.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: The figures are set out in the table. Only the figures for January to November inclusive are available for 1987.

Offices	*Number of cases marked no proceedings* 1984	1985	1986	1987
Aberdeen	413	1,539	4,366	3,412
Airdrie	484	306	432	459
Alloa	230	239	234	222
Arbroath	271	278	206	174
Ayr	966	1,473	1,395	1,274
Banff	83	153	169	133
Campbeltown	84	124	78	85
Cupar	223	238	255	203
Dingwall	133	211	241	218
Dornoch	137	94	99	60
Dumbarton	561	826	924	786
Dumfries	167	353	315	264
Dundee	1,335	1,338	797	791
Dunfermline	828	1,178	1,429	1,121
Dunoon	192	155	251	178
Duns	95	104	123	116
Edinburgh	25,238	29,551	29,746	10,545
Elgin	613	573	812	726
Falkirk	835	1,490	1,834	1,470
Forfar	75	74	136	77
Fort William	138	185	186	245
Glasgow	7,760	9,736	10,824	18,248
Greenock	552	1,440	1,590	973
Haddington	1,008	655	715	798
Hamilton	1,750	1,666	1,914	1,987
Inverness	708	755	967	806
Jedburgh	188	182	182	137
Kilmarnock	2,320	1,547	1,435	1,270
Kirkcaldy	985	1,064	1,163	1,364
Kirckudbright	117	110	92	73
Kirkwall	67	86	80	69
Lanark	221	172	162	172
Lerwick	216	137	57	91
Linlithgow	347	390	382	366
Lochmaddy	21	7	17	10
Oban	229	207	155	134
Paisley	2,191	2,537	3,044	2,061
Peebles	49	52	49	49
Perth	1,801	2,166	1,696	1,506
Peterhead	219	327	411	468
Portree	56	91	127	64
Rothesay	109	93	111	70
Selkirk	196	273	325	295
Stirling	380	459	537	614
Stonehaven	108	175	387	223
Stornoway	47	74	83	62
Stranraer	204	335	211	165
Tain	215	164	226	229
Wick	142	198	258	182
TOTALS	55,307	65,580	71,228	55,045

Mr. Wallace: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many trials in each court in Scotland were adjourned due to pressure of business, in each year since 1984 and up to the most recent date in 1987 for which information is available.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: This information is not available centrally.

Mr. Wallace: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many witnesses were cited for cases which adjourned without any proceedings in *(a)* Edinburgh sheriff court, *(b)* Glasgow sheriff court, *(c)* Hamilton sheriff court and *(d)* Dunfermline sheriff court in October 1987.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: The table shows in the first column the total number of witnesses cited to summary trials in the sheriff courts listed and in the second column the numbers of those witnesses whose citations were cancelled in time to save their attendance at court.

	Number of witnesses cited to court in which trial was adjourned	*Number of witnesses whose citations were cancelled prior to trial*
Edinburgh	1,150	554
Glasgow	778	594
Hamilton	329	292
Dunfermline	88	8

Mr. Wallace: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland whether the Lord Advocate will make available to Parliament, on an annual basis, statistics collected by the Crown Office relating to the administration of criminal justice in Scotland; and if he will make a statement.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: Statistics relating to the administration of criminal justice in Scotland are collected and published by the Secretary of State for Scotland.

Mr. Wallace: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many cases of rape, reported to procurators fiscal by the police, were marked for no further proceedings in 1987.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: These figures are not centrally held and cannot be obtained except at disproportionate cost. However, of the 206 cases involving allegations of rape which were reported to the Crown Office in 1987, no proceedings were instructed in 70 cases.

Mr. Wallace: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland whether he has any proposals to transfer the administration of the district courts to the Scottish Courts Administration, and if he will make a statement.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: My right hon. and learned Friend has no proposals to alter the terms of the District Courts (Scotland) Act 1975, under which the administration of district courts is a function of district and islands councils.

Mr. Wallace: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many cases and persons were dealt with by each district court in Scotland in each year since 1975.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: The available information, which relates to persons dealt with by the district courts, is given in the table:

Persons called to trial in District Courts in Scotland

	[1]*1975*	*1976*	*1977*	*1978*	*1979*	*1980*	*1981*	*1982*	*1983*	*1984*	*1985*	*1986*
Berwickshire	72	100	73	98	63	73	78	59	66	125	139	228
Ettrick and Lauderdale	137	234	211	231	235	256	293	280	350	432	352	267
Roxburgh	197	339	277	332	314	267	324	290	425	418	338	284
Tweeddale	79	144	111	103	115	61	107	59	81	55	60	106
Clackmannan	224	297	270	290	283	341	359	484	609	782	744	798
Falkirk	743	1,525	1,538	1,499	1,572	1,530	1,618	1,667	1,950	2,188	2,117	2,487
Stirling	440	753	551	1,016	677	551	852	899	1,063	997	1,214	1,368
Annandale and Eskdale	61	92	121	101	104	118	122	172	243	354	332	585
Nithsdale	128	303	318	189	184	316	376	503	754	886	873	1,061
Stewartry	24	37	52	44	5	12	58	67	59	97	14	32
Wigtown	128	166	147	182	240	198	148	195	145	304	411	430
Dunfermline	329	663	511	670	695	828	1,304	1,292	1,831	1,297	811	1,002
Kirkcaldy	648	834	658	644	630	856	971	1,390	1,087	1,978	1,805	1,733
North East Fife	121	190	254	261	208	242	251	225	433	583	563	545
City of Aberdeen	1,657	2,978	3,046	3,118	3,584	3,429	4,421	3,668	4,004	3,644	4,153	4,171
Banff and Buchan	248	385	333	347	410	366	585	706	713	732	791	1,056
Gordon	131	261	185	205	263	235	231	181	407	462	396	407
Kincardine and Deeside	120	243	207	216	303	393	401	327	399	666	706	608
Moray	232	676	735	702	758	665	924	584	868	772	829	859
Badenoch and Strathspey	91	174	130	182	167	212	208	137	142	240	184	159
Caithness	51	210	290	208	288	294	279	218	201	148	185	191
Inverness	700	1,141	719	684	1,125	1,078	1,013	785	890	1,085	1,046	1,251
Lochaber	49	101	123	188	238	239	284	263	232	233	280	246
Nairn	38	89	48	66	89	82	111	132	95	140	107	176
Ross and Cromarty	292	306	297	367	344	364	418	428	430	618	658	677
Skye and Lochalsh	51	53	51	42	45	44	69	51	77	72	80	100
Sutherland	—	12	61	66	50	57	76	61	—	—	78	76
East Lothian	554	879	496	671	588	652	695	661	909	746	644	872
City of Edinburgh	7,290	8,976	8,170	8,457	8,351	9,065	9,762	10,378	10,630	10,841	6,987	6,089
Midlothian	531	1,105	756	711	766	765	727	643	930	1,017	880	1,020
West Lothian	595	951	1,364	1,318	1,252	1,809	1,615	1,677	2,710	3,231	2,268	2,960
Argyll and Bute	491	709	821	822	659	661	714	788	809	758	942	721
Bearsden and Milngavie	130	151	126	122	214	175	202	157	166	160	126	190
Clydebank	453	822	797	1,077	961	1,098	1,464	1,193	1,326	1,159	707	884
Clydesdale	155	381	315	370	316	395	466	416	471	730	919	1,190
Cumbernauld and Kilsyth	251	422	504	419	581	606	830	554	547	567	571	744
Cumnock and Doon Valley	363	407	239	206	120	219	223	464	417	471	441	481
Cunninghame	960	1,457	1,095	1,002	1,199	1,211	1,230	2,050	1,923	2,453	2,217	2,492
Dumbarton	639	1,164	943	1,002	1,030	1,097	974	1,097	1,222	1,154	1,119	1,120
East Kilbride	499	800	801	798	828	1,200	1,125	1,016	784	1,087	1,110	1,229
Eastwood	233	276	148	187	133	197	176	160	218	228	160	173
City of Glasgow	17,457	27,376	22,982	24,653	28,700	31,162	32,444	29,598	33,301	31,295	35,598	31,868
Hamilton	1,305	2,010	1,229	789	1,239	1,663	2,170	2,295	2,209	1,848	2,228	2,080
Inverclyde	2,699	3,986	3,219	3,380	3,485	3,502	3,469	3,499	3,190	2,946	2,058	1,673
Kilmarnock and Loudoun	583	571	506	472	713	771	886	926	1,219	1,222	1,095	1,176
Kyle and Carrick	482	800	660	629	992	1,044	1,447	1,445	1,902	1,496	1,423	945
Monklands	1,230	2,393	2,192	2,366	2,222	1,903	3,239	2,260	2,190	1,640	1,893	2,050
Motherwell	2,326	3,183	2,678	2,781	2,959	3,177	4,312	4,374	3,359	3,216	3,270	3,291
Renfrew	1,773	2,946	2,401	2,442	2,779	2,699	2,593	2,171	2,923	2,718	2,692	1,576
Strathkelvin	373	478	358	714	707	985	890	850	759	896	789	1,224
Angus	514	748	572	575	496	518	894	950	848	1,057	1,087	1,155
City of Dundee	2,140	3,748	3,575	3,629	3,791	3,939	5,345	4,898	4,488	4,637	5,071	5,390
Perth and Kinross	561	1,137	1,063	1,052	934	1,084	1,255	1,312	1,307	1,532	1,375	1,118
Western Isles	47	80	135	188	196	157	156	145	125	90	53	90
Court not known	—	12	2	—	2	1	—	15	—	—	—	—
Scotland Total	51,625	80,274	69,464	72,883	79,202	84,862	95,184	91,115	98,436	98,503	96,989	94,704

[1] District Courts were introduced on 16 May 1975, to replace the Justice of the Peace Courts and Burgh (or Police) Courts.

Mr. Wallace: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what proportion of reports submitted by the police to procurators fiscal were marked no proceedings in each fiscaldom in Scotland in each of the years 1984, 1985, and 1986 and to the most recently available date in 1987.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: The figures are set out in the table below. Only the figures for January to November inclusive are available for 1987.

Offices	*Proportion of Reports marked No Proceedings*			
	1984	*1985*	*1986*	*1987*
	Per cent.	*Per cent.*	*Per cent.*	*Per cent.*
Aberdeen	2·8	9·0	25·0	25·9
Airdrie	6·2	3·8	4·8	5·0
Alloa	9·2	9·0	9·6	8·9
Arbroath	11·0	10·9	8·3	8·3
Ayr	13·2	17·2	15·7	14·5
Banff	9·1	15·1	15·0	12·9
Campbeltown	11·9	13·3	9·3	11·0
Cupar	10·1	9·9	10·7	8·6
Dingwall	8·8	12·3	13·0	13·7
Dornoch	21·4	14·0	15·6	11·1
Dumbarton	7·9	10·0	11·0	9·8
Dumfries	2·3	4·2	3·7	3·4
Dundee	9·5	8·6	5·1	6·0
Dunfermline	14·0	19·1	21·4	18·3
Dunoon	12·3	10·2	16·9	12·2
Duns	12·8	12·2	14·5	12·6
Edinburgh	43·5	48·3	49·4	26·4
Elgin	15·7	15·1	19·8	17·8
Falkirk	10·4	17·8	19·9	17·0
Forfar	2·7	2·2	4·3	2·4
Fort William	11·5	14·5	15·3	18·5
Glasgow	10·8	12·9	14·7	25·4
Greenock	8·3	20·9	23·8	14·9
Haddington	31·4	19·2	19·5	21·4
Hamilton	9·3	8·2	8·5	8·9
Inverness	11·8	11·5	13·6	13·4
Jedburgh	13·1	11·1	12·4	8·8
Kilmarnock	20·7	13·0	12·2	10·9
Kirkcaldy	13·5	13·0	14·1	16·0
Kirkcudbright	12·7	9·9	8·7	5·8
Kirkwall	11·3	13·5	12·3	11·7
Lanark	10·2	6·8	5·0	3·9
Lerwick	24·5	16·3	7·2	11·3
Linlithgow	5·0	5·2	5·2	5·0
Lochmaddy	9·7	2·9	5·6	4·9
Oban	15·3	14·4	12·5	12·6
Paisley	19·0	20·5	25·1	17·9
Peebles	8·0	7·1	6·7	6·7
Perth	22·6	26·4	21·2	17·6
Peterhead	9·9	14·9	16·0	20·0
Portree	11·4	15·6	17·9	12·9
Rothesay	18·0	19·6	26·4	16·2
Selkirk	12·0	15·5	18·0	15·2
Stirling	7·9	8·1	8·4	10·3
Stonehaven	4·2	5·6	11·6	9·4
Stornoway	5·7	11·0	10·1	9·3
Stranraer	9·4	16·0	10·5	8·0
Tain	14·9	12·1	14·9	17·0
Wick	12·7	16·3	17·4	18·2
TOTALS	16·8	18·5	19·9	17·0

Museums and Galleries

Mr. Faulds: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland whether he will publish in the *Official Report* the attendance figures for 1987 reported by the national museums and galleries in Scotland, broken down into the individual institutions but comprising their outstations, with figures for each case of the percentage increase or decrease on the attendance figures for 1986.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: The information is as follows:

	1987	*Percentage change since 1986*
National galleries of Scotland	524,261	−1·02
National museums of Scotland	547,395	+17·26

The national galleries of Scotland comprise the National Gallery of Scotland, the Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art and the Scottish National Portrait Gallery. The national museums of Scotland comprise the Royal Museum of Scotland buildings at Chambers street and Queen street, Edinburgh, the Scottish Agricultural

Museum, the Scottish United Services Museum, the Museum of Flight and the Shambellie Museum of Costume.

Low Earnings

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many *(a)* full-time males on adult rates, *(b)* full-time females on adult rates and *(c)* full-time employees on adult rates earned (i) £110 per week or less and (ii) £120 per week or less, in Scotland during the last year for which figures are available; and what are the corresponding figures for each year since 1979.

Mr. Lang: Estimates of the numbers of full-time employees on adult rates by the level of their earnings are not available. The table gives information about the distribution of gross weekly earnings for some full-time employees. The source is the "New Earnings Survey", which is conducted by the Department of Employment and covers a 1 per cent. sample of employees who are members of PAYE schemes. The corresponding figures for years prior to 1984 are not readily available. The percentages for male employees and for female employees are given in table 114 of the "New Earnings Survey" part E reports, available in the Library of the House.

Full-time employees on adult rates whose earnings for the survey pay-period were not affected by absence

	Scotland	*Percentage with gross weekly earnings*	
		less than £110	*less than £120*
	April		
	1984	32·2	39·4
	1985	26·8	34·4
	1986	22·1	28·9
	1987	18·3	24·6

Note: These figures are subject to sampling errors, and cannot be assumed to apply to all full-time employees because they do not cover, for example, private domestic servants, those who are not on adult rates, and those who are not members of PAYE schemes.

Milk Quotas

Mr. Geraint Howells: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many dairy farmers in Scotland do not produce milk up to their allocated quota; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: In the 1986-87 quota year 1,702 dairy farmers in Scotland produced less than their allocated quota, the majority falling short by less than 5 per cent.

Although producers are advised by the milk marketing board to maximise use of their quota, ultimately this is a matter for the individual. At the end of each quota year unused quota is utilised mainly to offset the supplementary levy liability of over-quota producers and thereby provides an important element of flexibility within the system. In the two years prior to 1986-87 the availability of unused quota ensured that no supplementary levy was paid by producers in Scotland.

Drink Offenders

Mr. Worthington: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many offenders with drink problems were diverted from prosecution in the criminal justice system to such service as social work or psychiatric assistance or to a designated place or similar facility in 1985-86; and what steps are currently being taken to increase this number.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: This information is not available.

Hypothermia

Mr. McAllion: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what was the number of hypothermia and cold-related deaths in *(a)* the Dundee area and *(b)* the Tayside area in each year since 1979.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave him on 17 December 1987.

Rate Support Grant (Tayside)

Mr. McAllion: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what was the rate support grant paid to Tayside regional council in each of the financial years since 1978 expressed in *(a)* cash terms and *(b)* rent terms expressed in 1986-87 prices; and what percentage of total spending in each year this represents.

Mr. Lang: The information requested is set out in the table.

Tayside

	RSG cash	*RSG 1986-87 cost terms*	*Percentage of relevant expenditure*
	£'000s	*£'000s*	
1978-79	63,874	124,271	63
1979-80	74,105	123,358	63
1980-81	88,525	124,297	61
1981-82	96,813	123,801	59
1982-83	100,607	120,014	56
1983-84	106,211	121,127	56
1984-85	104,637	114,300	53
1985-86	112,401	115,788	54
1986-87	114,743	114,743	51
1987-88	124,784	119,697	51

Notes:

1. The figures for the years 1978-79 to 1983-84 are final. Those for 1984-85 to 1987-88 will be varied following the next rate support grant order. The figures reflect selective and general abatement of grant, except that for 1987-88 no adjustment has been made for grant penalties since they will be restored for authorities which bring their expenditure down to guidelines on outturn.
2. The GDP deflator has been used to convert RSG to 1986-87 prices. The expenditure figures used in the final column are those for relevant expenditure including loan charges.

Mr. McAllion: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what was the total amount of rate support grant for education paid to Tayside regional council in each of the financial years since 1978, expressed in *(a)* cash terms and *(b)* real terms, expressed in 1986-87 prices; and what percentage of total spending in each year this represents.

Mr. Lang: Rate support grant is paid in support of a authority's income generally. It is not attributable to particular services.

Scottish Development Agency

Mr. Alan Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what, at 1988 prices, has been the level of Government subvention to the Scottish Development Agency in each year since its establishment.

Mr. Lang: The information requested is given in the table:

	£ million 1987-88 prices
1976-77	29·7
1977-78	91·8
1978-79	107·3
1979-80	112·6
1980-81	117·0
1981-82	101·6
1982-83	125·5
1983-84	105·2
1984-85	90·0
1985-86	101·6
1986-87	93·0
1987-88	94·9

As Government expenditure on the SDA is expressed in net terms, the figures are not illustrative of total agency resources over the years. This also partly explains the variations between years.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Acrylic Yarn

Sir John Farr: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what is the import duty on Turkish high bulk acrylic yarn entering the United Kingdom; and what are the duties British spinners have to pay on exporting high bulk acrylic yarn to that country.

Mr. Alan Clark: Turkish high bulk acrylic yarn is imported into the United Kingdom free of all import duties.

All imports to Turkey are current subject to the following:

Municipal tax — 15 per cent. of applicable import duty
Customs charges (incl stamp tax) — 2 per cent. approximately of cif value
Stamp duty—8 per cent. of cif value
Import premium—6 per cent. of cif value
Wharf dues—5 per cent. of the sum of the cif value plus import duty, municipal tax and stamp tax on customs declarations.

In addition imports of acrylic yarn are liable to:

Import duty—10 per cent. of cif value
Housing fund contribution—US$ 100 per tonne.

World Trade (GATT)

Mr. Leighton: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what information he has as to what percentage of world trade takes place within general agreement on tariffs and trade rules and what percentage outside them.

Mr. Alan Clark: There are 95 full contracting parties to GATT, including most of the world's major trading nations. Economists estimate that these countries account for somewhat more than 80 per cent. of the world trade in goods. By implication, about 20 per cent. of such trade involves countries outside the general agreement. While the United Kingdom is steadfast in its adherence to GATT rules many contracting parties are, regrettably, in breach both of the rules themselves and of the rollback and standstill commitments. Accordingly, the percentage of trade taking place on a genuinely open basis will be much smaller. A principal objective of the new Uruguay round of multilateral trade negotiations is to bring about a high level of conformity among the signatories to the gener agreement.

Sexual Harassment

Ms. Richardson: To ask the Chancellor of the Duch of Lancaster what is his Department's policy on sexu harassment at work; whether a guidance on reportin complaints has been issued to all staff; how man complaints have been reported in the past five years; an what disciplinary action has been taken.

Mr. Maude: The Civil Service policy on sexu harassment, followed by my Department, is set out in th programme of action to achieve equal opportunities fo women in the Civil Service which was published by th Cabinet Office (Management and Personnel Office) i 1984. Sexual harassment at work is not tolerated and dealt with as a disciplinary matter through the usual Civ Service procedures. A notice to all departmental staff ha been issued informing them of the Department's polic and of the procedures for making a formal complaint; an a reference to the notice is included in the Department' personnel management policy statement, an individua copy of which is held by every member of staff.

There have been three complaints reported in thi Department in the past five years. In two of the case inquiries uncovered insufficient evidence to support th bringing of disciplinary charges. In the third case, charge were brought, and the officer was found guilty reprimanded and posted to another office.

Registers of Shareholders

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy o Lancaster what proposals he has to ensure that register of shareholders clearly indicate the owners of companie and the extent of their ownership; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Maude: Provision already exist for all those with interests in shares to disclose their interests when they reach 5 per cent. Companies also have powers under the Companies Act, 1985, to inquire into the ownership o interests in shares whatever the size of the holding. Disclosure made under these provisions must be recorded by companies in a register of interests in shares. I am not persuaded at present that there is a need to make major changes to these provisions. The Government intend, however, to issue a consultative document in order to seek views on whether improvements are possible.

Corby (Fibre Optics)

Mr. William Powell: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what are the total payments made of investment support for the fibre optics and opto-electronics industries in the Corby travel-to-work area in each year since 1980.

Mr. Butcher: No payments have been made.

Estate Agents Act 1979

Mr. Sean Hughes: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster (1) what, since its inception, has been the total cost of administering the Estate Agents Act 1979, together with the main headings of cost;

(2) what are the total numbers employed responsible for the administration of the Estate Agents Act 1979 since its inception;

(3) what have been the numbers in each year since its inception of banning orders and warnings in respect of the Estate Agents Act 1979.

Mr. Maude: The administration of the Estate Agents Act 1979 is a matter for the Director General of Fair Trading and I have asked the director general to write to the hon. Member.

EEC (Imports from East Germany)

Mr. Sayeed: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster (1) what was the value of goods and services imported into the European Economic Community from East Germany in the last year for which figures are available;

(2) what was the value of goods and services imported into the European Economic Community from eastern bloc countries in the last year for which figures are available.

Mr. Alan Clark: Data on services transactions with Eastern Bloc countries are not available. Figures on visible trade are in the following table.

EC Imports[1] from East Germany and Eastern Bloc Countries
Million ECU

	From German Democratic Republic	*From Eastern Bloc Countries*
Twelve months to May 1987	4,554	26,268

[1] Includes trade conducted under the Inner German Trade Agreement.
1 ECU = approximately £0·70.
Source: Eurostat Monthly External Trade Statistics.

West Germany (Imports)

Mr. Sayeed: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster (1) if he will list what information he has on the value of goods and services imported into West Germany from East Germany;

(2) if he will list what information he has on the value of goods and services imported into West Germany from Eastern bloc countries.

Mr. Alan Clark: Data on services are not available. Figures for visible trade are in the following table:

Federal Republic of Germany Imports[1]
Twelve months ending August 1987

From:	*million DeutschMarks*	*million ECU's*
German Democratic Republic	6,601	3,178
Eastern Bloc	22,372	10,769

[1] Includes trade conducted under the Inner German Trade Agreement.
Source: Federal Republic Germany National Statistics.

CEGB (Transmission System)

Mr. Ieuan Wyn Jones: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster when he expects punblication of the Monopolies and Mergers Commission inquiry into the operation of the transmission system of the Central Electricity Generating Board.

Mr. Maude: The report was published and announced to Parliament on 26 June 1987 at columns *7* to *8*.

Landlords (Resale of Electricity)

Mr. Ieuan Wyn Jones: To ask the Chancellor of the Ducy of Lancaster what measures are being undertaken to eliminate dishonest practices in relation to the resale of electricty by landlords; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Maude: I intend shortly to make regulations, under the Consumer Protection Act 1987, which will require landlords to give tenants itemised bills showng both the selling price and the statutory maximum price of electricity and gas resold. We shall be consulting interested parties on the details of the draft regulations.

National Girobank

Mr. Harry Ewing: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what consultations he is undertaking in relation to the future of Girobank; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Butcher: We consult the Post Office on a systematic basis each year about the future of Girobank in the light of its corporate plan and take up particular issues from time to time with the chairman.

Departmental Corporate Image

Mr. Andrew Smith: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what is the total cost of launching his Department's new corporate image; and how this breaks down between signs, stationery, vehicle logos and any other identifiable sub-categories of expenditure.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: I refer the hon. Member to the answer my hon. Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Corporate and Consumer Affairs gave to the Member for Sheffield, Central on 14 January to a similar question.

Radio (Abuse)

Mr. Forth: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what measures is he taking to reduce the use of obscene or offensive language by users of citizens band, private mobile, marine and similar radio.

Mr. Butcher: I am concerned about the misuse of radio in this way. Users of radio especially open access services such as CB or services on shared-channels should know that they can cause offence and distress to others who may be listening. I am tabling before Parliament the Wireless Telegraphy (Content of Transmission) Regulations 1988, which will make it a specified offence under the Wireless Telegraphy Acts to use obscene, offensive or threatening language on radio. Authorised broadcasting is excluded because similar provisions are being contemplated in an extension to the Obscene Publications Act.

TRANSPORT

Drivers (Eye Tests)

Sir Anthony Grant: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make regulations requiring periodic eye tests for all persons holding a driving licence; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: No. Current legislation already places the responsibility on motorists to meet, at all times when driving, a standard of visual acuity equivalent to an ability to read a vehicle number plate from a distance of 75 ft for characters 3½ in high or 67 ft for characters 3⅛ in high. The number plate test is one that motorists can take for themselves at any time and can be readily used by the police for enforcement purposes. Motorists who have any doubts about their ability to satisfy the test should consult any optician for further advice.

Drivers are required to inform the DVLC if they become aware of an eyesight condition which affects their ability to drive. Some 60 such cases are referred to the centre each day for investigation; where necessary, arrangements are made for specialist eyesight examinations.

Research studies have not identified poor eyesight as a significant factor in accidents. There is no evidence to suggest that the present arrangements are failing to meet the requirements of road safety.

London Regional Transport

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for T
(1) what has been the level of ratepayers' sub
London Regional Transport per thousand p
journeys at constant 1986-87 prices for each ye
1979;

(2) what has been the proportion of total in
(a) ratepayers' subsidy and *(b)* fares income to
Regional Transport for each year since 1979.

Mr. David Mitchell: It is not possible to
subsidy between ratepayers and taxpayers p
1985-86, since much of the latter's contribution
means of rate support grant and transport supple
grant to the GLC which, as block grants,
hypothecated. The figures otherwise requested ar

	1979	*1980*	*1981*	*1982*	*1983*	*1984-85*	*1985-86*	*1986-87*
	per cent.	*per cent.*	*per cent.*	*per cent.*	*per cent.*	*per cent.*	*per cent.*	*per cent.*
Traffic income including reimbursement for concessionary fares	73·9	71·4	64·1	62·8	60·1	65·6	63·8	66·3
Other income	1·8	1·8	2·8	2·5	2·7	3·1	3·8	4·4
Ratepayer subsidy	24·3	26·8	33·1	34·7	37·2	31·3	21·3	19·2
Exchequer contribution							11·1	10·1
							£	*£*
Ratepayer subsidy per 1,000 passenger miles (at constant 1986-87 prices)							184·27	100·10

Underground (Train Doors)

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport whether, further to his answer of 7 December 1987, *Official Report*, column *64*, about the opening of underground train doors while the train is in motion, the investigation by London Underground Limited to which he refers has been completed; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. David Mitchell: The investigation by London Underground Limited into one of the incidents has not yet been completed but they have already indicated that they have taken appropriate measures to prevent a recurrence of the two incidents on the Central line. New rolling-stock built for one-person operation has an interlock which prevents the doors from being inadvertently opened whilst the train is in motion. Similar provision has been incorporated where technically possible into rolling-stock which has been converted for one-person operation but LUL have been unable to find a reasonable or practical means of preventing the train doors of the other, older stock from being opened in error by train crews who, if they misoperate the doors, are dealt with under the disciplinary code.

Heavy Goods Vehicles

Mr. Batiste: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what proportion of heavy goods vehicles weighed by *(a)* his Department and *(b)* local authorities in each of the last three years for which statistics are available were found to be overweight; what proportion of those resulted in prosecution; and what was the average fine.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: Following is the information.

	Proportion of vehicles weighed found to be overloaded Per cent.	*Proportion of overloaded vehicles prosecuted* Per cent.	*Average fine* £
DTp			
1984	20	38	153
1985	19	39	158
1986	20	43	151
Local authorities			
1984	30	30	165
1985	36	35	197
1986	31	32	187

Mr. Batiste: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) what steps he is taking to promote research into the effects on roads and road safety of the overloading of heavy goods vehicles; and if he will make a statement;

(2) what action he proposes to take to encourage better heavy goods vehicles design so as to reduce wear and tear on the road system; and what estimate he has made of the scope for savings in road repairs by this means.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: The TRRL's research programme includes work on the relationship between the design of heavy goods vehicles, their axle loads and the forces imposed on roads and bridges. It is too early to say what design changes this may lead to and what effect this may have on road maintenance expenditure. The incidence of lorry overloading and the effects on road wear been estimated. Research on lorry safety is aime improvements to the lorry in all conditions of load.

Mr. Batiste: To ask the Secretary of State for Trans whether he is satisfied with the effectiveness of exi enforcement procedures concerning the overloadin heavy goods vehicles; and if he will make a statemer

Mr. Peter Bottomley: No.

Over 100,000 heavy goods vehicles will be ch weighed during the current year. Constant efforts being made to increase the effectiveness of the resou available for enforcement by the use of new technol

Mr. Batiste: To ask the Secretary of State for Trans whether he is satisfied with the adequacy of exi penalties to deter heavy goods vehicles operators overloading their vehicles; and if he will make a staten

Mr. Peter Bottomley: No.

The level of fines imposed on drivers and operato overloaded heavy goods vehicles is a matter for the co taking into account the particular circumstances of case. The maximum fine provided by the law does n present constrain the courts from imposing an adeq penalty. Overloading convictions can also be taken account by the licensing authorities in deciding whet take action in respect of an operator's licence.

Weighbridges

Mr. Spencer Batiste: To ask the Secretary of State Transport how many dynamic weighbridges have installed by his Department; how many more are plan and when they will be installed.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: Fifty eight of the Departme weighbridge sites are equipped with dynamic axle weig and two with static weighbridges. Another 25 enforcen sites are planned for implementation over the next t years.

Onslow Village

Mr. David Howell: To ask the Secretary of State Transport what representations he has received conc ing the rising volume of traffic noise for residents in Onslow village area, adjacent to the A3 at Guildford; w studies he has made of this increase in noise volume; what steps his Department plans to take to offset environmental noise pollution involved.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: In addition to representation my right hon. Friend, two residents of Onslow village h written to the Department about traffic noise in the 12 months.

We are investigating the noise levels and the poss benefits of barriers at certain locations on this sectio the A3. It is too soon to say whether noise protectio feasible or can be justified.

Muroroa (Nuclear Weapons Testing)

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Transp what representations he has received from the Uni Kingdom merchant shipping industry about the risks fr radioactivity arising from nuclear weapons testing aro the Muroroa atoll; what advice his Department give shipping intending to navigate in adjacent waters; an he will make a statement.

Mr. David Mitchell: No representations have been received from United Kingdom shipowners. Warnings to shipping about the risks from radioactivity arising from nuclear weapons' testing around the Mururoa atoll are contained in nautical publications Nos. 62 and 62s, "Pacific Island Pilot Volume III, 10th Edition 1982" and its "Supplement No. 2" respectively published by the Hydrographer of the Navy. Carriage of nautical publications by United Kingdom registered ships is mandatory under the Merchant Shipping (Carriage of Nautical Publications) Rules 1975.

In the event of risk from nuclear tests, following prior information from the French authorities, daily radio warnings, in English, are transmitted to shipping throughout the area by the New Zealand co-ordinator for Navarea XIV of the worldwide navigational warning service adopted by the International Maritime Organisation.

Heavy Lorries

Mr. Battle: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if in the light of the report of the National Audit Office on the regulation of heavy lorries, he will take steps to ensure that *(a)* everything possible is being done to encouage the use of lorry designs which have less adverse effects, *(b)* further studies are carried out in conjunction with the local authority associations to establish the full extent of the problem, *(c)* further research is carried out into whether enforcement procedures are effective and *(d)* steps are taken to increase the deterrent effect of penalities for overloading to include the suspension or revocation of the transport operator's licence; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: I refer the hon. Member to the transcript of this Department's oral evidence to the Committee of Public Accounts (HC 170-(i)). It would not be appropriate for me to comment further until the Committee has made its report.

East London River Crossing

Mr. Cartwright: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when he expects to receive the report of the public inquiry into the east London river crossing; and when he plans to publish his decision on its recommendations.

Mr. Channon: The inspector's report has just been received. It is not yet possible to say when my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment and I will be able to publish our joint decision on this scheme.

London Regional Transport (Sale of Dwellings)

Mr. Spearing: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what is the number of dwellings built by London Transport, or its predecessors, for occupation by its employees, and, of that number, how many have been sold by London Regional Transport or its subsidiaries.

Mr. David Mitchell: When London Regional Transport was formed in June 1984, it inherited 950 residential units. Since then, 790 have been disposed of. Of the remaining 160, the sale of a further 17 is currently in hand. Information about the housing stock held by LRT's predecessors is not readily available, but it is t LRT that the number of acquisitions and between 1947 and 1984 was relatively small.

London Regional Transport (Bus Servi

Mr. Spearing: To ask the Secretary of Transport what is the appropriate route mile services operated under the aegis of London Transport which at current service levels *(a)* surplus of revenue over running costs, *(b)* requi from other services and *(c)* is currently subcon contract where the contractor is a recipient of

Mr. Mitchell: The latest information availa in LRT's annual business plan 1988-89:

(a) (b) LRT forecast that 169 million bus mile operated during 1987-88 on their local services wit London. 154 million bus miles are in respect operated by London Buses Ltd., which has a fore trading deficit of £125 million in 1987-88. It is not say what proportion of the services currently surplus of revenue over running costs.

(c) LRT forecast that by the end of 1987-88 equivalent of some 30 million bus miles will be ope contracts involving payments to the operator. Th contracts secured by London Buses Ltd. in tendering.

Humber Bridge Authority (Debt)

Mr. Roy Hughes: To ask the Secretary of Transport if he will make a statement about his d with the Humber Bridge Authority conce settlement of their debt.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: I met representativ Humber bridge board on 18 November 1987 their proposals for dealing with the outstand They proposed that tolls, which were lower in than when the bridge opened, should be increase their value should be maintained in real ter future. I said that the Government would be p write off so much of the accumulated debt as reasonably be recovered from realistictolls. confirmed on 2 December that tolls would be with effect from 1 January 1988 to the maxima by the Humber Bridge Tolls Order 1979 Co Instrument 1980 (SI 1980 No. 1137) and that would also promote a new tolls order to aut further increases they had proposed.

The proportion of bridge debt to be written determined once the outcome of the proce making the Order is known. The amount will projection of income and expenditure prepare time.

Transport and Road Research Laborat

Mrs. Ray Michie: To ask the Secretary of Transport if he will publish a list of the cur programme of the Transport and Road Laboratory in the area of enforcement of overlo excessive driving hours in the road freight indu

Mr. Peter Bottomley: The Transport a Research Laboratory research programme enforcement of heavy goods vehicle weight r consists of the following projects:

On-board axle weighers
Assessment of new enforcement weighing techn
Assessment of weighpads for enforcement

Enforcement pre-selection
Monitoring the extent of overloading
Use of automatic methods to improve lorry management planning and enforcement.

There is no work on enforcement of the drivers' hours regulations in the current TRRL research programme.

Manchester Light Rapid Transport System

Mr. Burt: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he has reached a decision on the financing of the proposed Greater Manchester light rapid transit system; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Alfred Morris: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will now make a statement on the funding of Manchester's light rapid transit system.

Mr. David Mitchell: I have concluded that, on the basis of the assessments which have been made, private sector participation in the construction and operation of this proposed system could bring useful benefits and could best be achieved by inviting bids from private sector promoters to build and operate the system on the basis of a public sector contribution towards the capital cost. The system would however be owned by the Passenger Transport Executive. The next stage of a project on these lines would entail working up an invitation for tenders from the private sector and, subject to a satisfactory response to such an invitation, I can see no present reason why a grant under section 56 of the Transport Act 1968, at a level determined depending on the details of the proposal, should not be made available at the appropriate time. I am today so informing the Greater Manchester passenger transport authority and I shall keep the House informed of progress.

Pedal Cyclists

Sir Anthony Grant: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will take steps to introduce on-the-spot fines for pedal-cyclist offences on the same basis as those applying to motor vehicles; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: I have been asked to reply.

We are reviewing the operation of the extended fixed penalty system, in consultation with other interested parties, and intend to consider, among other things, the range of offences that might be covered by the scheme.

AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES & FOOD

Cereals

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what is the current amount of cereals in European Economic Community stores.

Mr. Donald Thompson: A note setting out the volume of intervention stocks in the European Community on the latest available dates, which includes figures for cereals, is deposited in the Library of the House and is updated monthly.

Milk Quota

Mr. Nicholas Bennett: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what information he has to the transfer between counties in England and Wales of milk quota in each year since 1984.

Mr. Donald Thompson: Records of quota trans England and Wales are maintained by the Milk Mark Board on behalf of the Ministry. Data are kept on the of MMB regions rather than by county. The follo table shows net quota transfers between regions:

Wholesale quota transfers by Milk Marketing Board regi millio

MMB region	Net gain/loss 1984-85	1985-86	1986-87	19
Northern	—	+4 (0·3)	−5 (0·3)	−1
North Western	−1	+6 (0·2)	+13 (0·5)	+9
Eastern	—	−2 (0·5)	−2 (0·5)	−3
East Midlands	—	−3 (0·5)	+2 (0·4)	+4
West Midlands	+1	— (—)	+8 (0·6)	+0
North Wales	—	−2 (0·4)	+1 (0·1)	+0
South Wales	+1	— (—)	−17 (1·7)	−6
Southern	+1	−2 (0·3)	+1 (0·2)	−4
Mid West	−2	+1 (0·1)	+1 (0·1)	+1
Far West	+1	— (—)	+3 (0·2)	+2
South East	−1	−2 (0·3)	−5 (0·8)	−2

Figures in brackets indicate percentage of total quota in (not available for 1984).
[1] April to October 1987

Non-Civil Servant Advisers

Mr. Galbraith: To ask the Minister of Agricul Fisheries and Food if he will list his non-civil se advisers, giving their present main employment and field of expertise.

Mr. MacGregor: I receive advice from Department's advisory non-departmental public b which are listed in "Public Bodies 1987". I consult a range of interests and experts as appropriate. I do retain at present any non-civil servant advisers. I shorly to be in a position to announce the appointme a special adviser within my Department.

Milk

Mrs. Peacock: To ask the Minister of Agricul Fisheries and Food if he will make further amendmen the Milk (Special Designation) Regulation to re universal pasteurisation of milk in England and Wale the light of the recent communicable disease re showing the comparative incidence of disease associ with milk and dairy products in England and Wale compared with Scotland.

Mr. Donald Thompson: Sales of untreated milk already subject to strict controls. The incidence of borne disease associated with such sales is kept u review but I do not consider that these figures requi change in our existing policy, which seeks to achie balance between the health risks associated with untre milk and the need to preserve consumer choice.

Mineral Water

Mr. Neil Hamilton: To ask the Minister of Agricul Fisheries and Food if he plans to amend the Nat Mineral Water Regulations 1985 so as to bring them in with the standards set in European Community Direc No. 80/778.

Mr. Donald Thompson: The Natural Mineral Wa Regulations 1985 implement Council Direc 80/777/EEC on the exploitation and marketing of nat

mineral waters. It would not be appropriate to amend the regulations in the way suggested because officially recognised natural mineral waters are specifically excluded from the scope of Council Directive 80/778/EEC.

Fisheries Council

Mr. John D. Taylor: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food on what dates, since 18 December 1987, there have been meetings of the EEC Fisheries ministerial Council.

Mr. Donald Thompson: There have been no meetings of the EC Council of Fisheries Ministers since 18 December 1987.

Weil's Disease

Mr. Burns: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (1) how many rivers in the Chelmsford constituency are contaminated with Weil's disease.

(2) what action his Department is taking to minimise the dangers to human life caused by Weil's disease; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Edwina Currie: I have been asked to reply.

I shall let my hon. Friend have replies as soon as possible.

WALES

Labour Statistics

9. **Mr. Barry Jones:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many people are unemployed in Clwyd and in Wales.

Mr. Peter Walker: On 10 December 1987 the numbers of unemployed claimants in Clwyd and in Wales were 19,117 and 146,119 respectively.

14. **Mr. Roy Hughes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what are the latest unadjusted figures for unemployment in *(a)* Newport, *(b)* Gwent and *(c)* Wales; and if he will give the equivalent figures for 1979 or the most nearly comparable basis.

Mr. Peter Walker: On 10 December 1987 the numbers of unemployed claimants in Newport district, Gwent and Wales were 7,909, 22,915 and 146,119 respectively. Unadjusted figures for 1979 are not available on a basis that enables a valid comparison to be made.

19. **Dr. Thomas:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many persons are unemployed in Wales; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Walker: On 10 December 1987 there were 146,119 unemployed claimants in Wales, 27,427 fewer than a year earlier—a fall of 2·3 percentage points. During 1987 Wales experienced the biggest annual fall in unemployment since the second world war.

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what is the total number of employees in employment in Wales; and what is the corresponding figure for 1979.

Mr. Peter Walker: There were 1,036,572 employees in employment in Wales in September 1979 and 874,900 in September 1987.

Tree Planting

Mr. Chapman: To ask the Secretary of S
if he will make a statement about his Depart
for encouraging tree planting in the Princi

Mr. Peter Walker: As my hon. Friend
anxious to encourage tree planting th
Principality. There are a range of measures
in Wales; the valleys initiative, urban
Forestry Commission grant schemes, p
woodland scheme and Coed Cymru —
Wildwoods" all promote amenity or co
planting and/or conservation of existing w

Hospital Waiting Lists

11. **Dr. Marek:** To ask the Secretary of S
if he will give the latest waiting list figure
treatment in *(a)* Clwyd and *(b)* Wales.

Mr. Grist: At 31 March 1987 there wer
waiting for in-patient treatment in hospitals
equivalent figure for Wales was 41,396.

Mr. Robin Cook: To ask the Secretary
Wales if he will publish figures showing th
people waiting for treatment in March 19
1987; and if he will break this down by
authority and district health authority.

Mr. Grist: The information, which
specialties, is given in the table:

District Health Authority	*Waiting for treatment as an in-patient*		*Waiti patie*
	March 1978	*March 1987*	*M*
Clwyd	3,571	4,959	4
East Dyfed	1,941	2,335	3
Gwent	6,404	7,705	10
Gwynedd	2,128	1,971	2
Mid Glamorgan	10,467	8,483	12
Pembrokeshire	1,411	2,510	1
Powys	78	36	
South Glamorgan	5,521	7,876	12
West Glamorgan	3,880	5,521	12
Wales	35,401	41,396	58

I think, however, that the hon. Gentlen
aware that by March 1979 the position as
March 1978 had substantially deteriorate
from 31 March 1978 to 31 March 1979, the
patients on waiting lists increased from 35,

It is also very important in the context
to recognise the degree to which the numb
cared for by the NHS has substantially incr
1978 and 1987. In the 1977-78 financial ye
patients were treated and 417,332 new out
seen in Wales. The equivalent figures for
435,621 and 508,984—increases of 27·2 pe
per cent. respectively.

Education Expenditure

12. **Mrs. Clwyd:** To ask the Secretary
Wales if he will make a statement on the l
Government spending on education in Wa

Mr. Wyn Roberts: In real terms,
Government spending on education has inc

million in 1979-80 to £12 million in 1987-88. Spending by local education authorities has increased from £769 million to £862 million in the same period.

Mrs. Clywd: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what was *(a)* central Government and *(b)* local authority spending on education, including higher education expressed per household, for 1979 and for 1986-87 at (i) current prices, (ii) 1979 prices and (iii) 1987 prices.

Mr. Wyn Roberts *[holding answer 14 January 1988]:* The relevant information covering expenditure by the Department and by local authorities in Wales is as follows:

	1979-80 £	[1] *1986-87* £
Central Government expenditure per household in Wales		
(i) cash	3·46	9·49
(ii) at 1979-80 prices	3·46	5·70
(iii) at 1987-88 prices	6·00	9·89
Local authority expenditure per household in Wales		
(i) cash	572·85	917·89
(ii) at 1979-80 prices	572·85	551·29
(iii) at 1987-88 prices	994·12	956·88

[1] Provisional.

Between 1979-80 and 1986-87 gross local authority expenditure actually increased by about 3 per cent., from £963·7 million to £990·7 million (at 1987-88 prices). The number of separate households in Wales has increased by some 7 per cent., from 969,400 in 1979 to 1,035,300 in 1986 due to larger numbers of young and elderly people living alone; over the same period the number of school pupils in Wales has fallen by some 13 per cent. and the amount spent per pupil has risen by 27 per cent.

Expenditure on the university of Wales falls outside my area of responsibility.

Consultant Referrals

13. **Mr. Gareth Wardell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many patients resident in Wales have been referred by their consultants to a hospital in England for surgery and have subsequently been discharged home without the surgery being performed.

Mr. Grist: This information is not available centrally. However, should the hon. Gentleman wish to write to me about any particular case I shall arrange for the necessary investigations to be made.

Health Authorities (Funding)

15. **Mr. Flynn:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what plans he has to add to the published £46 million allocation in 1988 to Welsh health authorities in order to fund the nurses', and other pay awards and to reduce the capital burden carried by the Gwent area health authority.

Mr. Grist: The cash increases which I have announced for authorities in 1988-89, together with the resources available from cost improvements and income generation, should be sufficient to meet the current forecast of pay and price inflation next year and provide for further service development.

Rate Rebate

16. **Mr. Rowlands:** To ask the Secretary of S Wales what is the latest estimate for the number o in receipt of 100 per cent. rate rebate in Wales.

Mr. Peter Walker: About 200,000.

Hospitals (Repairs)

17. **Mr. John:** To ask the Secretary of State fo what is his assessment of the state of repair of hos South Wales.

Mr. Grist: District health authorities are responsible for keeping their hospitals in an ac state of repair. They are required to follow management guidance issued by the Welsh Off encouraged to spend a minimum of 7·5 per cent. total financial resources on the maintenance of pl buildings. Capital allocations to district health au for their discretionary use will rise by nearly 21 p next financial year compared to this year and thu greatly assist their programmes of estate maintena rationalisation.

Health Authorities

18. **Mr. Ieuan Wyn Jones:** To ask the Secretary for Wales what meetings he has held during the p months with the chairmen of health authorities in and if he will make a statement on the outcome discussions.

Mr. Grist: My right hon. Friend and I have Welsh health authorities chairmen's committee chairman of Gwynedd health authority during t two months. We have also had separate meetings w chairman of Mid Glamorgan health authority. meetings made a valuable contribution to the con dialogue between the Government and health aut in Wales.

Free Food

20. **Mr. Alex Carlile:** To ask the Secretary of S Wales what representations he has received t distribution of food under the European Commun food distribution scheme in Wales; and if he will statement.

Mr. Peter Walker: Since the announcement January 1988 by my right hon. Friend the Mini Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, about the applica the United Kingdom of the European Communi food scheme, I have received no representations distribution of such food in Wales.

National Health Service

21. **Mr. Livsey:** To ask the Secretary of State for if he will make a statement on the state of the N Health Service in Wales.

Mr. Peter Walker: My recently announced pla further increases in expenditure next year will take spending in Wales to £1,173·1 million. That repre real terms increase of over 39 per cent. since 1978-79 means that expenditure upon the NHS in Wales sta record levels in both cash and real terms. This, to

with the introduction of improved management arrangements are the drive for increased efficiency, has led to increased numbers of staff, major improvements in services and an increased emphasis on health promotion. Wales has an expanding health service and will continue to have one.

Rating Reform

22. **Mr. Geraint Howells:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what representations he has received in support of the introduction of the poll tax in Wales.

Mr. Peter Walker: During the period of consultation on the Green Paper "Paying for Local Government" more than twice as many individuals who responded were in favour of the community charge as were against it.

Cardiff Bay Development Corporation

23. **Mr. Gwilym Jones:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will make a statement on the progress of the Cardiff Bay development corporation.

Mr. Grist: The corporation has
progress in respect of liaison with loca
other public bodies, consultation on p
approval of initial projects, negoti
acquisitions, preliminary work to establi
sive regeneration strategy and has c
approved studies into the technical,
environmental impact of a barrage acr
Cardiff bay.

Obstetric Units

Mr. Gareth Wardell: To ask the Secr
Wales if he will publish in the *Official Re*
obstetric unit for each area health autho
each year since 1979, the number of deli

Mr. Grist: The table gives the total
(live and still) in each maternity unit in

Hospital	*1979*	*1980*	*1981*	*1982*	*1983*	*1984*
Clwyd District Health Authority						
HM Stanley	2,042	2,044	2,101	2,113	2,121	2,121
Maelor General	2,080	2,205	2,098	2,069	2,089	2,191
Chirk	53	58	52	—	40	38
Catherine Gladstone	32	25	8	11	13	14
Colwyn Bay Maternity	48	37	26	11	20	9
Chatsworth House	99	58	54	53	41	16
Ruthin	30	9	—	—	—	—
East Dyfed District Health Authority						
West Wales General	1,509	1,505	1,409	1,403	1,274	1,292
Bronglais General	588	549	526	592	534	538
Cardigan and District	2	—	—	—	—	—
Amman Valley	155	140	160	118	118	108
Gwent District Health Authority						
Nevill Hall	1,071	1,067	1,218	1,336	1,295	1,362
County	1,376	1,424	1,203	1,023	819	923
Royal Gwent	3,450	3,444	3,077	3,040	3,146	3,359
Gwynedd District Health Authority						
St. Davids	2,303	2,335	2,418	2,183	2,250	2,249
Bryn Beryl	27	20	11	10	14	7
Dolgellau and Barmouth	62	62	54	65	55	69
Tywyn	23	16	12	15	18	18
Gors Maternity	45	45	—	—	—	—
Mid Glamorgan District Health Authority						
Princess of Wales	—	—	—	—	—	—
Bridgend General	1,583	1,747	1,606	1,631	1,710	1,673
Maesteg General	175	151	141	97	68	76
East Glamorgan General	1,818	1,984	1,912	1,968	1,952	2,187
Llwynypia	458	400	358	296	182	180
Merthyr General	—	478	617	940	1,021	1,115
ST Tydfils	807	425	—	—	—	—
Aberdare General	823	963	1,156	778	873	743
Caerphilly and District Miners	1,317	1,463	1,377	1,358	1,354	1,367
Powys District Health Authority						
Brecon War Memorial	195	192	189	192	206	187
Llandrindod Wells	60	71	71	66	61	68
Builth Cottage	50	51	28	56	44	26
Knighton	53	47	61	69	50	66
Machynlleth and District	12	18	16	23	18	22
Llanidloes and District	25	36	34	30	35	36
Victoria Memorial	115	124	116	110	111	95
Montgomery Infirmary	102	96	78	98	90	78
South Glamorgan District Health Authority						

Hospital	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985
University Hospital of Wales	2,764	2,898	2,870	2,818	2,860	2,798	2,969
St. Davids	2,603	2,740	2,612	2,670	2,763	2,799	2,835
West Glamorgan District Health Authority							
Mount Pleasant	1,701	1,588	1,813	1,491	1,686	1,705	1,631
Gorseinon	308	241	188	226	160	162	110
Morriston	1,543	1,672	1,508	1,840	1,799	1,769	2,104
Neath General	1,836	2,008	1,831	1,747	1,711	1,641	1,693
Pembrokeshire District Health Authority							
Withybush General	1,295	1,305	1,436	1,473	1,397	1,421	1,415

Mr. Gareth Wardell: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will indicate for each obstetric unit in Wales whether there is an in-service training programme for *(a)* trainee anaesthetists; *(b)* non-consultant anaesthetists; *(c)* midwives and *(d)* supporting staff.

Mr. Grist: Information on in-service training at each obstetric unit in Wales for the staff groups referred to is not held centrally. On a national basis, all anaesthetics posts established for junior medical staff in the training grades are designed to include appropriate training in neonatology and paediatric intensive care, and there is a statutory requirement for practising midwives to attend a refresher course every five years.

I understand that at the all-Wales level, the University of Wales college of medicine also provides courses for career grade non-consultant anaesthetists.

Mr. Gareth Wardell: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales (1) if he will indicate for each obstetric unit in Wales whether the anaesthetic equipment includes *(a)* anaesthetic machine, *(b)* difficult intubation kit, *(c)* a DC defibrillator, *(d)* anaesthetic gas scavenging facilities, *(e)* an automatic pulmonary ventilator with disconnect alarm and *(f)* refrigerator for the storage of drugs;

(2) if he will indicate for each obstetric unit in Wales whether there is *(a)* an ECG monitor with recorder, *(b)* an inspired oxygen concentration meter, *(c)* an automatic blood pressure measuring device, *(d)* an end tidal carbon dioxide meter, *(e)* a peripheral nerve stimulator, *(f)* apparatus for measuring central venous pressure, *(g)* pulse aximeter, *(h)* blood storage refrigerator, *(i)* pressure infusion bags, *(j)* a blood warming device, *(k)* blood filters, *(l)* neonatal resuscitation equipment that includes a temperature measuring device; and neonatal equipment for maintaining the temperature of the neonate;

(3) if he will publish in the *Official Report* a list of each obstetric unit for each area health authority in Wales; and if he will indicate for each unit *(a)* whether there is a designated consultant anaesthetist whose duties include the organisation of an obstetric anaesthetist service and ensuring that the health authority is fully aware of any deficiencies in this service, *(b)* whether there is a consultant anaesthetist on-call and readily available on a 24-hour, seven-day-a-week basis, *(c)* whether suitable facilities for the storage of blood exists, *(d)* whether a quantity of group O Rh-ve blood is held, *(e)* whether there exists a 24 hour on-request epidural service, *(f)* whether an anaesthetic audit is undertaken; and *(g)* whether the equipment required in the labour suite and the obstetric theatre include an emergency electricity supply.

Mr. Grist: These are matters of operational policy for the health authorities concerned and I suggest that the hon. Gentleman writes to the district general managers.

Staff Statistics

Mr. Butler: To ask the Secretary of State fo he will give the percentage change in the n administrative staff in the National Health Wales since 1979.

Mr. Grist: Between September 1979 and S 1987 there was a 13·9 per cent. increase in the w equivalents of all administrative and clerical st NHS in Wales.

National Museum of Wales

Mr. Faulds: To ask the Secretary of State whether he will publish in the *Official R* attendance figures for 1987 reported by the Museum of Wales, comprising its outstations, percentage increase or decrease on the attendan for 1986.

Mr. Wyn Roberts: A total of 1,041,290 peo the National Museum of Wales during 1987, a of 46 per cent. on the attendance figures for 19

Hospital Beds

Mr. Robin Cook: To ask the Secretary of Wales if he will publish, by district health regional health authority and special health auth showing the average daily number of beds av 1979 and 1986 for all specialties and for acute s

Mr. Grist: The information is given in the ta

	All specialties		*Acute s*
	1979	*1986*	*1979*
Clwyd	3,052·5	2,769·1	1,420·5
East Dyfed	2,098·2	1,758·2	761·8
Gwent	3,882·6	3,308·8	1,517·9
Gwynedd	1,569·5	1,629·9	686·2
Mid Glamorgan	4,943·4	4,498·4	1,915·8
Pembrokeshire	466·4	473·0	245·7
Powys	1,265·5	1,014·4	292·2
South Glamorgan	3,583·7	3,460·3	1,864·9
West Glamorgan	2,594·3	2,574·1	1,428·3
Wales	23,456·1	21,686·2	10,133·3

[1] All specialties excluding geriatrics, younger disabled GP Maternity, mental illness, mental handicap, psychiatry, mental illness children, psychogeriatric mentally infirm.

I remind the hon. Gentleman that bed nu themselves are no indicator of the level of health crucial indicator is the number of patients treat increased by 24 per cent. between 1979 and 19

Welsh Language

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what is the outcome of the policy review undertaken on the Welsh language following the public consultation which concluded on 31 March 1987; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Wyn Roberts: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the reply I gave my hon. Friend the Member for Delyn (Mr. Raffan) on 10 December at column *215*.

Houses (Disrepair)

Mr. Ieuan Wyn Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales (1) how many homes in each district authority area in Wales are considered to be in a serious state of disrepair; what proportion of the total housing in each area they represent; and what were the corresponding figures for each year since 1979;

(2) how many homes in each district authority in Wales are considered to be unfit; what proportion of the total housing stock they represent in each area; and what were the corresponding figures for each year since 1979.

Mr. Grist: Reliable estimates of the number of dwellings considered to be unfit or in a serious state of disrepair in each local authority district will not be available until the publication of the 1986 Welsh house condition survey.

House Purchase

Mr. Ieuan Wyn Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many homes have been bought by the tenants of each of the housing associations in Wales in each year since the inception of right to buy legislation.

Mr. Grist: A total of 313 dwellings have been bought by housing association tenants since the inception of "right to buy". Details are given in the table. During the same period, about 2,400 additional sales took place under such schemes as co-ownership, improvement for sale, leasehold schemes for the elderly, home ownership schemes for tenants of charitable housing associations, and shared ownership schemes.

"Right to buy" purchases by housing association tenants

Housing association	*1980-81*	*1981-82*	*1982-83*	*1983-84*	*1984-85*	*1985-86*	*1986-87*	*1987-88*
Cymmer Corrwg	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—
Hafod	—	—	4	8	12	12	20	11
Muir Group	—	—	6	5	1	—	1	2
Wrexham and District	—	—	3	1	—	—	—	—
Wales and West	—	—	4	22	28	29	25	14
Second Cathays	—	—	5	2	—	—	—	—
Adamsdown	—	—	—	3	—	1	—	2
Derwent	—	—	—	5	1	4	1	—
Newydd	—	—	—	1	—	—	4	
Gwalia	—	—	—	7	3	2	3	3
Western Permanent	—	—	—	—	1	23	12	—
Secondary Housing Association for Wales	—	—	—	—	1	4	1	—
British Airways	—	—	—	—	—	7	3	—
Second Bromford	—	—	—	—	—	1	1	—
North Britain	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—
Bro Myrddin	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1
United Kingdom	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1

Care in the Community

Mr. Ieuan Wyn Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what estimates his Department has made of the additional housing needs of handicapped and vulnerable people through the implementation of care in the community; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Grist: Such estimates are a matter for local determination by housing authorities, district health authorities and local authority social services departments working together and in collaboration with other interests such as housing associations and voluntary organisations, and the representatives of those needing housing.

Housing Corporation (Expenditure)

Mr. Ieuan Wyn Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what was the Housing Corporation's total expenditure in Wales during 1986-87 and in each year since the Corporation's establishment, both at 1987 and actual prices.

Mr. Grist: Total expenditure by the Housing Corporation in Wales since 1974-75 (when it was established on its present basis) is given in the table:

	Expenditure	*1987-88 prices*
1974-75	3·2	11·6
1975-76	4·7	13·6
1976-77	10·1	25·8
1977-78	18·0	40·4
1978-79	22·1	44·8
1979-80	24·5	42·5
1980-81	28·9	42·3
1981-82	33·3	44·4
1982-83	46·4	57·7
1983-84	48·8	58·0
1984-85	43·4	49·4
1985-86	43·6	46·8
1986-87	51·5	53·7

A44 (Aberystwyth to Rhayader)

Mr. Geraint Howells: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he has any further plans to improve the A44 trunk road between Aberystwyth and Rhayader in the current year; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Wyn Roberts: Improvements are planned at Capel Bangor and the Llangurig junctions. Their timing will depend on the completion of statutory procedures and availability of financial resources.

Earnings

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many *(a)* full-time males on adult rates, *(b)* full-time females on adult rates and *(c)* full-time employees on adult rates earned (1) £110 per week or less and (ii) £120 per week or less, in Wales during the last year for which figures are available; and what are the corresponding figures for each year since 1979.

Mr. Peter Walker: Information relating to male and female workers and all employees on adult rates for the years 1984 to 1987 is given in the table. Data for the period prior to 1984 are not available for all employees; but figures relating to male and female workers are published as table 114 of part E of the annual new earnings surveys, copies of which are available in the Library.

Full-time employees on adult rates of pay whose earnings were not affected by absence—Wales
(Percentage at April each year)

	1984		1985		1986		1987	
Percentage with weekly earnings less than:	£110	£120	£110	£120	£110	£120	£110	£120
Full-time males on adult rates	19·1	25·7	14·4	20·3	12·3	16·9	9·7	14·0
Full-time females on adult rates	77·9	84·6	49·9	60·8	43·8	53·4	36·2	46·0
All full-time employees on adult rates	31·2	39·0	25·4	32·9	22·3	28·5	18·0	24·0

Patients (Conveyance)

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what guidance his Department gives to health authorities in Wales concerning the conveyance of patients to and from hospital by public transport.

Mr. Grist: Guidance is provided in Welsh health circular (77)4. Some patients are able to have their travelling expenses paid. The procedure for this is explained in DHSS leaflet H11.

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what representations he has received concerning the lack of ambulance facilities to convey patients to and from hospitals in Wales; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Grist: A few representations on behalf of patients not in medical need of ambulance transport but without easy access to public transport, were received from community health councils and local authorities in Gwynedd during the period of public consultation on the criteria proposed by Gwynedd health authority for the transport of non-emergency patients. Gwynedd health authority was aware of these representations and the ambulance service has reacted sympathetically to individual cases of difficulty.

Ambulances

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales (1) what is the number of ambulances operated per 1,000 inhabitants in each health authority area in Wales; and what are the corresponding figures for each year since 1979;

(2) what is the total number of ambulances operated by each of the Welsh health authorities; and what are the corresponding figures for each year since 1979.

Mr. Grist: This information is not held centrally.

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what recent changes have been made in the provision of ambulance services for patients and hospitals in Gwynedd.

Mr. Grist: Gwynedd health authority is responsible for the provision of the ambulance service in Gwynedd. To improve the service to those in medical need the authority has recently published for the information of the public, doctors and hospitals, the criteria upon which the provision is based. A special financial allocation has been made to the authority to enable it to purchase five specialised ambulances for conveying patients from Gwynedd to hospitals in Liverpool for radiotherapy and limb fitting.

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what measures are being undertaken by his Department to improve ambulance facilities in rural areas in Wales; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Grist: It is the responsibility of individual health authorities to assess the need for and manage the ambulance service in rural areas of Wales.

Housing Associations

Mr. Ieuan Wyn Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many homes in each district authority area in Wales are owned by housing associations.

Mr. Grist: This information is not held centrally at present. The Housing Corporation is working to establish a data base on housing association stock by district council area.

Hospital Closures

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales whether his Department lays down any guidelines to health authorities in Wales on the minimum requirements to be contained in consultation documents issued to the public on proposed hospital closures in their area; whether such documents are discussed with his Department before being published; and whether, in cases where such

documents are found to be faulty, misleading or inadequate, he will insist on further consultation before coming to his own decision on proposed hospital closures.

Mr. Grist: Guidelines for the content of consultation documents in respect of proposed hospital closures are set out in Health Service planning paper 5, "Procedure for Consultation on the Closure and Change of Use of Health Buildings". I am placing a copy in the Library of the House. There is no requirement to discuss consultation documents with the Welsh Office before publication. If my right hon. Friend considered such a document to be faulty, misleading or inadequate in a way that might be prejudicial to proper consultation, it is likely that further consultation would be required.

Bridges (Safety)

Mr. Alan Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what reports he has received on the safety of bridges in Dyfed as a result of the October floods; what estimates have been made of the cost of repairing these bridges; and whether extra resources will be made available by his Department for this work.

Mr. Wyn Roberts: We have received no detailed reports from Dyfed county council about bridge safety nor any estimates of repair costs. I remain prepared to consider any representation from the county council about particular problems arising from the flooding in October, as I indicated in my reply to the right hon. Gentleman on 12 November.

Speech Therapists

Mr. Martyn Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what measures he is taking to remedy deficiencies in the pay and career structure of speech therapists in Wales.

Mr. Grist: A new pay and grading structure for speech therapists has been introduced with effect from 1 January 1988. The management side of the Scientific and Professional Staffs Council believes that this will bring considerable benefits to the speech therapy profession.

Member's Question

Mr. Gareth Wardell: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will now reply to the question tabled on 17 December 1987 for answer on 11 January by the hon. Member for Gower on Welsh Office circular 44/87.

Mr. Grist: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the reply given to him on Thursday 14 January 1988.

Circular 44/87

Mr. Gareth Wardell: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if, in the light of the formal public circulation of his Department's circular 44/87 and its subsequent withdrawal, and of its submission as evidence by both parties in the public inquiry held at the Guildhall, Swansea, relating to proposed executive houses at Murton lane, Newton, Swansea, he will now formally recover jurisdiction and determine this inquiry; and if he will make a statement on the circumstances of the distribution of circular 44/87 and on its status.

Mr. Grist: As I have already explained to the hon. Gentleman my right hon. Friend sees no reason to recover jurisdiction from the appointed inspector. Copies of a document which appeared to be an updated version of circular 30/86 have been received by some local authorities. No further circular on this subject has been issued and circular 30/86 continues in force.

General Practitioners

Mr. Murphy: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will give the number of general practitioners in *(a)* Torfaen, *(b)* Gwent and *(c)* Wales.

Mr. Grist: At October 1986, the latest date for which figures are readily available, the numbers of unrestricted principals were 45, 236 and 1,549 respectively.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Fire Hydrants (Portaferry)

Mr. John D. Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland when was the last survey of fire hydrants in the Portaferry turnout area; what assessment he has made of *(a)* the adequacy of the number of fire hydrants in this rural area and *(b)* sufficiency of the existing two diameter water mains for fire hydrants; if he has any plans to improve either the water mains or number of fire hydrants in this area; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Needham: A survey of fire hydrant requirements in the Portaferry area is currently being conducted by the Fire Authority for Northern Ireland. The survey, which is expected to be completed by the middle of this year, will examine the adequacy of the number of existing hydrants and the sufficiency of existing water mains and will make recommendations.

Union Flag

Mr. John D. Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland whether Tower Hill hospital, Armagh city hospital, health and social services offices, the Mall, Armagh, and the Agriculture Department offices, The Mall, Armagh, are in possession of standing instructions for the flying of the Union flag on all appropriate dates; why the Union flag was not flown at these four public buildings on 25 December 1987; whether the flying of the Union flag in Armagh city has been discussed at the Anglo-Irish ministerial conference; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Stanley: The requirement to fly the Union flag on those prescribed dates relevant to Northern Ireland applies only to central Government offices. There is no requirement therefore for it to be flown on Tower Hill hospital, Armagh city hospital and the Southern health and social services offices in the Mall in Armagh. Due to an oversight the Department of Agriculture Drainage Office in the Mall, Armagh, did not fly the Union flag on 25 December 1987. The Department has reminded its staff of the requirement.

As to the right hon. Gentleman's question about the Intergovernmental Conference, joint statements issued after each meeting, copies of which are placed in the Library, set out matters that have been discussed. We do not make public any further details of conference proceedings.

Pupils (Religious Denomination)

Mr. John D. Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland whether each new pupil enrolling in a controlled secondary school is requested by the school principal to make known his religious denomination.

Dr. Mawhinney: Every school is required by law to keep a register containing, amongst other particulars, the religious denomination of each pupil.

Radioactivity (Monitoring)

Mr. John D. Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what is the extent of radioactivity monitoring in the Irish sea; and if he will make a statement on the implications for fish stocks in the Irish sea of the construction of nuclear installations on the west coast of Great Britain.

Mr. Needham: The Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food carries out extensive monitoring for radioactivity in the aquatic environment around the British Isles including the Irish sea. The results are published annually and placed in the Library of the House. These sources show that radiological levels pose no risk to fish stocks.

Proposals for nuclear installations go through a stringent consent procedure before construction is authorised and the effect on fishstocks is an important factor in the decision. Radioactive discharges from nuclear installations are controlled by authorisation issued by the appropriate Government Departments. The effects of such discharges on the flora and fauna of the Irish sea are among the matters considered by the authorising Departments in establishing the permitted limits.

Traffic Flow (Carrickfergus)

Mr. Beggs: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he has any plans to improve the traffic flow along the shore road between Carrickfergus and Whiteabbey, County Antrim.

Mr. Needham: Yes. The Department of the Environment for Northern Ireland has proposals in its major works programme to improve the section of single carriageway from the entrance to the university of Ulster to Ravenhill.

Free EC Food

Mr. John D. Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what arrangements and support he will provide to assist the distribution of free EEC foods to the needy in Ulster in 1988; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Viggers: The implementation of the new EC scheme for distributing surplus food to the most needy announced on 12 January 1988 by my right hon. Friend the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food will operate in Northern Ireland. Butter and beef will be available in response to specific applications received from charitable or non-profit-making organisations which meet appropriate conditions.

Quantities will be limited to amounts specifically authorised by the European Commission within the finance available. Designated organisations will be eligible to receive contributions within the terms of the EC regulation towards their administrative and transport costs. Commission rules also provide for arrangements to be made with individual processors for a proportion of product handled to be retained by the processor as payment.

Ulster Museum

Mr. Faulds: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland whether he will publish in the *Official Report* the attendance figures for 1987 reported by the Ulster museum, comprising its outstations, with the percentage increase or decrease on the attendance figures for 1986.

Dr. Mawhinney: In 1987 267,700 people visited the Ulster museum and the Armagh county museum, a decrease of about 8 per cent. on the attendance figure for 1986.

Meningitis

Mr. John D. Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many cases of meningitis there are currently in hospitals in Northern Ireland, what consultations he has had with health authorities in Great Britain about the present meningitis outbreaks; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Needham: There were eight patients in hospitals in Northern Ireland suffering from meningitis on 13 January 1988. This figure can fluctuate daily. There is no known connection between any of the present cases. There has been no significant change recently in the incidence of the disease in the Province and there is no evidence to link any of the existing cases with the recent outbreaks in England and Wales. My officials have been maintaining close contact with their counterparts at the Department of Health in London on this matter and this will continue.

Matrimonial Proceedings

Mr. McNamara: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will list in the *Official Report* those changes he is making in the Draft Matrimonial Proceedings (Northern Ireland) Order following the representations he has received.

Mr. Stanley: I cannot at present add to the reply that I gave the right hon. Member for Strangford (Mr. Taylor) on 3 December at column *692*.

Elected Representatives

Mr. McNamara: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will list in the *Official Report* the individual members of each delegation with which the Government met to canvass views before issuing their discussion paper, "Elected Representatives and the Democratic Process in Northern Ireland", identifying the political party, local council or other organisation, if any, from which each individual came.

Mr. Needham: The affiliations of the various delegations who met me were listed in my reply of 4 November to the hon. Member at column *791*. It would not be appropriate to publish the names of the individual members of those delegations without their permission.

Correspondence

Mr. Madden: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will arrange for his letter to the hon. Member for Bradford West, dated 11 January, to be published in the *Official Report*.

Mr. Stanley: Yes. My letter is below.

"In reply to your Questions:

> To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when he expects the investigations or allegations against the Royal Ulster Constabulary, about which he last wrote to the honourable Member for Bradford West on 23rd June, to be concluded; and if he will make a statement.
>
> To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when Mr. Chan Hok Chun was deported from the United Kingdom how many times he was interviewed by police officers in relation to allegations made against Royal Ulster Constabulary officers and others in Belfast; and if Mr. Chan Hok Chun has been asked to supply any further information since he was deported.

I replied that I would write to you.

The RUC have informed me that Mr. Chan Hok Chun was deported to Hong Kong on 30 June 1987 and that he has not been asked to supply any further information since his deportation. With regard to the number of times Mr. Chan has been interviewed by police you will recall that Nick Scott told you on 6 April 1987 (Hansard Col. 115) that Mr. Chan had been interviewed by officers from the Royal Ulster Constabulary but that the extent, direction and control of that investigation and any subsequent proceedings are matters for the Chief Constable and the Director of Public Prosecutions. I understand the papers relating to the police investigation are with the Director of Public Prosecutions and a direction regarding charges is awaited. It is not therefore possible to say when the investigations into the allegations against the Royal Ulster Constabulary will be concluded. Any matters of internal police discipline arising from the investigations must await the outcome of any criminal proceedings."

Debt

Mr. McNamara: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many state employees, or employees of state agencies, spent all or part of th in debt recovery under the Payments for Debt (Em Provisions) Act (Northern Ireland) 1971, in 1987

Mr. Stanley *[holding answer 15 January 198* number of employees in Government Departme public bodies working on debt recovery und legislation is as follows:

DHSS (NI)	
Northern Ireland Electricity	—40
Belfast Gas	—9 full-time equi
DOE (NI)	—120 with varying of involvement

Information on the number of employees of the N Ireland Housing Executive involved in this worl available and could only be obtained at dispropo cost.

Planning (Advertisements)

Mr. McCusker: To ask the Secretary of S Northern Ireland how many occasions the Depart the Environment (NI) has invoked its powers unde 51 of the Planning (NI) Order 1972 in relation display of an advertisement in contravention Planning (Control of Advertisements) Registratio 1973.

Mr. Needham *[holding answer 14 January 198* records available indicate that since 1974 62 sum have been issued.

ENVIRONMENT

Housing Management

Mr. McAvoy: To ask the Secretary of State Environment if he will list the names and addr those organisations which have been given grant section 16 of the Housing and Planning Act 1986, d the terms of reference of the grants and the geo area each organisation is expected to cover.

Mr. Waldegrave: The information the hon. M seeks is given in the table.

Housing and Planning Act 1986: S.16 Housing Management Grants

Name and address of organisation	*Grant terms of reference (geographical coverage)*	*Grant approved for 1987-88* £	*pro app*
CDS Co-operative Housing Society Ltd., 140 Stockwell Road, London SW9 9TQ	To inform local authorities and tenants and residents groups about TMC's and undertake feasibility studies (London and the home counties)	31,727	
Chisel (Co-operative Housing in South East London) Ltd., 184A Brownhill Road, London SE6 2DJ	To promote TMC's and par-value co-ops amongst public sector tenants and provide training and management services to help tenants run such co-ops (SE London and Kent)	7,500	
East London Housing Association Ltd., 187A Romford Road, London E15 4JF	To facilitate tenant control and community development along co-operative lines on a new estate in Newham (East London)	2,085	
Solon Co-operative Housing Services Ltd., 223A Kentish Town Road, London NW5 2JT	To part finance the setting up of a Tenant Initiatives Unit to promote, service and support TMC's and community ownership co-operatives (NW London and adjacent home counties)	12,900	
Solon Wandsworth Housing Association, 49A Lavender Hill, London SW11 5QN	To promote TMC's using a co-op worker and co-op link workers to establish dialogue with council officers and members (SW London)	7,500	

Name and address of organisation	Grant terms of reference (geographical coverage)	Grant approved for 1987-88 £	Grant provisionally approved for 1988-89 £
Banks of The Wear CHS Ltd., 46 Falconar Street, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, NE2 1UY	To provide (i) a service to tenants to help establish tenant groups, give appropriate training and assist liaison with landlords (ii) a service to landlords to bring about changes in local authority policy and practice (North East England)	42,100	51,300
CHS (North West) Ltd., 79A Oswald Road, Manchester M21 1QD	To promote TMC's in liaison with two residents associations; to improve, along with NFHC, publicity and information on TMC's supplied to local authorities and potential TMC's (Greater Manchester)	12,700	33,100
Merseyside Improved Houses Special Projects Housing Association Limited, 46 Wavertree Road, Liverpool L7 1PH	To promote and explain the role of TMC's and community based housing associations in tackling hard-to-let estates; to expand and develop the services provided by Merseyside Community Projects Advisory Service (Merseyside)	31,500	85,100
Institute of Housing Regional Training Unit, 9 White Lion Street, London N1 9XJ	To establish a pilot Regional Training Unit in Leeds to provide housing training and co-ordination of training activity (Northern England)	37,700	120,800
Path (Local Authorities), 259A High Road, London N15 5BT	To set up a scheme to train black people for housing management duties at middle and senior level in local authority housing departments (throughout England)	31,900	260,300
TPAS [Tenants' Participation Advisory Service] England, c/o 20 Grosvenor Gardens, London SW1W 0DH	To promote tenant involvement in housing management on local authority and other housing estates and provide training, information, consultancy and advice to tenant groups (throughout England)	47,500	55,000
NACRO Crime Prevention Unit, Cranmer House, 39 Brixton Road, London SW9 6DZ	To develop a training service as part of the National Advisory Service by appointing a training co-ordinator, and to develop the National Safe Neighbourhoods Programme (throughout England)	45,000	300,000

Note: TMC—Tenant Management Co-operative.
NFHC—National Federation of Housing Co-operatives.

Homelessness

Mr. Chris Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) if he will list each scheme included in the Housing Corporation's 1987-88 approved development programme, which uses flexible housing association grant with private finance, to provide temporary accommodation for homeless families; how many units of accommodation each scheme will provide; when these units are likely to be available for letting; and which local authorities will have nomination rights to each scheme;

(2) if he will list, for each scheme included in the Housing Corporation's 1987-88 approved development programme which uses flexible housing association grant with private finance, to provide temporary hostel accommodation for homeless families *(a)* the estimated capital cost of the scheme, *(b)* the proportion of the scheme's estimated capital cost which will be met by flexible housing association grant, *(c)* the estimated revenue cost of the scheme in the first year, comprising repayment of capital, management, maintenance and an allowance for furnishing and *(d)* the average weekly rent which homeless families nominated to this accommodation are likely to be charged.

Mrs. Roe: The information is given in the table. The revenue costs do not include the cost of repaying capital, for which detailed figures are not available, but rents under this scheme are normally set at the levels necessary to cover borrowing costs and costs of future major repairs. The units are expected to become available for letting from April onwards.

Local Authority	Number of units	Capital Cost (£)	HAG Proportion Per cent.	Revenue Costs (£)	Weekly Rent (£)
Haringey	1	80,720	50	3,640	91·22
Haringey	1	93,772	50	3,640	105·00
Hackney	8	718,170	50	3,640	103·00
Bromley	1	74,824	50	2,860	63·00
Bromley	1	66,692	50	2,860	63·00
Bromley	1	73,020	50	2,860	63·00
Bromley	1	71,014	50	2,860	63·00
Bromley	1	72,900	50	2,860	63·00
Bromley	1	69,564	50	2,860	63·00

Local Authority	Number of units	Capital Cost (£)	HAG Proportion Per cent.	Revenue Costs (£)	Weekly Rent (£)
Bromley	1	74,028	50	2,860	63·00
Bromley	1	67,576	50	2,860	63·00
Lewisham	1	69,436	50	2,860	65·00
Lewisham	1	72,738	50	2,860	65·00
Lewisham	1	71,612	50	2,860	65·00
Lewisham	1	72,142	50	2,860	65·00
Slough	6	402,903	30	1,456	61·00
Rushmoor	25	1,314,723	30	1,456	52·00

Private Tenants (Right to Buy)

Mr. Harry Barnes: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what representation he has received seeking legislation under which tenants are given the right to buy houses and flats from their private landlords; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Waldegrave: We receive occasional letters from hon. Members and members of the public asking about a right to buy scheme for private tenants. We consider that such a right would be an infringement of rights over private assets and would discourage landlords from letting property. It is open to sitting tenants to negotiate sale with their landlords. We do not intend to legislate on this.

Radiation Monitoring

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment whether local authorities will be allowed direct and open access to the central database facility for the purpose of radiation monitoring in an emergency; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Moynihan: Local authorities with appropriate interrogation equipment will have access to regular information and advice bulletins prepared and distributed from the central database facility. In circumstances where they collect monitoring data, they will be able to enter it into the database providing that it has been collected and supplied according to specified procedures.

Rating Reform

Mr. Nicholas Bennett: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what estimates he has as to the likely effects on average rateable values in each local authority in England if a general revaluation were to take place; and if he will publish in the *Official Report* the estimate for each English local authority, together with current average rateable values.

Mr. Howard: Forecasts of the effects of the non-domestic revaluation in 1990 by local authority area cannot be made until the necessary rental evidence has been collected and analysed by the Inland Revenue valuation office. We have no plans for a domestic revaluation before domestic rates are abolished in 1990. I therefore have made no estimate of the impact of such a revaluation at local level and do not intend to do so.

Mr. Heddle: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will publish in the *Official Report* a list of all Acts and regulations in which gross, net annual or rateable values are included as the basis for compensation; and if he will make a statement on the alternatives he proposes to introduce to deal with such compe claims following the introduction of the com charge.

Mr. Howard: The following Acts and regulatio been identified as containing provisions which use net annual or rateable values as the basis for deter compensation payments and which will be affected abolition of domestic rates. Proposals for alte measures for dealing with compensation for those s in list A were published on 23 December 1987 consultation paper on the use of rateable values in h and related legislation, copies of which I have place Library. We are considering suitable substitutes fo Acts and regulations shown in list B. Provision is m the Local Government Finance Bill to amend al provisions by order.

List A
Housing Act 1985 (c. 68).
Landlord and Tenant Act 1954 (c. 56).

List B
Land Compensation Act 1973 (c. 26).
Town and Country Planning Act 1971 (c. 78).
Brine Pumping (Compensation for Subsidence) Act 1 40).
Housing (Payments for Well Maintained Houses) Ord (SI 1973 No. 753).
Compensation (Defence) Notice of Claim Rules 1939 (1939 No. 1296).

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Secretary of State f Environment what research he has made o implications for his policy on the poll tax of the st Professor Colin Hughes of the university of Edinbu the increase in house prices under a poll tax, a c which has been sent to him; and if he will m statement.

Mr. Howard: Professor Hughes has comment several occasions on the effect of abolishing domesti on house prices. It is not disputed that some incre house prices is likely. The Government's estimate effect is contained in annex E to the Green Paper "I for Local Government" (Cmnd 9714). While there i for alternative views on this matter, we find Pro Hughes' estimates to be implausibly large. They give cause to revise our own estimate which we believe re broadly correct.

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State f Environment whether, under the proposed comm charge, once a jointly liable couple have been sepa joint debts will be carried over after separation reg of which was previously the main wage earner.

Mr. Howard: I refer the hon. Member to the an gave to the hon. Member for Cynon Valley (Mrs. C on 12 November 1987 at column *189*.

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what is his Department's policy towards treating women's aid refuges as the sole or main residence of women residents for the period when they stay at the refuge; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Howard: Most women staying in refuges do so for short periods and will remain mainly resident elsewhere. They will pay the personal community charge in respect of their main residence. Those women who have their sole or main residence in a refuge will pay the personal community charge in respect of their residence in the refuge. Women in both categories will be eligible for rebates of up to 80 per cent. according to their circumstances. Those on low incomes will receive assistance through the income support system towards their 20 per cent. contribution.

I announced, in my answer on 2 December to my hon. Friend the Member for Billericay (Mrs. Gorman) that women living under threat of violence will be able to register for the community charge without making their names and addresses public.

Dr. Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will make it his policy to place in the Library copies of the papers of the community charge working group, its implementation sub-group, and any joint circulars to local authorities that may be produced by his Department on the implementation of the Local Government Finance Bill.

Mr. Ridley: Any necessary joint circulars to local authorities on the introduction of the community charge, as well as practice notes, prepared by the implementation sub-group will be placed in the Library.

Mr. Wareing: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what representations he has received seeking the exemption of disabled people being cared for in the community and their carers from the payment of the community charge; what response he has made; and will he make a statement.

Mr. Howard *[holding answer 14 January 1988]:* We have had a number of representations about the liability of disabled people and volunteer carers for the community charge. We do not consider that an exemption would be justified. They will be eligible for rebates of up to 80 per cent. and income support will be increased to help recipients pay the remaining 20 per cent. In addition, in recognition of their special needs, any income received by disabled people from allowances such as mobility and attendance allowances would be disregarded in calculating entitlement to rebate.

Search and Charge Procedures

Mr. Heddle: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what information he has about the progress so far achieved in persuading local authorities to computerise local search and charge procedures.

Mr. Waldegrave: I understand that at least two computing systems for local authority searches are at an advanced stage of development and at least one is now being tested by two local authorities. I hope that local authorities will give serious consideration to the installation of such systems which will help them to give an improved service to home buyers.

Mr. Heddle: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will publish in the *Official Report* the average length of time taken by each local authority in England to answer local search inquiries.

Mr. Waldegrave: This information is not collected centrally. However, the local authority associations provided evidence on the matter to the Government's conveyancing committee, and the committee's second report, published in January 1985, gives details. A copy of that report is in the Library.

Rate Support Grant, Cumbria

Mr. Campbell-Savours: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what was the cost to the Exchequer of the domestic resource equalisation component in the rate support grant settlement to the county of Cumbria in each year since 1979.

Mr. Chope: Within the grant total, the effect of resource equalisation is to transfer money from areas of high rateable value to areas of low rateable value. There is no cost to the Exchequer.

North Sea Project

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will make a statement on the funding of the North sea project.

Mr. Colin Moynihan: The Government fund substantial programmes of research and monitoring by Government Departments and the research councils related to the North sea. The total level of such funding is of the order of £7 million annually, although because some of this work has relevance to the marine environment generally, it is difficult to give a precise figure for the North sea.

The recent second international conference on the protection of the North sea endorsed the need for the development of national and international programmes to enhance our understanding of possible threats to the North sea and to improve our ability to manage this unique resource. The conference also endorsed the need for a task force to carry forward this work, and the United Kingdom offered to host its first meeting early in 1988.

It is intended that the bulk of the United Kingdom's contribution to the scientific effort of the task force will be drawn from existing national programmes, including the NERC's North sea project. Some additional funding for the task force will, however, be necessary. My Department will shortly be bringing interested parties together to consider the setting-up of the task force.

Urban Regeneration Grants

Mr. Rooker: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how much money has been spent on urban regeneration grants to the latest convenient date; and how many projects were involved in the expenditure.

Mr. Trippier: Since urban regeneration grant was introduced, four offers of grant totalling £7·62 million have been made for projects in Manchester and Dudley. This grant is expected to attract £34·32 million of private investment into these areas. Approval in principle has been given to a project in Blackburn. Ten projects are under appraisal and a number of others are being discussed informally with the Department.

Dog Wardens

Mr. Meale: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will make extra resources available in the next financial year to local authorities for the provision of dog warden schemes in their areas; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Moynihan: The rate support grant report (England) 1988-89 was approved by the House on 9 December. It is for local authorities themselves to decide on the provision of individual services in the light of this and their view of local needs and circumstances and having regard to statutory obligations.

Planning Appeal Decisions

Dr. Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if, pursuant to his reply of 11 January, *Official Report*, columns 78-9, he will give the locations of those planning appeal decisions made by him since 1980, contrary to the inspectors' recommendations.

Mr. Ridley: The table shows the local planning authorities within whose areas planning appeal decisions were made by the Secretary of State for the Environment contrary to the inspectors' recommendations, for each year from 1984, the earliest date from which information on an individual planning authority basis is available, to 30 September 1987.

Year and county	*Planning authority*
1984	
Berkshire	Wokingham
Cambridgeshire	Peterborough
Cheshire	Congleton
Essex	Chelmsford
Hampshire	Hart[1]
	New Forest
	Rushmoor
Lancashire	Wyre
Somerset	Mendip
Staffordshire	Staffordshire Moorlands
Greater Manchester	Salford[2]
West Midlands	Walsall
London	Brent
	Waltham Forest
1985	
Avon	Woodspring
Berkshire	Berkshire CC
	Reading
	Windsor and Maidenhead[2]
	Wokingham
Cumbria	South Lakeland within the National Park
County Durham	County Durham
Essex	Basildon
Leicestershire	Hinckley and Bosworth
Lincolnshire	Lincoln
Oxfordshire	South Oxfordshire
Suffolk	Babergh (2)
Surrey	Mole Valley
	Reigate and Banstead
	Waverley (2)
West Sussex	Mid Sussex
Greater Manchester	Bolton
Merseyside	Knowsley
London	Greenwich
	Lambeth
1986	
Avon	Woodspring
Berkshire	Wokingham
Cambridgeshire	Peterborough
Cornwall	Penworth
Essex	Colchester
Hertfordshire	St. Albans (2)
	Welwyn Hatfield
Kent	Maidstone
	Thanet
Nottinghamshire	Broxtowe
Oxfordshire	South Oxfordshire
Staffordshire	Stafford
Warwickshire	Stratford-on-Avon
West Sussex	Chichester
	Horsham
West Yorkshire	Calderdale (2)
London	Brent
	Bromley (2)
	Harrow
1987	
Avon	Bristol
Bedfordshire	Luton
Cambridgeshire	Cambridge (2)
Essex	Brentwood (2)
	Castle Point
Hampshire	Fareham
	New Forest
Kent	Tunbridge Wells
Northumberland	Tynedale
Nottinghamshire	Nottingham
Surrey	Elmbridge (2)
South Yorkshire	Doncaster
London	City of Westminster (2

Note: Figure in brackets is the number of decisions

Rented Property

Mr. Winnick: To ask the Secretary of S Environment if he will give the date, place a any ministerial statements prior to 11 June publicised the Government's policy towards local councils in the provision of dwellings fo out in the answer to the hon. Member for W on 18 December 1987, *Official Report*, colu if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Roe: The policy was clearly set out of the White paper "Housing: The G Proposals" (Cm 214) which was itself foresha Conservative Party document "The N Forward" published in May 1987.

Sport and Leisure Facilities

Mr. Pendry: To ask the Secretary of S Environment what has been the respo consultation paper on competition in the ma local authority sport and leisure facilities; a make a statement.

Mr. Moynihan: A total of 352 response received to the consultation paper which invit by 11 December 1987. These are now being detail.

Barter Deals

Mr. Matthew Taylor: To ask the Secretary the Environment whether there are any prop the formal use of barter deals by local aut means of raising finance; and if he will make

Mr. Chope: My right hon. Friend has m proposals.

Urban Development Corporations

Mr. Boyes: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how much has been spent by each urban development corporation from the formation of the London Docklands development corporation to the latest date available, by year.

Mr. Trippier: Information on expenditure is contained in each urban development corporation's annual report and accounts, copies of which are laid before the House. Reports by London Docklands DC and Merseyside DC cover the period from their formation to the end of the last full financial year (1986-87). The only other corporation to spend during that period was Trafford Park DC which came into operation on 10 February 1987 and spent £31,000 in 1986-87.

New Premises (London)

Mr. Kirkwood: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what consideration he is giving to acquiring new premises in central London for use by his Department; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Chope: The Property Services Agency constantly has under review the accommodation needs of all Government departments in central London, including the Ministry of Defence. Its aim is to meet such needs as economically as possible. Where this requires the aquisition of new accommodation from the market, negotiations are always conducted on a strictly commercial, and therefore confidential basis.

Boxing

Mr. Fearn: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he has any plans to introduce the mandatory wearing of protective headwear for the sport of boxing.

Mr. Moynihan: The Government have no plans to introduce the mandatory wearing of protective headwear for boxers. That is a matter for the governing bodies of boxing to consider.

Mr. Fearn: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he has any plans to improve safety precautions for those taking part in the sport of boxing.

Mr. Moynihan: The Government have no such plans. British boxing is already subject to stringent medical safeguards. Any further safety precautions are for the amateur boxing associations and the British Boxing Board of Control to consider.

Mr. Fearn: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what information he has as to the most common permanent and temporary injuries sustained as a result of the sport of boxing.

Mr. Moynihan: The most common injuries sustained in amateur boxing are of a minor nature such as bruises, sprains and cuts. Major injuries include dislocations and fractures. In England in 1987 there were 117 minor and 10 major injuries out of some 30,000 competitors actively engaged in amateur boxing. The British Boxing Board of Control does not keep records on the incidence of injuries in professional boxing, but their advice is that major injuries are rare. All boxers, both amateur and professional, are required to undergo medical examinations before a bout.

Storm Damage

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment if he will make further funds available to Countryside Commission in the light of the net bids ma by local authorities in respect of tree damage sustained 16 October 1987.

Mr. Moynihan: The Department is discussing with Countryside Commission the need for a long-te programme of tree planting.

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment if he will carry over to 1988-89 any part the £25 million allocated by his Department in 1987-88 storm damage on 16 October 1987 and not paid out wit the current financial year.

Mr. Chope: No, but parliamentary approval will necessary be sought to adjust the main Estimates provisi for 1988-89 to enable grant to be paid on all eligi expenditure.

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment what is the closing date by which claims damages sustained on 16 October 1987 should submitted by local authorities and others to Department.

Mr. Chope: Initial claims must be with the Departm by 1 March 1988. Grant on 90 per cent. of eligi expenditure will be paid on the basis of those claims. Fi claims, on the basis of which grant on the remaining 10 cent. of eligible expenditure will be paid, must submitted via local authorities: auditors to Department by 31 December 1988.

Animal Virus Research Institute

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, pursuant to his reply of 13 January, *Offic Report*, column *280*, if he will give the nature and quant of radioactive waste discharged from the Animal Vi Research Institute for the most convenient period and manner of disposal.

Mr. Moynihan: Records of radioactive waste discharg are not held by Her Majesty's inspectorate of pollution b they are kept at the Animal Virus Research Institute. Th are inspected by Her Majesty's inspectorate of polluti to check that the discharges are within authorised limi Waste liquids are discharged to the river Wey af treatment.

Radioactive Waste

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, pursuant to his reply of 13 January, *Offic Report*, column *280*, in respect of each of the organisatio listed for each of the past five years *(a)* how much lo level radioactive waste has beeen discharged, *(b)* wha was, *(c)* how it was dispersed and *(d)* if any discharge b been outside authorised limits.

Mr. Moynihan: Records of discharges are not held Her Majesty's inspectorate of pollution, but they are k by each of the organisations concerned. They are inspect by Her Majesty's inspectorate of pollution to ensure th discharges are within authorised limits. These reco show that there have been no discharges outside authorised limits. Waste liquids are discharged into near rivers after treatment.

Thames House

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what plans his Department has to acquire the use of Thames house, Millbank; at what cost; and under what form of tenure.

Mr. Chope: Office buildings in this area of Westminster are always of potential interest to the Property Services Agency in the discharge of their responsibility for meeting the accommodation needs of Government Departments. Their aim is to meet accommodation needs as economically as possible. Where this requires the acquisition of new accommodation from the market, negotiations are always conducted on a strictly commercial, and therefore confidential, basis.

Nature Reserves

Mr. Home Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will make a statement on his policy for the future ownership and management of the national nature reserves at Achanarras Quarry, Beinn Eighe, Ben Lui, Blawhirn Moss, Braehead Moss, Cairngorms, Cairsmore of Fleet, Claish Moss, Corrieshalloch, Cragbank Wood, Creag Meagaidh, Dunnet Links, Glasdrum Wood, Glen Roy, Glen Tanar, Inverpolly, Loch Druidibeg, Loch Lomond, Loch Sunart Woodlands, Morton Lochs, Rannoch Moor, Rhum, Taynish and Tetsmuir Point, and for the future control of other national nature reserves in Scotland; and what consultations he has undertaken with Scottish interests on this subject.

Mr. Moynihan: I refer the hon. Member to the reply my right hon. Friend gave on 13 January to the hon. Member for Copeland (Dr. Cunningham) at column *281*. I shall, of course, consult my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Scotland about the outcome of the review of national nature reserves which is currently being undertaken by the Nature Conservancy Council.

Nuclear Waste

Mr. Harry Barnes: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what studies have been conducted into the long-term safety of high level liquid nuclear waste tanks at British Nuclear Fuels plc, Sellafield; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Michael Spicer: I have been asked to reply.

Studies have been completed by BNF plc on the reliability of high active waste tanks. A paper on the subject was published at the fourth European reliability data conference. I am arranging for a copy to be placed in the Library of the House.

For the future the company plans to remove liquid waste from the tanks for vitrification. Construction of a vitrification plant is nearing completion.

Mr. Harry Barnes: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what physical protection systems exist against possible terrorist attacks on the high level liquid waste tanks at British Nuclear Fuels plc, Sellafield; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Michael Spicer: I have been asked to reply.

Such systems are in place. It would not be prudent to publish details.

Nuclear Safety

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary
Environment what arrangements are
that local authorities would be alert
opportunity if an emergency, involvi
possibly going to affect their area.

Mr. Michael Spicer: I have been ask
All licensed nuclear sites must have d
plans in place. These plans, which are
the presence of the NII, include proce
local authorities.

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary
Environment whether the national res
become operational in the United K
accident, involving radiation, to occur
Kingdom; and if he will make a statem

Mr. Michael Spicer: I have been ask
I refer the hon. Member to the answe
Friend the Member for Bedfordshire, N
by my right hon. Friend the Prime Mi
1987, at columns *65-67*.

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary
Environment what has been the outcom
evacuation zones in relation to emerg
plants; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Michael Spicer: I have been ask
I refer the hon. Member to the answer
Member for Yeovil (Mr. Ashdown) by m
Member for Eddisbury (Mr. Goodlad)
at column *534*.

Racing (Drug Misuse)

Mr. Meale: To ask the Secretary
Environment (1) what information he
number of cases of drug misuse involvin
the racing industry since 1979;

(2) if he will introduce legislation to m
offence to misuse restricted drugs, partic
the horse and dog racing industries; and
a statement;

(3) if he has received any request for
horse and dog racing industries to help co
of drugs on either race horses or dogs; an
a statement.

Mr. John Patten: I have been asked
do so as soon as possible.

Meadowhall Development, Sh

Mr. Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretar
Environment why his Department has re
million-£30 million urban regeneratio
developers of the junction 34 — Meado
ment in east Sheffield.

Mr. Trippier: After careful appraisal w
the project was viable without assistance.

Derelict Land (Corby)

Mr. William Powell: To ask the Secret
the Environment (1) if he will list in the
relation to the Corby district *(a)* the am

land in the Corby district, identified in the survey of 1982, *(b)* the amount of derelict land which was identified as capable of justifying reclamation and *(c)* the amount of land in fact reclaimed since 1982;

(2) how much Government funding has been contributed to the Corby district council for derelict land reclamation in each year since 1980; and how many acres have been reclaimed in each year.

Mr. Trippier: The 1982 derelict land survey identified 218 hectares (538 acres) of derelict land in the district of Corby, of which 216 hectares (533 acres) justified reclamation. Some 90 hectares (222 acres) have been reclaimed since 1982.

Government resources have been allocated to Corby district council to allow expenditure on derelict land reclamation as follows:

	£ million
1980-81	0·5
1981-82	0·8
1982-83	3·1
1983-84	3·3
1984-85	3·5
1985-86	3·6
1986-87	3·8
1987-88	3·7

Derelict land grant is payable to meet 100 per cent. of the eligible costs incurred by the Council on reclamation. Because of the continuous nature of land reclamation works in Corby, it is not possible to identify the area of derelict land reclaimed each year.

SOCIAL SERVICES

Psychotropic Drugs

Mr. Worthington: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what is the annual expenditure by the National Health Service on psychotropic drugs; and how many patients per year are prescribed such drugs.

Mr. Newton: Information is not available on the number of patients prescribed psychotropic drugs. The table shows the number and net ingredient cost of prescriptions in England in 1986 for hypnotics, sedatives and tranquillisers, and anti-depressants:

	Number of prescriptions (millions)	*Net ingredient cost (£ million)*
Hypnotics	13·2	20·0
Sedatives and tranquillisers	11·2	14·4
Anti-depressants	6·6	26·2
Anti-depressant and sedative-tranquilliser combinations	0·5	1·3
Total	31·6	61·9

Consultants

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will, during the lifetime of this Parliament, consider conducting a review of the contract system for employing consultants.

Mrs. Currie: We have no current plans to do so, but we do of course keep the system under review.

Trent RHA

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for Services what appointments he has made to the regional health authority since 1979.

Mrs. Currie: The Secretary of State has ma following new appointments to Trent RHA since

1980
Mr. A. Dale.
Mr. J. F. Pattison.
Mr. D. C. Samworth.

1981
Professor R. E. Coupland.

1982
Sir Michael Carlisle—*Chairman.*
Mrs. B. Borrett.
Mrs. E. J. Dady.
Councillor D. C. Jackson.
Dr. R. A. Lawrence.
Councillor H. Seddons.
Dr. P. F. Sewell.
Councillor Mrs. M. Spencer-Gregson.
Mr. H. Wordsworth.

1984
Dr. J. A. Birch.
Councillor A. J. Burton.
Mr. J. E. Eardley.
Professor D. S. Munro.
Mr. M. F. Spungin.

1986
Councillor P. Gaul.
Councillor A. O'Brien.
Mrs. J. Radford.
Councillor P. J. Regan.
Mr. M. Varcoe.

1987
Mrs. N. M. Collett.
Mr. J. Thierry.

National Health Service Consultants

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for Services how, pursuant to his answer of 18 Dec *Official Report*, column 925, whole-time equivale calculated with respect to consultant staff; and if make a statement.

Mr. Newton: The whole-time contract for a con holding one or more appointments with one o employing authorities equals 11 notional half days hours and is counted as one whole-time equivalent case of multiple appointments with different em authorities, only time contracted with the au concerned will be shown.

Consultants known to hold "maximum par contracts are counted as full-time staff (ie 11 notio days) to reflect their substantially whe commitment.

For part-time and honorary consultants the whe equivalent is calculated by dividing the total nu notional half days contracted for by 11.

Obstetric Units

Mr. Gareth Wardell: To ask the Secretary of S Social Services whether he will indicate for each o unit in England there is an in-service training pro for *(a)* trainee anaesthetists, *(b)* non-con anaesthetists, *(c)* midwives and *(d)* supporting s

Mrs. Currie: Training of staff is a matter for the relevant professional bodies and health authorities according to their own particular needs. This information is not held centrally.

Mr. Gareth Wardell: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services whether he will indicate for each obstetric unit in Wales there are drills for *(a)* cricoid pressure, *(b)* failed intubation, *(c)* management of severe haemorrhage and *(d)* cardiac arrest.

Mr. Grist: I have been asked to reply.

These are matters of operational policy for the health authorities concerned and I suggest that the hon. Gentleman writes to the district general managers.

Merit Awards

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will list the membership of the group making merit awards for the Liverpool and Wirral district health authorities.

Mr. Newton: Distinction awards are granted by the Secretary of State on the recommendation of the Advisory Committee on Distinction Awards whose members are listed in the table. The ACDA is advised by two local award committees in each region, depending on the level of award. The names of the members of the current committees for the Mersey region, which includes both Liverpool and Wirral health authority are also listed.

Advisory Committee on Distinction Awards
Sir Gordon Robson, CBE, FFARCS, Chairman.
Mr. A. L. Rennie, CB.
Professor Sir Raymond Hoffenberg, KBE, MD, PhD, FRCP.
Professor Sir Herbert Duthie, MD, FRCS, Eng, FRCS, Ed.
Professor C. E. Stroud, FRCP, DCH.
Professor E. D. Williams, MD, FRCP, FRC, Path.
Professor K. Rawnsley, CBE, FRCP, FRCPsych.
Professor E. Rhys Davies, FRCP, PRCR.
Professor G. R. Seward, MBBS, MDS, FDSRCS, FRCS, Ed.
Professor K. D. Peters, FRCP.
Professor D. K. Mason, FRCS, Glas, FRCPath.
Professor W. J. Sharrard, MD, FRCS.
Dr. J. Batten, MD, FRCP.
Dr. E. Rosemary Rue, PFCM.
Dr. Aileen K. Adams, FF, ARCS.
Dr. A. C. Douglas, FRCP.
Mr. I. P. Todd, MS, FRCS.
J. A. P. Marston Esq. MA, DM, FRCS.
G. D. Pinker, Esq. CVO, FRCS, PRCOG.
Sir Anthony Grabham, FRCS.
M. Burrows, Esq. FFARCS.
R. J. Sellick, Esq. FRCS.
D. W. Lamb, Esq. FRCS.

Mersey Higher Awards Committee
Professor C. F. H. Vickers, FRCP.
Dr. Winifred J. A. Francis, FRCOG.
M. M. Burrows, Esq. FFARCS.
P. H. Buxton, Esq. FRCP, FRCPath.
M. D. Enoch, Esq. FRCPsych.
Professor R. Shields, FRCS.
J. H. E. Carmichael, Esq. FRCR.
Professor E. Alwyn Smith, CBE, FRCP, FRCPG, FFCM.
R. Finn, Esq. FRCP.
Professor R. H. T. Edwards, FRCP.
Sir John Wakeley, BT, FRCS, FRACS.
J. E. Utting, Esq. FFARCS.
G. C. Turner, Esq. FRCPath.
J. S. Madden, Esq. MB, FRCP, FRCPsych.
J. B. Meade, FRCSI.

Mersey Regional Awards Committee
J. B. Meade, Esq. FRCSI.
B. K. Brooker, Esq. MRCPsych, DPM.
J. R. Sutherst, Esq. FRCOG.
T. B. Hales, Esq. FRCPath.
H. Allison, Esq. FRCPath.
K. R. Krishnan, Esq. FRCS.
Dr. June Phillips, FFCM, DCH.
G. P. Walker, Esq. FRCOG.
Professor M. C. L'e Orme, FRCP.
Dr. Jean Shackleton, FRCP.
T. Forrest, Esq. FFARCS.
N. E. Williams, Esq. FFARCS.
P. Atkins, Esq. FRCS.
C. J. E. Monk, Esq. FRCS.
D. W. Fielding, Esq. FRCP.
K. F. Edwardson, FRCS.
L. D. Brock, Esq. FRCR, DMRD.
Professor C. F. H. Vickers, FRCP.
J. F. Kane, Esq. FRCS.

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Sec
Social Services what guidance is give
operating the merit award system; a
copies of any relevant documents in t

Mr. Newton: There is no formal gu
Advisory Committee on Distinct
committee which recommends the allo
consultants. The ACDA receives advic
committees and issues guidance to it
their duties. A copy of the ACDA's c
been placed in the Library.

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Sec
Social Services if he will list by name
(a) Liverpool district health authori
district health authority who has been g
and if he will state when each award
grade and what value, the specialisat
who has an award and amount of tim
is contracted to work for the Nationa

Mr. Newton: No. The names of
confidential, subject only to their
confidence to consultants generally wi
request to the regional medical officer

Mr. Butler: To ask the Secretary
Services if he intends to review the Nati
consultants' merit award system.

Mr. Newton: We have no present p

Patient Treatment

Mr. Butler: To ask the Secretary
Services (1) what was the percentage ch
of day cases in the North West region
between 1978 and the latest available

(2) by how many National Health S
have changed in percentage terms betw
in *(a)* the North West region and *(b)*

(3) how many patients were treate
Health Service in Great Britain in 1986
(b) in-patients and *(c)* day cases.

Mrs. Currie: Between 1978 and 1986
cases treated in North Western region
increased by 84·4 per cent. from 68,080
of the other requested in[illegible]ation is
Statistics for the rest of Great Britain
right hon. and learned Friend the Sec
Scotland and my right hon. Friend the
for Wales.

National Health Service hospitals activity

	1979	1986	Percentage change 1979-1986
North Western Regional Health Authority			
Number on in-patient waiting list at 31 December	70,192	61,803	−12·0
In-patient cases treated	509,049	624,678	22·7
Day cases treated	70,608	125,564	77·8
New out-patients	699,717	789,043	12·8
Total out-patient attendances	3,156,219	3,644,682	15·5
England			
Number on in-patient waiting list at 31 December	687,686	676,475	−1·6
In-patient cases treated	5,400,120	6,413,789	18·8
Day cases treated	592,061	1,050,158	77·4
New out-patients	7,713,465	8,767,788	13·7
Total out-patient attendances	34,099,725	37,727,608	10·6

Medical and Dental Staff

Mr. Butler: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what is the percentage increase in medical and dental staff, whole-time equivalents, in *(a)* the north-west region, and *(b)* England, between 1978 and the latest available year.

Mr. Newton: The information requested is set out in the table.

HCHS Medical and Dental Staff[1] at 30 September each year

	1978	1986	Percentage change
England	37,803·1	43,248·3	+14·4
North Western Regional Health Authority	3,381·0	4,041·4	+19·5

[1] Includes permanent paid, honorary and locum staff.

Community Health Councils

Mr. Butler: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what consideration he has given to the abolition of community health councils.

Mrs. Currie: Community health councils were established to represent the interests of the public in the health service in their districts. We currently have no plans to abolish them.

Hospital Waiting Lists

Mr. Butler: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what reduction there has been in in-patient waiting lists in Warrington district health authority between 1986 and 1987; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Newton: Between March 1986 and Ma number of in-patients on the waiting lists of district health authority fell by 808 from 2,6 During the same period the proportion of cas for more than one year fell from 41·9 per cent cent.

Mr. Robin Cook: To ask the Secretary Social Services (1) if he will publish a table for health authority and special health authority, each the total numbers of people waiting for September 1982 compared with the number 1987, the numerical change and the percentag decrease, listed with the biggest increase fi largest decrease last;

(2) if he will publish figures showing the people waiting for treatment in March 1978 1987; and if he will break down this list by reg authority, district health authority and sp authority.

Mr. Newton: I shall let the hon. Membe information as is available centrally witho disproportionate costs as soon as possible.

Mr. Nellist: To ask the Secretary of Stat Services if he will give a breakdown for each of years, to the latest convenient date, by speci current waiting lists for operations at each of t in the Conventry district health autho information he has as to the waiting lis tabulated, for examination.

Mr. Newton *[holding answer 11 January* available information is given in the table.

Number of patients on in-patient waiting list in Coventry district health authority—surgical specialties at 31 Decembe

Hospital/specialty	*1977*	*1978*	*1979*	*1980*	*1981*	*1982*	*1983*	*1984*	*19*
Walsgrave general hospital									
General surgery	889	982	1,427	1,484	1,292	1,463	1,558	1,465	1,2
ENT	657	756	737	615	411	1,188	1,217	1,066	6
Urology	136	180	181	163	173	311	302	288	3
Thoracic surgery	108	121	175	222	188	120	172	232	1
Neurosurgery	130	179	226	288	348	356	545	587	4
Gynaecology	834	959	1,164	1,234	1,160	1,790	1,485	1,413	8
Total	2,754	3,177	3,910	4,006	3,572	5,228	5,279	5,071	3,6

Steinberg, Gerald
Stott, Roger
Strang, Gavin
Straw, Jack
Taylor, Mrs Ann *(Dewsbury)*
Taylor, Rt Hon J. D. *(S'ford)*
Taylor, Matthew *(Truro)*
Thomas, Dafydd Elis
Thompson, Jack *(Wansbeck)*
Turner, Dennis
Vaz, Keith
Wall, Pat
Wallace, James
Walley, Ms Joan
Wardell, Gareth *(Gower)*
Wareing, Robert N.
Wigley, Dafydd
Williams, Rt Hon A. J.
Williams, Alan W. *(Carm'then)*
Wilson, Brian
Winnick, David
Wise, Mrs Audrey
Worthington, Anthony
Wray, James
Young, David *(Bolton SE)*

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. Frank Haynes and
Mr. Ray Powell.

NOES

Allason, Rupert
Amess, David
Amos, Alan
Arbuthnot, James
Arnold, Jacques *(Gravesham)*
Arnold, Tom *(Hazel Grove)*
Ashby, David
Atkins, Robert
Baker, Rt Hon K. *(Mole Valley)*
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Baldry, Tony
Banks, Robert *(Harrogate)*
Batiste, Spencer
Beaumont-Dark, Anthony
Bellingham, Henry
Bendall, Vivian
Bennett, Nicholas *(Pembroke)*
Benyon, W.
Bevan, David Gilroy
Biffen, Rt Hon John
Blackburn, Dr John G.
Blaker, Rt Hon Sir Peter
Body, Sir Richard
Bonsor, Sir Nicholas
Boscawen, Hon Robert
Boswell, Tim
Bottomley, Peter
Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Bowden, Gerald *(Dulwich)*
Bowis, John
Boyson, Rt Hon Dr Sir Rhodes
Braine, Rt Hon Sir Bernard
Brandon-Bravo, Martin
Brazier, Julian
Bright, Graham
Brittan, Rt Hon Leon
Brooke, Rt Hon Peter
Brown, Michael *(Brigg & Cl'r's)*
Bruce, Ian *(Dorset South)*
Buchanan-Smith, Rt Hon Alick
Buck, Sir Antony
Budgen, Nicholas
Burns, Simon
Burt, Alistair
Butcher, John
Butler, Chris
Butterfill, John
Carlisle, John, *(Luton N)*
Carlisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Carrington, Matthew
Carttiss, Michael
Cash, William
Chalker, Rt Hon Mrs Lynda
Channon, Rt Hon Paul
Chapman, Sydney
Chope, Christopher
Churchill, Mr
Clark, Hon Alan *(Plym'th S'n)*
Clark, Sir W. *(Croydon S)*
Colvin, Michael
Conway, Derek
Cope, John
Cormack, Patrick
Couchman, James
Cran, James
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Curry, David
Davies, Q. *(Stamf'd & Spald'g)*
Davis, David *(Boothferry)*
Devlin, Tim
Dickens, Geoffrey
Dicks, Terry
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James
Dover, Den
Dunn, Bob
Durant, Tony
Dykes, Hugh
Eggar, Tim
Evans, David *(Welwyn Hatf'd)*
Evennett, David
Fallon, Michael
Favell, Tony
Fenner, Dame Peggy
Field, Barry *(Isle of Wight)*
Finsberg, Sir Geoffrey
Fookes, Miss Janet
Forman, Nigel
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Forth, Eric
Fowler, Rt Hon Norman
Fox, Sir Marcus
Franks, Cecil
Freeman, Roger
French, Douglas
Fry, Peter
Gale, Roger
Gardiner, George
Garel-Jones, Tristan
Gill, Christopher
Glyn, Dr Alan
Goodhart, Sir Philip
Goodlad, Alastair
Goodson-Wickes, Dr Charles
Grant, Sir Anthony *(CambsSW)*
Greenway, Harry *(Ealing N)*
Grist, Ian
Hamilton, Neil *(Tatton)*
Hanley, Jeremy
Harris, David
Hawkins, Christopher
Hayes, Jerry
Hicks, Robert *(Cornwall SE)*
Higgins, Rt Hon Terence L.
Hordern, Sir Peter
Howarth, Alan *(Strat'd-on-A)*
Howarth, G. *(Cannock & B'wd)*
Howell, Rt Hon David *(G'dford)*
Hughes, Robert G. *(Harrow W)*
Hunt, David *(Wirral W)*
Hurd, Rt Hon Douglas
Jack, Michael
Jackson, Robert
Jones, Gwilym *(Cardiff N)*
Kellett-Bowman, Mrs Elaine
Key, Robert
King, Roger *(B'ham N'thfield)*
King, Rt Hon Tom *(Bridgwater)*
Kirkhope, Timothy
Knapman, Roger
Knight, Greg *(Derby North)*
Knowles, Michael
Knox, David
Lamont, Rt Hon Norman
Lang, Ian
Latham, Michael
Lawrence, Ivan
Lawson, Rt Hon Nigel
Leigh, Edward *(Gainsbor'gh)*
Lester, Jim *(Broxtowe)*
Lightbown, David
Lilley, Peter
Lloyd, Sir Ian *(Havant)*
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
Lord, Michael
Luce, Rt Hon Richard
Lyell, Sir Nicholas
McCrindle, Robert
Macfarlane, Sir Neil
MacKay, Andrew *(E Berkshire)*
McLoughlin, Patrick
McNair-Wilson, M. *(Newbury)*
McNair-Wilson, P. *(New Forest)*
Madel, David
Major, Rt Hon John
Malins, Humfrey
Mans, Keith
Maples, John
Marland, Paul
Marlow, Tony
Marshall, John *(Hendon S)*
Marshall, Michael *(Arundel)*
Martin, David *(Portsmouth S)*
Mates, Michael
Maude, Hon Francis
Maxwell-Hyslop, Robin
Mayhew, Rt Hon Sir Patrick
Mellor, David
Meyer, Sir Anthony
Miller, Hal
Miscampbell, Norman
Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)*
Mitchell, David *(Hants NW)*
Moate, Roger
Montgomery, Sir Fergus
Morrison, Sir Charles *(Devizes)*
Moss, Malcolm
Moynihan, Hon C.
Mudd, David
Neale, Gerrard
Needham, Richard
Nelson, Anthony
Neubert, Michael
Nicholls, Patrick
Nicholson, David *(Taunton)*
Nicholson, Miss E. *(Devon W)*
Onslow, Rt Hon Cranley
Oppenheim, Phillip
Page, Richard
Paice, James
Parkinson, Rt Hon Cecil
Patnick, Irvine
Patten, Chris *(Bath)*
Patten, John *(Oxford W)*
Pattie, Rt Hon Sir Geoffrey
Pawsey, James
Peacock, Mrs Elizabeth
Porter, David *(Waveney)*
Portillo, Michael
Powell, William *(Corby)*
Price, Sir David
Raffan, Keith
Raison, Rt Hon Timothy
Rathbone, Tim
Redwood, John
Renton, Tim
Rhodes James, Robert
Rhys Williams, Sir Brandon
Riddick, Graham
Ridley, Rt Hon Nicholas
Rifkind, Rt Hon Malcolm
Roberts, Wyn *(Conwy)*
Roe, Mrs Marion
Rowe, Andrew
Rumbold, Mrs Angela
Ryder, Richard
Sackville, Hon Tom
Sainsbury, Hon Tim
Sayeed, Jonathan
Scott, Nicholas
Shaw, David *(Dover)*
Shaw, Sir Giles *(Pudsey)*
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Shelton, William *(Streatham)*
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Shersby, Michael
Sims, Roger
Smith, Sir Dudley *(Warwick)*
Smith, Tim *(Beaconsfield)*
Soames, Hon Nicholas
Speed, Keith
Speller, Tony
Spicer, Sir Jim *(Dorset W)*
Squire, Robin
Stanley, Rt Hon John
Steen, Anthony
Stern, Michael
Stevens, Lewis
Stewart, Allan *(Eastwood)*
Stewart, Andrew *(Sherwood)*
Stradling Thomas, Sir John
Sumberg, David
Summerson, Hugo
Taylor, Ian *(Esher)*
Taylor, John M *(Solihull)*
Taylor, Teddy *(S'end E)*
Tebbit, Rt Hon Norman
Thompson, D. *(Calder Valley)*
Thompson, Patrick *(Norwich N)*
Thorne, Neil
Thornton, Malcolm
Thurnham, Peter
Townend, John *(Bridlington)*
Tracey, Richard
Tredinnick, David
Trippier, David
Trotter, Neville
Twinn, Dr Ian
Vaughan, Sir Gerard
Viggers, Peter
Waddington, Rt Hon David
Wakeham, Rt Hon John
Waldegrave, Hon William
Walker, Bill *(T'side North)*
Waller, Gary
Walters, Dennis
Ward, John
Wardle, C. *(Bexhill)*
Warren, Kenneth
Watts, John
Wells, Bowen
Wheeler, John
Whitney, Ray
Widdecombe, Miss Ann
Wiggin, Jerry
Wilkinson, John
Wilshire, David
Winterton, Mrs Ann
Winterton, Nicholas
Wolfson, Mark
Wood, Timothy
Woodcock, Mike
Yeo, Tim

Young, Sir George *(Acton)*

Tellers for the Noes

Mr. Mark Lennox-Boyd and Mr. Stephen Dorrell.

Question accordingly negatived.

Main Question put and agreed to.

Resolved,

That this House approves the Autumn Statement presented by Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer on 3rd November 1987; welcomes the prospect of continuing low inflation and steady growth as the basis for maintaining the trend of rising employment; and congratulates Her Majesty's Government on the continuing reduction in the share of national income pre-empted by public expenditure.

PETITION

Rating Reform

10.14 pm

Mr. John Home Robertson (East Lothian): I am grateful to have such an enormous audience to hear this important petition which I wish to present on behalf of 636 residents of the town of Tranent and the neighbouring area in my constituency.

The petition calls on the House to repeal the Scottish poll tax legislation. I cannot think of many issues which have united Scottish public opinion to the same extent as this. The House should take account of the deep sense of outrage that the tax is arousing in Scotland. Tranent is an area which would be severely penalised by the imposition of the poll tax. For example, a family of three adults in a three-apartment house in Lindores drive, who currently pay a rates bill of about £435 a year, would have to pay more than double that figure, £1,050, under the poll tax. Meanwhile, people living in far more prosperous areas would pay substantially less.

I wholeheartedly endorse the terms of the petition from the Belters of Tranent and I support their appeal to the House to repeal this pernicious and dangerous legislation, which is an affront to the principles of democracy and to the nation of Scotland.

To lie upon the Table.

Health Services (Maidstone)

Motion made, and Question proposed, That this House do now adjourn.—*[Mr. Dorrell.]*

10.17 pm

Miss Ann Widdecombe (Maidstone): I do not wish to rehearse too much the background to the Health Service crisis which has so badly affected my constituency in the last six months, as that has already been done adequately through the diligence and eloquence of my hon. Friend the Member for Mid-Kent (Mr. Rowe), whom I see in his place and who raised the issue in the House a few weeks ago.

We have a brand new hospital in Maidstone. Last year there was an unprecedented rise in activity, so that we were treating about 30 per cent. more patients. That rise in activity was not predicted and could not reasonably have been so. That meant that the health authority was badly overrunning its budget.

The district health authority was already extremely efficient, because it had introduced privatisation measures, because it had cut waste and because it had already increased its throughput per patient bed; therefore, it had very little scope to find economies and savings to meet the additional strains upon the budget. It therefore reacted with ward closures. One major closure was in the brand new hospital. It also closed all physiotherapy facilities and threatened further ward closures.

I am very grateful to my right hon. Friend the Minister for Health for the immediate help which he made available and for giving us money enough to reopen those wards. I am also very grateful to him for the additional money which enabled Maidstone to appoint a third orthopaedic surgeon and a fourth gynaecologist to cut some of our severest waiting lists.

But those measures are addressed to the immediate crisis and are designed to cope with immediate problems. It is more to the future that I want to look tonight, because I have to cope in the constituency both with a very heavy legacy of the past six months, which in itself is bound to affect the future, and with the major question that I know to be in the minds of my constituents, which is not so much whether the present crisis is over as what guarantees we have that we shall not be in this situation again this time next year if we continue to be efficient and to increase our activity.

The legacy I am left with is one of badly increased waiting lists. A cardiac patient came to my surgery last Saturday who needs a test to establish whether he needs major heart surgery. The test, never mind the operation, will not be available until October 1988. He has been offered various appointments at various hospitals within the South East Thames area, but October 1988 seems at the moment to be the best that can be offered.

Cataract patients write to me in desperation and say that they are prepared to go to Inverness. They do not have quite to go to Inverness, but the nearest I found recently was Glasgow, which is not too far from there. My office has been turned into an agency for finding places for operations.

In the immediate term, this is something that can be addressed and can be tackled. It is about the future that I am particularly concerned — not only the future funding but the future adminstration of the South East Thames regional health authority. There has been very

[Miss Ann Widdecombe]

little in the past to inspire confidence on the part of the people of Maidstone in some of the decisions taken by the authority.

First of all, we were the only hospital in the entire region which, when it opened, was not given additional money for running costs. Secondly, a purely regional decision, not one that has been taken by other regions and not one that has been decreed by central Government, to change from RAWP to ACORN has removed £1·2 million from Maidstone's future expectations. When we are just recovering from a major crisis, to find that £1·2 million has been taken off our future expectations does very little to give us hope and confidence.

Mr. Andrew Rowe (Mid-Kent): Is my hon. Friend also aware that, in an apparently unique regional hospital authority decision, the hospital in Medway where students come gets no money at all towards paying the costs of those students? It appears to be the only regional authority in the country that has taken that decision.

Miss Widdecombe: I am grateful to my hon. Friend for his intervention and that addition to this debate.

Furthermore, those concerned work on out-of-date statistics which work very badly to Maidstone's disadvantage, calculating our allocation and our entitlement on birth statistics and population flows that were obtaining six years ago.

When the crisis erupted in Maidstone in the summer, I immediately entered into negotiations with the South East Thames authority to find out what it could do for us. It promised us two things, or rather half-promised us two things. First, it said that it would look at its finances and see if there was any flexibility for loan or other arrangements; secondly, it said that it would try to improve the statistics, which was bound to work to Maidstone's advantage.

Several months after the receipt of that letter, neither of those half-promises had been implemented. It was not until I managed to see the Minister, in conjunction with my hon. Friend the Member for Mid-Kent and my right hon. Friend the Member for Tonbridge and Malling (Mr. Stanley), that we finally got the extra money and help that we needed. According to a reply given to the hon. Member for Southport (Mr. Fearn), the authority has a budget of £933 million—Maidstone needed less than £1 million to keep its wards open—but, if it cannot manage the cash flow better than that, it does not hold out much confidence for the future of the South-East Thames region.

The South East Thames regional health authority is a little remote. It is in Bexhill-on-Sea. It is quite an intrepid character who goes to Bexhill-on-Sea. Whether one goes by road or rail, one needs a great deal of time on one's hands. The health authority said that it moved to Bexhill-on-Sea because it was too expensive to stay in Croydon. It moved from Croydon to Bexhill-on-Sea, but it still has its empty, £600,000 premises in Croydon. For £600,000, we could have kept our wards open.

If it may be gathered from this that I am not wholly at one with the way in which the regional health authority operates, the fact remains that the authority does have the odd cross to bear. This is an urgent matter and I ask my hon. Friend the Minister to respond to certain points which could help the authority to help Maidstone.

I quoted from out-of-date statistics. The author consistent defence is that it does not decide which stati to use. It is simply not supplied centrally with up-to- figures. I wish to ask my hon. Friend whether it is pos to expedite the updating of those figures.

Secondly, there should be clear guidance to all regi health authorities to reward efficiency, because effic district authorities do not have the scope to econo when they are faced with financial difficulties. Ineffic authorities do, so there should be a reward w recognises efficiency. If we had that, we would have far fewer problems in Maidstone.

Thirdly, there is the underfunding of pay awards. not believe that it has been wrong for the Governmen have some underfunding of pay awards. Blank cheque not promote efficiency and the elimination of waste. S authorities have reached an efficiency ceiling, but not Before we believe that an efficiency ceiling has b reached in the South East Thames area, I have statistics which show Maidstone's performance to be above that of others. Some authorities are not perform to the expected standards, but presumably are still fun for the expected standard. When an efficiency ceilin reached, there is no longer the flexibility to react by elimination of waste. I appeal both to my hon. Friend Under-Secretary of State and to my right hon. Friend Minister for Health to consider the effects of un funding of pay awards on those areas which suffer thro the regional allocations and which have already reac their efficiency ceiling.

I do not feel particularly penal towards the South E Thames regional health authority, but I think it wo benefit the NHS as a whole if the regions were abolish However, we shall have enough of that in two weeks' t in another debate. I shall not ask my hon. Friend respond to that tonight because I am sure that she wo not wish to do so.

Finally, we need an overhaul of the NHS and a refo of its structure and system as well as of our level funding. In short, we must not roll from crisis to crisi

I have a letter from the South East Thames regio health authority chairman which suggests to me th although he can guarantee sufficient money — inde has already given sufficient money — to reopen wards this year, he is concerned about the economies t have been implemented for the future.

I am concerned about where my constituents will f themselves this time next year. Will they still be queu up at my surgery for me to find them operations Glasgow, or will they be able to rely on proper rewards efficiency, which is what my district health autho deserves and what is too little recognised throughout South East Thames area?

10.30 pm

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Hea and Social Security (Mrs. Edwina Currie): I congratul my hon. Friend the Member for Maidstone (M Widdecombe) on obtaining the debate and once ag reiterating her concern about her local health authority, she has also done in six recent parliamentary questions, her contribution to the debate on the Health Serv during the debate on the Consolidated Fund Bill on December, at a meeting with other local Members

Parliament with my right hon. Friend the Minister for Health on 30 November and in much correspondence with Ministers, some of which I have still to respond to.

I also commend my hon. Friend the Member for Mid-Kent (Mr. Rowe), who is in his place tonight. I commend both my hon. Friends to their constituents for their energy, interest and concern. I take note of what my hon. Friend the Member for Maidstone says about visitors to her constituency advice bureau and no doubt as a result of what she has said tonight she will have many more. In a few moments, I shall offer my hon. Friend some figures which may be new to her. I hope that, with her considerable experience of finance, she will find them interesting.

Maidstone district health authority's cash allocation for this year is over £32 million—a 8 per cent. chang over the previous year, which, in turn, was nearly 6 per cent. more than in 1985-86. Also in recent years, the capital allocation has been between £2·5 million and £3 million each year, even after the opening of the magnificent new district general hospital, which, as my hon. Friend knows, I recently visited.

My hon. Friend asked whether we could obtain more updated figures and I share her interest and concern on that. She probably knows about the Korner reforms, which mean that statistics will be more readily available this year when the new system comes on stream. I hope that if, as a result, there is any comment about the cost of administration, clerical and computer staff, she will still consider it a good idea.

My hon. Friend talked about the underfunding of pay awards. I am sure that she realises that no Government ever give a blank cheque on pay awards. Certainly we do not, and have no intention of so doing.

Miss Widdecombe: I and everybody else fully accept that the Government do not write blank cheques, but neither does the region nor the district. Somebody must pick up those pay awards, which I accept are agreed by the independent review body, not the Government. All that I am appealing for is that the shortfall should not be such that it makes inroads into funds that should be spent on patient care—*[Interruption.]*

Mrs. Currie: The hon. Member for Rhondda (Mr. Rogers) says that we should give my hon. Friend a party card. I am not sure to which party he is referring.

My hon. Friend's point is well made and well taken. I merely put it to her that pay awards are not an alternative to service to patients. Paying our staff properly is part of our service to patients, particularly if it thereby ensures that we can keep the staff whom we want. Current discussions with the review bodies for the doctors, dentists and nurses will no doubt have their outcome in due course. However, I repeat that it would be a foolish Government who gave a blank cheque for pay awards in the middle of a pay negotiation. I am sure that my hon. Friend can find it in her heart to agree with something in that statement.

I hear what my hon. Friend says about the regional system. I am sure that she is aware that I shall not have a chance to respond to her debate on 26 January. However, I hope that she will recognise the recent valuable role of the regional health authority. Earlier this year, the region calculated that the total projected overspend among its districts would be over £9 million.

Those health authorities have a statutory duty to remain within their cash limits, as I have to remain within my budgets. So the region correctly stressed that to the districts, and emphasised that reductions in service had to be made only as a last resort. Most of the districts, like Maidstone, introduced further savings measures not affecting patient care, such as slowing down some service developments and instituting income generation schemes. The region, too, has implemented savings and has clearly taken note of my hon. Friend's previous remarks, because I understand that it will be reducing its expenditure in 1988-89 by £275,000. We expect it to keep to its budget just as much as anyone else in the area.

However, a number of districts had to make temporary service reductions. To help those districts, the regional health authority co-ordinated what it called a cash management exercise, whereby health authorities whose cash position is less critical this year assisted by contributing to a regional pool to help the other authorities, such as Maidstone, that were facing particular problems. At that stage in the autumn, the region was predicting that it would break even in this financial year.

Then we had the storm, and we have since allocated, as my hon. Friend knows, £8 million to the South East Thames health authority for the damage done. That is what it asked for, and what it got. We then found that there were further emergency measures, some of which my hon. Friend has referred to, to avoid overspending. But there was also the announcement on 16 December of about £75 million extra for the hospital and community health services in England for this financial year.

South East Thames asked the district to bid for additional money, which it could use in this financial year to meet immediate problems of the sort that have been described. Maidstone asked for an additional £191,000, which I can tonight confirm that it will receive. That will enable Maidstone to reopen, later this month, the temporarily closed general surgical ward at Maidstone district general hospital, which will then no longer be on amber alert. Eighteen temporarily closed beds at Kent county ophthalmic and aural hospital will also reopen shortly. An additional programme of joint replacement operations at the local private hospital will be undertaken, until another ward at the district general hospital can be commissioned to enable such operations to take place there.

Two wards that have been temporarily closed at Linton and Preston Hall hospitals might also have been reopened with the money, but they are having to be used to accommodate some patients from Maidstone hospital psychiatric wing, which had to be evacuated following extensive storm damage. I hope that my hon. Friend can accept that. In addition to the £191,000, Maidstone will get a further £135,000, which will go towards reducing its credit of balances and put the authority on a sounder financial footing for the coming year.

My hon. Friend is probably aware that we have been repeatedly advised by our financial advisers that if we delay paying our creditors for too long, all they do is put the prices up next year; so it is a sound, counter-inflationary measure to ensure that our health authorities have a reputation for paying on time. As a result, since my hon. Friend last raised the question with me, Maidstone district health authority has received an extra £326,000 for this financial year.

I fully accept that, after being able to reopen temporarily closed services with additional Government money, Maidstone does not want to be in the same

[Mrs. Currie]

position again next year or, indeed, in April of the coming year, when it may have to close some services again. It is for the regional health authority to decide on allocations to districts, and it will be doing that for 1988-89 on 21 January. That is the present system. I know that district and regional officers are discussing bridging finance from the region to help Maidstone get back on a sounder financial footing, but my hon. Friend will appreciate that, for the moment and for the foreseeable future, this is primarily a regional responsibility. However, I shall make sure that the region is aware of her views and those of my hon. Friend the Member for Mid-Kent.

Dame Peggy Fenner (Medway): My hon. Friend will observe that many of my hon. Friends who serve and represent constituencies in the South East Thames region are sitting in this evening. We would emphasise that we all share the concern of my hon. Friend the Member for Maidstone (Miss Widdecombe) about what will happen in the next allocation. We hope that, even under the present system, my right hon. and hon. Friends will ensure that the South East Thames region takes account of the several deprived districts in its area.

Mrs. Currie: My hon. Friend has made her point extremely well. I should also draw attention to the presence in the Chamber tonight of my hon. Friends the Members for Dover (Mr. Shaw), for Sevenoaks (Mr. Wolfson), for Gillingham (Mr. Couchman) and for Faversham (Mr. Moate), and to that of one or two Opposition Members who come from a long way away.

Mr. Allan Rogers (Rhondda) *rose——*

Mrs. Currie: No, forgive me, but I shall not give way because I do not have the time.

My hon. Friend the Member for Maidstone has drawn attention to the statistics that are based on performance indicators which, as she rightly says, come from the data for 1985-86 which, of course, are the latest information that I have. She is quite right that the authority has a high throughput. Indeed, it is one of the best in the country. I am talking mainly about Maidstone hospital. Although in fact it is not the best in South East Thames regional health authority—All Saints is the best—Maidstone is highly efficient and cost-effective.

The costs per case of Maidstone district health authority were £601 for 1985-86. I agree that that compares favourably with, for example, Brighton at £1,194 per case, Orpington at £1,074 per case or Lewisham at £1,257 per case. They are all similar hospitals—major district general hospitals with more than 250 beds. Among the 21 similar hospitals in the region, Maidstone ranked not first, but sixth in terms of cost per case. Kent and Canterbury and Eastbourne district general hospitals are cheaper. Although the difference is not great, it is worth putting it on record.

In terms of medical and dental costs per case, Maidstone DGH ranks not first but seventh in the regional health authority. The Royal Sussex county hospital, for example, spends much less on nursing per case and Greenwich district general hospital spends much less on medical staff per case. However, Maidstone has very good hotel and maintenance costs, which is amazing. I am curious to know why it costs nearly four times as much to run the ancillary services at Brighton general h at Maidstone. Perhaps our two splendid lady Mrs. Cumberlege and Mrs. Nelson, could get t that and share lessons.

I know that the regional health authority is its policy on cash allocations — *[Interruptio* disappointed in the hon. Member for Rhond usually interested in health matters. I also kno regional health authority——

Mr. Rogers *rose——*

Mr. Speaker: Order. It is a tradition that hon. do not interrupt, especially from a sedentary during Adjournment debates.

Mr. Rogers: I was asking the Minister to gi

Mrs. Currie: The hon. Gentleman knows th restricted in Adjournment debates.

My hon. Friend knows that the region authority is reviewing its policy on cash alloc mental illness. It is essential that in all the d about the pressure on acute services, we do not of the need for services for those with mental mental illness or other groups who, perhaps always in a position to make much fuss. I have that Maidstone district health authority's fe other DHAs, which send large numbers of p Maidstone, are getting something good on the c be taken into account. I gather that the DHA s is between £300,000 and £400,000 out of pocket of treating out-of-district mental illness patien may be some discussion about the exact amou know that the region has taken that fact on bo

I also know that, following the region authority's meeting on 19 November, further wor done on bed usage at Maidstone and on whethe scope for increasing the use of day care and s accommodation. The district health authority ha shown considerable improvements on the day- but in ear, nose and throat treatment, 95 per patients are in-patients. I have no doubt th discussions the DHA will take account of facts su occupancy in ENT, for which there is a waiting li over 500 for non-urgent surgery and treatment. T is over 400 for opthalmology. The occupancy specialties has been below 50 per cent. for many the other hand, the gynaecology department tre than 20 per cent. of its patients as day cases relatively good occupancy rates and a tiny waiti make no judgment from those figures but hope regional health authority will consider them. I am with good will and the willingness to change so held practices, issues such as these can be resolv interests of patients, possibly without using a funds.

We have to make a point here about p Estimates of future patient numbers, on which much of our financial planning, are based partly history and demography, and partly on po patterns and changes. Whether or not they are out of date, I can assure my hon. Friend the Me Maidstone that every effort is made to take them account. We also base our financial planning planned growth of services such as an ac consultant or expected changes in practice.

In 1982-83, the growth of in-patient cases in Maidstone was 1·5 per cent. In the following years it was 4 per cent. and then 5 per cent. In the year after that, it seemed to have levelled off because there was a very small drop in activity for in-patients at about 1 per cent. What is then clear is that the 13 per cent. jump in in-patient cases in the following year took everybody by surprise. Indeed, nobody could have planned for that and known that it would happen. I do not think that anyone would have believed the people of Maidstone if they had said to us blithely that they expected an increase in numbers of in-patient cases of 13 per cent. in one year.

It is a tremendous tribute to all the staff concerned that they managed to cope with such an increase in demand. I do not believe that the regional health authority should be blamed for its failure to anticipate that sort of growth. I suspect that, even if it had anticipated it, other DHAs would have objected strongly to anything like a 13 per cent. increase being given to Maidstone in a year.

In relation to the cost of the region's accommodati I understand that if it had not moved in 1983, it wo have been faced by a rent review in Croydon, and the r would have cost about £1 million a year.

Miss Widdecombe: At least the authority would h got something for it.

Mrs. Currie: What the authority did was to buy existing premises at Bexhill and expenditure since has b much less than it would have had to pay at Croydo assure my hon. Friend the Member for Maidstone that region has been active in trying to dispose of the remain of the lease and no doubt will do so shortly. However, have an extra £800,000 in revenue savings as a result of move, which has been spent on improving mental illn mental handicap and renal services. I hope that information is helpful to all my hon. Friends.

Question put and agreed to.

Adjourned accordingly at thirteen minutes to Ele o'clock.

House of Commons

Friday 15 January 1988

The House met at half-past Nine o'clock

PRAYERS

[MR. SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

Orders of the Day

Protection of Official Information Bill

Order for Second Reading read.

Mr. Speaker: Before I call the hon. Member for Aldridge-Brownhills (Mr. Shepherd), I must tell the House that many right hon. and hon. Members have said that they wish to take part in this important debate, including no fewer than eight Privy Councillors, and that is unusual for a Friday. I hope that hon. Members will make short speeches today, so that as many hon. Members as possible may be called.

9.35 am

Mr. Richard Shepherd (Aldridge-Brownhills): I beg to move, That the Bill be now read a Second time.

There has been much publicity in recent weeks about the nature of section 2 of the Official Secrets Act 1911, and I guess that every hon. Member who has served in this House over a number of years will have witnessed its progress and its effect on our national and social life. It has been well reviewed over those years during our debates and its deficiencies have been commented upon very effectively. Therefore, I will not overly trouble the House with such observations, because I have no doubt that many hon. Members will be able to cite their own instances of the way in which it has affected our society.

Any reading of the legislation will show that hardly any Minister or former Minister has expressed any support for section 2 as it is written now. There is almost universal recognition that it must go and be replaced by narrower, better defined and better targeted legislation. In that spirit, the sponsors of the Bill have tried to gather together the threads of the intellectual ideas that have been assembled over the past 15 or 16 years to identify the issues with which we have to grapple in our proposed reforms of section 2.

The wide drawing of section 2 of the Official Secrets Act 1911 means that the release of every piece of official information could possibly lead to prosecution. That has laid an appalling pall over our national life and has had certain consequences. It has affected the standards of the press in a curious way. A newspaper may take a stance on an issue every time an investigative journalist examines and discusses the very nature of our society. By implication, he must touch on those issues that affect our daily lives which are generated by information. Therefore, there is a stand-off with respect to section 2.

That was well put by Mr. Chapman Pincher in his evidence to the Franks committee, in which he cited the instance of a leaking radioactive plant in the north of England. He said that, at the time, the story wa considerable scoop for him and he wanted to publish However, he was approached by the permanent secret to the Home Department and was blocked. His newspa decided that the possibility of a prosecution under sect 2 of the Official Secrets Act 1911, for which there is defence if it involves official information, meant tha could not publish the story. I recount that exam because right hon. and hon. Members will be aware of very curious use of section 2 in its failure to m distinctions between matters that clearly involve natio security and the generality of information affecting ev area of life.

I begin with the proposition that, to have accountabil in a democratic process, Members of Parliament and electors who are equal to us as citizens must ha information to judge the instances and views to which can hold the Government to account. Against t background, and in that spirit, my right hon. and h Friends have proposed the measures in the Bill, that we discussing today.

I want to run through the points contained in the with close attention to the notes. Some of those are poi of considerable principle. Under section 2 of the Offic Secrets Act 1911, the unauthorised disclosure of a official information, significant or trivial, harmful to nation's fundamental interests or not, is a criminal offen The Franks report recommended, and succeedi Governments have agreed, that a more discriminati approach is needed with criminal sanctions applied o to disclosures of defined classes of information wh release would involve specific harm.

That was the basis of the Bill that the Governme introduced in 1979, and it is the basis of the present B We wish to distinguish between that information whi should lead to criminal prosecution, and gene information, which needs lesser disciplinary contro Without that distinction, we will not have a free socie

The Bill applies only to specified classes of protect information. Disclosures of other information would n be a criminal offence. That is not to say that su information would become freely available. Much of it w continue to require protection, but that protection wou not include the threat of prosecution.

The sanctions against improper disclosures are w understood in the Civil Service. A civil servant who do not show appropriate discretion in the handling information cannot expect promotion; one who negligent or deliberately leaks information may expe disciplinary proceedings and perhaps dismissal. T importance of those sanctions was stressed by the Fran Committee who, in paragraph 58 of its report, thoug them "of greater practical consequence" than Section 2

Information which is or has been held by a Crow servant or Government contractor by virtue of his offici position is protected if it falls into one of the class described in clause 1 of the Bill.

The clause protects information relating to defenc international relations, and security and intelligence who unauthorised disclosure would be likely to cause seriou injury to the interests of the nation or endanger the safe of a British citizen. The 1979 Bill that the Governme introduced in another place adopted a similar approac although the "serious injury" test was applied only to t first two of those categories. The Bill reflects the Fran report which recommended that, even in the fields

[Mr. Richard Shepherd]

security and intelligence, criminal law should apply only if unauthorised disclosure would cause serious injury to the interests of our country.

Dame Elaine Kellett-Bowman (Lancaster): Does paragraph *(c)* of clause 1(1) cover income tax inspectors who are currently under a lifetime vow of silence? If they are not advised to keep silent, they will have a field day with their memoirs, which would make recent disclosures look like chickenfeed.

Mr. Shepherd: I congratulate my hon. Friend on her elevation to "Dameship". I shall deal with her intervention as I go through the provisions of clause 1.

Information is also protected if it is likely to be useful in committing a crime, helping an escape from custody or otherwise impeding law enforcement.

Finally — I hope that this will answer my hon. Friend's question — certain personal information supplied to the Government, such as the details of someone's income declared to the Inland Revenue or information supplied by a person applying for social security, would also be protected. Those classes of protected information are based on those in the 1979 Bill, although they are narrower in certain respects. They do not include a separate class of offence relating to disclosures of information about telephone tapping, the interception of post, or communications received from other Governments.

However, disclosures of any such matters would be offences under the Bill if they were likely to result in serious injury to the nation's interests. No doubt we will come to the concept of serious injury during the course of the debate. It was dealt with in the Franks report and in the White Paper and is a concept well understood by right hon. and hon. Members.

Nor does the Bill include among its protected classes information received from or relating to companies and nationalised industries, as did the 1979 Bill. To do so would be to protect a vast amount of information on subjects such as nuclear and environmental pollution, food additives, pesticides, pharmaceuticals and consumer product safety. The fact that such information is covered by section 2 of the Official Secrets Act 1911 is one reason why there is general resentment and much disquiet about section 2.

Certainly, some civil servants handle commercially sensitive information obtained from private concerns, but so, too, do local authority officials who have never been subject to section 2. Should an official improperly disclose a company's trade secrets, no doubt he or she would be open to an action for recovery of damages under common law, which might involve potentially enormous personal liability.

Under clause 2 a civil servant who intentionally or recklessly discloses information contrary to his official duty commits an offence punishable — as under the Official Secrets Act—by up to two years imprisonment. Clause 3 contains similar provisions in relation to Government contractors. Anyone who obtains protected information — that includes journalists and ordinary citizens such as hon. Members and their constituents— commits an offence under clause 4 if he intentionally discloses information, knowing it to be protected.

Under clause 5, a person who impr protected information contrary to his officia officially being asked to return it, commi However, the existing section 2 offence of m official information would no longer exist.

These provisions provide a considera against the improper disclosure or publicatio information. However, the Bill creates unif and that is an element that we consider to be contribution to the debate, on which we wou the Government's views.

Under clause 6 it would be a defence fo show that the information he was charged w had already become publicly available, w United Kingdom or elsewhere. That reflec basic premises of the measure — that on which are likely to cause actual harm s criminal penalties. That was the Governm some of those issues when the 1979 Bill was the House of Lords.

A disclosure that merely repeats informat already been provided would not be an o harm would have been done by the origin — the contention of closing the stable d horse has bolted. However, the person respo original disclosure would be liable to pros the Bill.

Clause 7 contains a defence for disclosu in the public interest, although I must stress carefully limited in several respects. First, available only on specific matters: crime, fr authority, neglect in the performance of an or other misconduct. It would not be availab who merely disagreed with Government poli that Government policy was not in the publ Britain, we settle such matters at a general el Government are entitled to maintain that t people, expressed through a general election, matters. Moreover, the misconduct would serious—sufficient to justify, in the public disclosure of information which should nor confidential.

Secondly, there would have to be reason for believing that such crime, fraud or misco Suspicion or conjecture would not do. The d be available only in circumstances in which, same evidence, any reasonable person woul reach similar conclusions.

Finally, in the case of a civil servant or contractor, although not in the case of a j defence would be available only if the perso had previously taken all reasonable steps misconduct to the attention of the appropria using established internal procedures, an failed. Disclosure could be justified only as first—resort.

The principle of a public interest defence not new. It is taken from the existing con confidence which has long held that a pers bound to respect an obligation of confi conceal serious wrongdoing. In a 1968 jud Denning held that the defence

"extends to any misconduct of such a nature th the public interest to be disclosed to others."

He went on to say:

"It should extend to crimes, frauds and misdeeds, both those actually committed as well as those in contemplation, provided always—this is essential—that the disclosure is justified in the public interest."

In 1981 the Law Commission made proposals for a new statutory law on confidence and the draft Breach of Confidence Bill which it published incorporated a statutory public interest defence. The Attorney-General's consent would be required for any prosecution in which serious injury to the nation's interests was alleged.

In any prosecution involving information about defence, international relations, security or intelligence, a certificate signed by the Minister would be required under clause 8. The certificate would show that at the time of the alleged offence the information was properly classified and that its disclosure was likely to cause serious injury to the interests of the nation or to endanger the safety of a citizen. If the defence wished to challenge the assertion that serious injury was involved, that would be done before the trial took place by referring the matter, under clause 9, to the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council, whose decision on the matter would be conclusive. That is the only matter that would go before the Judicial Committee. The question of justification in the public interest or any other defence would be heard at the trial itself in the normal way.

It is curious that, as we have advanced through those years since 1911, charges under section 1—this Bill does not touch on section 1, which deals with crime, treachery, spying, espionage and so on—has been referred to a court of the land and tried in front of a jury of fellow citizens. That was considered appropriate in 1911. We have somehow retreated from the principle that we should be judged in matters of honour and integrity that affect our liberty by procedures other than by trial by jury of our fellow citizens. It is a matter of personal regret that the judgment of the sponsors was that that could not be met in the clause dealing with section 2, which involves much lesser offences. We have tried to look for a satisfactory route that would retain the confidence of the House and the confidence of the public beyond.

Clause 11 contains penalties for offences. These are identical to those in the 1979 Bill. We saw no reason to differ from the judgment of the Government. Of course, in the ordinary course of events, penalties or judgments can be altered to meet the requirements of the House as its perceptions alter. The Bill's provisions on classification are generally similar, although not identical, to those of the 1979 Bill. Ministers would be required, under clause 12, to classify documents whose unauthorised disclosure would be an offence involving serious injury to the national interest under this Bill. Regulations on the classification and marking of documents would be made under clause 13 and there would be an annual report to Parliament on the application of the regulations.

The second part of the Bill is different in intent. It contains two limited duties of publication. Under clause 15, Government Departments and certain other public authorities would be required to make available for inspection, copying and purchase the guidelines and rules they use in administering schemes affecting the benefits or penalties to which individuals may be entitled or subject. They may charge a fee to cover any administrative costs entailed. The object is to provide individuals with information about the rules under which they may be dealt with and allow them to satisfy themselves that they have been treated fairly. I must acknowledge that the Government are moving forward in that line and movement is appreciated by the public and colleagues on both sides of the House in that it easier for us to judge cases in the instance of i constituents.

Clause 16 requires Departments and auth make an annual report to Parliament on the s have taken to improve and increase public information within their control. The Bill however, impose a duty on them to take such the publication duty may provide a modest inc them to do so.

The remaining clauses deal with miscellaneou The definitions are, on the whole, based on the as are the provisions relating to acts done abroa schedule of repeals, which includes section 2 of th Secrets Act.

I have gone through that so that I have disch duty in trying to bring before the House t instances and clauses to which the Bill rel sponsors and I approached the matter bearing in it concerns every one of us as citizens and appropriate that these issues should be discusse Floor of the House. We do not take the absolu that the Bill has everything and has to sta However, we thought that it was an appropriate v a proper discussion of certain issues that deal relationship of the citizen to the state and the Commons to the Executive.

Mr. D. N. Campbell-Savours (Workington): M the hon. Gentleman back to the Ponting case? believe that the prosecution would have been su brought against Clive Ponting had this Bill been l at that time?

Mr. Shepherd: If the hon. Gentleman will fo I shall try to deflect requests to make a specific on legal matters that have come before a court. one of the reasons why section 2 has not been us Government is that they do not have confidence i that juries would take the same view as they d fairness, that has confronted Governments of When a jury of free English men and women are with an issue that does not involve national sec they are considering what may perhaps dishonourable conduct, which is essentially a dis matter and could be dealt with in other ways, t nervously on the possibility of finding a fello guilty, with the possible implication that someon to prison. That has caused great difficulties Governments. Juries now have difficulty in disce distinction between what is injurious to national and what is merely inconvenient to Governm bungling.

The former Secretary of State for Defence, hon. Friend the Member for Henley (Mr. Hes present. His repudiation of the charges on the Flo House was wholly convincing as to the Government, and I also thought that the identifi the principles of confidentiality and the duties servants within the internal disciplinary arrange Departments of State was convincing. Perhaps th instance when that route should have been However, I claim no great wisdom on the deta arguments that came before the House. I reiterat issue of national security was involved.

Mr. Tam Dalyell (Linlithgow): Will the hon. Gentleman consider a situation where the dishonourable conduct may be less that of the civil servants than the behaviour of the politicians involved?

Mr. Shepherd: I am sorry, but I did not hear the hon. Gentleman.

Mr. Dalyell: The dishonourable conduct may be less that of the civil servants than that of the politicians involved who may have misbehaved.

Mr. Shepherd: We all have our own views on specific cases. I have tried to identify the reasons why I do not want to make a judgment on a particular issue without having had sight of all the documents available within a court.

The sponsors were kind enough to see me though, and we are grateful for the advice of a wide range of outside individuals, including the press, and a whole series of organisations and citizens.

I want to identify the three matters of principle that we believe should be brought to the attention of the Houses of Parliament. The first is the question whether a Minister should be both judge and jury in an issue concerning a certificate. That goes to the heart of our sense of what is right and proper. When it was in opposition, the Conservative party's position was that that was inappropriate. Lord Havers, then Sir Michael Havers, speaking as the shadow Attorney-General, identified that as the one issue that would not be satisfactory to our party. I hold by that still. It is one of those ironies of history that when we introduced a Bill we omitted that safeguard and it brought about considerable criticism in the House of Lords and from the general press as to our intentions.

The fundamental principle is that, if one is to retain public confidence in the fact that a Minister has not simply found in someone's favour — surprise, surprise — one must show the public that good and solid citizens with experience in such matters have looked at the issue, and in that way validate the judgment of a Minister of the Crown. I do not think that that is an unreasonable contention. It goes to the heart of our relationships in those matters. If a man is facing the possible loss of his liberty, he should be able to challenge the basis of that contention.

I know that the right hon. Member for Morley and Leeds, South (Mr. Rees), the then Home Secretary will be well able to tell us something about the doctrine of time and distance—that something of crucial interest to the nation in 1939 may have no validity today. Something of great injury to the state just two weeks ago may cause no injury today. The House should fully discuss this matter and I hope that the Home Secretary, when he at long last responds to these points, will say a few words about a principle which goes to the heart of any view of how we identify something which causes serious injury.

We now come to a more difficult concept, which has caused grave anxiety to myself and to some of my right hon. and hon. Friends—a doctrine which seems to be propounded through the courts, of a lifelong duty of confidentiality to the grave. The Bill reinforces the duty of confidentiality. It makes it clear to a civil servant that he will be dismissed, and possibly prosecuted, and, if so, that he may well face a criminal sentence and imprisonment of up to two years. Civil servants know where they stand. At present, because the law is so unspecific and because juries are failing to convict or accept the Government's views, there have been several cases—of whic an example—in which a jury has take from that of the Government.

I regret that the Government will be as they pursue this matter through the c the benefit of Mr. Justice Scott's vie considered specific issues and said tha information, the concept of public inter as is sometimes said. It is understood fa the courts. He challenged the con Armstrong, as portrayed before th instance is relevant in the present circum of a particular book—by asking, if a of the Crown conspire to destabilise a L Government, what would be our vie should be informed of that. Mr. Justice clear, that we can never enjoin anybody of confidentiality.

My own instincts and judgment of wh would be outraged if we so bound a servants are often loyal, committed understand the constraints under whi who fully honour their obligations to so they are honourable people. We are a confronted with something that goes t our democratic processes, which talks to of our democracy, that they should in reveal such information. I hold that t proposition.

Mr. Hugh Dykes (Harrow, East): Alt my hon. Friend, does he not conclude is vital for the House to have all the ap and surveillance of those matters, framework of confidentiality and of Pr

Mr. Shepherd: My hon. Friend ech be an extraordinary proposition, that th consider any matter which affects our society and who we are. We struggle make this the forum of our nation's i could hold Governments to account. information, we can hold no Governm Without access to information for our can hold no accountability of Governm the heart of our jobs and duties as citi

I am always nervous of the content we, as Members of Parliament, are citizens of the state, but we have the pr to have the opportunity, as I have this m some of the feelings of our society. Th all the time and the balance of a fair, op society is to try to relate the needs of t the needs, passions and observation citizens.

That is why I hate the distinctio between class and form, as if there were about what the House of Commons consider. It goes to another theme of th believe that if the House can be waylaid that there are matters so confidentia terms of framework and the enunc principles, not the detail of the applica case—that a Minister of the Crown, not accountable to the people of this co a sense of our most fundamental

extraordinary that anybody takes a contrary view. This is a Chamber in which contrary views are argued, and I have no doubt that I shall hear some from my hon. Friends and from Opposition Members. I believe strongly in the importance of our asserting ourselves in these matters. That is why this lifelong duty of confidentiality contradicts our ability to hold an Excutive or a Minister accountable.

When information is out, can there be a defence for citizens who pass it on? When a piece of information has become common knowledge, or is knowable, because it is no longer protected — when the horse has bolted, however regrettable and however disgraceful the conduct of the citizen responsible—what do we do? That is what we must all ask ourselves. That is what people outside and the press must ask themselves. There is a great folly in trying to deny citizens information that is commonplace. Are we saying that there is something so special about us as citizens that we must not know this information? The French, the Germans and the people 2 in across the Irish border may know this information. The United States may know this information. Citizens of this country may even have access to this information if they are rich enough to have purchased it from abroad. We can listen on the radio to broadcasts in English from Denmark and Sweden.

Mr. Norman Buchan (Paisley, South): Or from the Kremlin.

Mr. Shepherd: Are we to say that an embargo and an injunction on us forms our judgment on that information. It may have been absolutely criminal that that information escaped. It does not mean that the citizen who gave that piece of information should not be subjected to the rigours of the law. But, when the information is out, what do we do? I beg the Government to reflect seriously on that principle, because it has caused extraordinary difficulties for them.

I wish to go further. We must consider the relationship, because this affects the press deeply. I genuinely believe that the Government have a difficult case to convince the higher courts that a lifelong duty of confidentiality and enjoinment to the press that it may never repeat information, which goes to the heart of our democratic processes, will come to grief. By and large, our courts are regarded by most judiciaries in the English-speaking world with similar legislative instincts to our own as a conservative judiciary. The mere mention of the words "national security" tends to make them bend over in favour of a Government to accommodate a different course of action than is presently being pursued through injunctions.

I am also nervous that, if we do not take a step back and consider these issues reasonably, we shall end up in the European Court of Human Rights, and article 10 will be reinforced. I say that for two reasons. The press is an essential ingredient of freedom of discussion and holding the Government to account. By and large, we have a trivial and silly press. That is partly a reflection of the restraints placed upon it by section 2. It is important for individual citizens who are serious-minded to examine the contentions and proposals of the Government, which have come out into the open legitimately, but can be covered under section 2. It makes it too easy for Administrations to manipulate the information available to journalists and therefore has acted as a curb on a reasonable appraisal of legitimate information.

I shall cite a distinct difference in the pr speaking, the quality of our financial a reporting is wildly superior to that of our ge reporting. There is a reason for that. I shall will not endear me upstairs. We have ma press for too long. A hallelujah chorus rej Government handout that is put their way, though it were a masterful piece of journalism, and passes it off as though there in it. That practice has been reinforced ove *[Laughter.]* Opposition Members are laugh know that there have been moments when th have rushed to confide secrets—if I had an be stymied by an embargo — to that lit chorus, who have related it to their newspa

By and large, financial and economic jour interested in the procedures of the House diligently, publish statistics and make judgm a reflection on the Government's liberalis economic life. We have an increasingly in superior press in relation to economic in applaud the Government for that. But, political information, we have created almos relaying untested political propositions. I h been guilty of that over the past few weeks. of a moment, I have given a particular acco stand and where I go.

It is easy to succumb to such a temptati should stand up to it. It discredits them. journalists will not become lobby correspon of the symbiotic relationship between t chorus, Government, Ministers and senior B They pass off untested propositions and reported in the press as though they were one commandments cast on stone and repeat Moses.

We all know that "sources close to invariably means the Minister himself. We k but the public do not necessarily know it. "S heart of Government" invariably means a from a Department or even, possibly, the They are passed off as if it were of greater ver challenged than any other piece of informa that I have shaken that tree up there a little a will be more spunk and fight to bring t knowledge about the behaviours and proce House.

Over many years, the uncritical and slav of Government press handouts has done our injury. We see it on both sides of the H trivialised important issues beyond belief. W political issues are to be discussed in th challenge to the authority and accuracy of G of interest to citizens.

Section 2 relates to the control of inform hon. Member has encountered instances o which it has inhibited proper discussion. I some aspects that do not serve the interests o of Government. I was on the first Committee British Telecom. The proposition was th liberalising and creating a competitive telecommunications. One essential evaluatio judgment on it; an ability to improve a Bill creation of Mercury. It was cited as the n competitive framework, in which, hencefo Telecom would have to operate.

[Mr. Shepherd]

That was a State secret. It was embargoed as being commercially confidential to, supposedly, the second competitive force. It eventually leaked out in response to parliamentary questions, long after the events when it would have been important. We learned that Mercury's share of the market was to be restricted to 3 per cent. of British Telecom's revenue. There is no way in which one can construct an argument for competition on that basis. As a consequence, what emerged, in my judgment — others may make their own judgment — was a thoroughly bad Bill. It could have been better made, could have better served the interests of the consumer, and better served the Government's concept, to which I fully subscribe, that a competitive market place serves us better than does a monopoly which is regulated or otherwise.

In the context of the spheres in which they have expertise, all hon. Members have encountered such reluctance to make available knowledge that would serve citizens and enable the press to hold to account. If we are to have respect for our institutions, we need the best forms of information. If we can get that information, we can hold Governments to account. They are general themes. I invite the House to support me and to examine the Bill at a later stage.

10.15 am

Mr. Merlyn Rees (Morley and Leeds, South): I support the Bill. I compliment the hon. Member for Aldridge-Brownhills (Mr. Shepherd) on the way in which he presented our case. I shall remember what he said about the role of the House. Since I have returned to the Opposition Back Bench, I have often thought that, if we are treated like office boys, we shall behave like office boys. On the important topic of official secrets, section 2, we should be allowed to participate in the changes that must take place. They have been discussed for at least 30 years. Many of us can be blamed for the fact that we did not succeed. The issues are too complicated to be dealt with in the same way as, for example, an education Bill to bring in a national curriculum — it may not be well thought out, but the party of the day has won the election and will proceed with it.

Many of the issues in the Official Secrets Act 1911 are too complicated to be left to Ministers and to the meetings that take place in the Privy Council Office and the papers that come from them. The Government saw what happened to their Bill, which was different from the one that I hoped to have ready. Their Bill included clauses that civil servants had been pressing on me. The Government were new in office.

The Opposition want to participate in the reform of section 2. I suggest to my hon. Friend who introduced the Bill — I use that term deliberately — that, perhaps, this year, many of the issues that have been raised need to be thought out and teased out before they are translated into legislation. We can do that to the benefit of us all.

I have a few queries about the Bill, which I happily sponsor, but that is not surprising. I question some aspects of the Franks report. I was a member of the Franks committee, which was appointed by the then Prime Minister in 1972. As a former junior Minister at the pitch, I was pleased to spend a year or two with that great man, Lord Franks, as I was later to sit under his chairmanship of the committee on the Falklands war. He had a formidable mind, and both reports bear his imprint.

I also query some of the words that I used a few weeks after becoming Home Secretary. I hoped that there was one thing that I could do in that curious office — not much, as the Secretary of State knows. I hoped to reform the Official Secrets Act, but I did not do so. Perhaps I have learnt from the experience of the past few years. I hope that, even at this late stage, the Government will change their three-line Whip approach. There is a way in which the Bill, which I happily sponsor, can be used this year in advance of a White Paper. It would be a better White Paper if it were done in the light of discussions on the Floor of the House. There is a wealth of experience in the House.

Mr. Tony Baldry (Banbury): We are paying great attention to the right hon. Gentleman as he is a former Home Secretary. As the debate pans out, much will depend on the judgment that the House places on the Home Secretary. The right hon. Gentleman will appreciate that in former times we have been in Opposition, and he will recall the Agee and Hosenball case, when my right hon. and noble Friend Lord Whitelaw said:

"I believe that in the end, in cases like this we have to trust the judgment of the Home Secretary. I am prepared to do so because I believe that it is part of our constitution to trust the judgment of any Home Secretary in these circumstances . . . I cannot conceive that he would have taken this decision unless he had been totally convinced that it was in the interests of this country and its people".—[*Official Report*, 3 May 1977; Vol. 931, c. 407.]

Does the right hon. Gentleman believe that he and the Opposition should show the same courtesy and belief in the judgment of the Home Secretary today when he advises the House——

Madam Deputy Speaker (Miss Betty Boothroyd): Order. I hope that interventions will be interventions and not speeches. Will the hon. Gentleman come to a conclusion?

Mr. Baldry: Does the right hon. Gentleman believe that he and the Opposition should show the same courtesy to the Home Secretary as was shown to the Labour Government by the Conservative party?

Mr. Rees: The hon. Gentleman is speaking about a quite different issue. I was not operating the Official Secrets Act. If it had concerned that Act it would have been taken out of my hands and would have been in the courts. We are talking about legislation. The Home Secretary is a lonely man or woman——

Mr. Baldry: The right hon. Gentleman is missing the point.

Mr. Rees: Agee and Hosenball related to the immigration laws. Daily, the Home Secretary is making decisions under the new immigration legislation, which is much the same in essence. He made a decision last week for example, that was reported in the newspapers, to deport someone under the same terms as I deported Agee and Hosenball. If the attitude of the hon. Gentleman is the way that we are to deal with the reform of the Official Secrets Act, no wonder it has been kept under the hat of the Government—it is irrelevant.

We should use the Bill for the benefit of the House and, eventually, for the benefit of the country.

It is interesting to note how attitudes have changed since the White Paper of the 1966-67 Wilson Government on information policy. The Franks committee took evidence from a wide group of people and officials, including the security services, about who will do the prosecuting, how prosecutions under the Act should take place, what is the duty of the citizen and who controls prosecutions. The main point—it is what I want to talk about today—concerns classification. It is on the basis of classification that any new law will have to operate.

I have had a quick look at chapter 2 of the Franks report. One of the main problems that the Law Officers and the Home Secretary face is that section 2 is a catch-all. I got into trouble when I was first Home Secretary, having come from the Northern Ireland Office, when I used the phrase, to describe my reform, "We are moving from the blunderbuss to the armalite." I meant that one was sharper with regard to targeting. Many people took a dislike to that analogy, but I believed it to be true. Section 2 of the Act catches everybody—all Crown servants, every civil servant and every Minister of the Crown.

When one reads the memoirs of eminent former Prime Ministers and others, one notes that the Official Secrets Act is broken all the time. They keep classified papers—there may be some present today who have done so—and in so doing they are breaking the law. Many of those papers concern aspects of national security. Many civil servants feel a little angry that they are treated in one way and politicians in another.

How does section 2 work? I remember being surprised when the Franks committee was taking evidence from senior civil servants. Despite the catch-all nature of section 2, in the report we said;

"Nevertheless governments regularly reveal a great deal of official information. These disclosures do not contravene section 2.

A Crown servant who discloses official information commits an offence under the section only if the information is disclosed to someone other than a person to whom he is authorised to communicate it, or a person to whom it is in the interest of the State his duty to communicate it."

We continued:

"The Act does not explain the meaning of the quoted words."

We did not know what they were on about. We were told that people from the Treasury went to lunch every day in the City — those were the days of fixed exchange rates; a different world, maybe—and broke the Official Secrets Act. Why? It was because they were authorising themselves.

When a Minister leaves the Cabinet meeting — this goes on all the time—he says, "Yes, I told the old chap where I stand", or, nowadays, "Yes, I told her where I stand." They give information to what is now called, the hallelujah chorus, tell it what went on in Cabinent and give details of who said what to who. They are not breaking the Official Secrets Act because they are authorising themselves.

The Government are going up a blind alley about this new concept—it is not new because many civil servants have signed a document referring to a lifelong duty of confidentiality—because they are ignoring the question of authorisation. The information will not be locked up for ever. Thus, there is dispensation from lifelong confidentiality.

We decided that too often the Official Secrets Act was used to protect not the interests of the state or the country, but to protect the political interests of the Government of the day. This does not relate to section 1; this is not the spying clause arising from spying in the dockyards before the first world war. I should say to the hon. Member for Aldridge-Brownhills that one part of clause 2 should be in clause 1. It is akin to the spying aspect of clause 1, and that can be considered in Committee.

So, because it is important to what we do to show the change that takes place, by the time that I announced legislation in November 1976, I said that the Government would move only to prosecute "secret and above". Below that, the matter would have to be dealt with by the discipline of the organisation. We decided, unlike the Franks Committee, that Cabinet documents should not be protected. The Franks report, based on the experience of Oliver Franks, felt that Cabinet documents, whatever was in them, should be protected by the Official Secrets Act. I wish that I had had more experience at that time because that was not the way to go. When I became Home Secretary I said that Cabinet documents would be protected only if the information in them was "secret or above". In other words, it was on the basis of classification.

We said that economic information would not be protected per se, as recommended in the Franks report.

I went to speak for Mr. Ponting, who deserved to be dealt with within the Department, but who certainly should not have be dealt with under the Official Secrets Act. The then Labour Attorney-General kept his distance, as I am sure the present one does, from Ministers. When he heard what I was to say he said, "Will you remind the House on the basis of the position in the 1950s when the House voted in principle against capital punishment and the death penalty was not used afterwards?"

Whatever the law was, after the vote in the House the Home Secretary would not allow people to be hanged. He intended to proceed with prosecutions under the Official Secrets Act on information classified as secret and above. We operated in that way for the next two or three years.

The question was: why did I not introduce legislation? There were two reasons, which show the benefit of this legislation. First, most of my colleagues on whom I depended wanted a Freedom of Information Bill attached to any such legislation. I saw no way of coming to the House with a reform of section 2 of the Official Secrets Act plus a Freedom of Information Bill showing how information should be made available and getting them through, not least because I did not think from our discussions that we were clear about what we meant. I wanted reform of section 2 of the Official Secrets Act providing for only "secret and above" and a Freedom of Information Bill later.

There could be an examination in Departments such as the Department of Education and Science—which have probably never seen a document marked "secret"—to find out how information could be made available, unencumbered by the question whether to make it available.

Secondly, it was the time of the Lib-Lab pact. I was not prepared to come to the House of Commons under the control of the Liberal party on important issues. Not many members of the Liberal party had any experience of Government — rather like today — of writing a constitution. [HON. MEMBERS: "What was the issue?"] The issue was that the Liberals did not know what they were talking about.

Mr. Alex Carlile (Montgomery) *rose*——

Mr. Rees: The hon. and learned Gentleman must allow me to continue. It was an important Bill which I would have had to take through the House. I remember my experiences when we used to sit with Liberals in a little room near the Chamber. When we were considering a Post Office Bill the Liberals said, "We shall not support the Bill if there are three worker directors instead of two", or something like that. Well, OK, I could afford to take a couple of winks while that was discussed. But I was not going to be controlled by the Liberals on official secrets. All I am saying is that we were a minority Government. It is a fact that the Liberals had no experience of Government. That is not meant to be basically offensive.

I proposed other changes in the White Paper. The issue is so complicated that the more one looks at it, the more, as time goes on, one sees the further changes that should be made. Of course, we had to do something about freedom of information, but there was no way in which we could get legislation passed, and a Green Paper was published. The then Clement Freud, proposed a private Member's Bill in 1978-79. The Minister of State, Home Office, my hon. Friend the Member for Pontypridd (Mr. John), handled it on the Floor of the House. In our Green Paper we said:

"Some aspects of the reform have recently been discussed in Standing Committee on the Official Information Bill now before Parliament, and the Government will be making further proposals at the Report Stage which will reflect the White Paper policy."

But we had run out of time—a general election was approaching and we could not have gone any further.

While in office we produced a Bill, which I shall willingly make available. I think that I could authorise that. Legislation was being prepared, albeit hastily because we were not in a position to do otherwise. Ministers should look at it. That legislation should be made available. The Bill which the new Government then produced was not exactly the same, and it failed. I asked the Library to find comments on why the Bill failed. A Press Council release said:

"Contrary to the Franks Committee's proposals it severs the link between classification and protection."

For that reason, the media were apparently not happy. Some people, including the Labour party, said that under the new legislation there could not have been a full discussion of the Blunt case. I do not know about that; I only know that the Blunt statement which the Prime Minister read out was the one that we had ready to read out, had we still been in office.

Mr. Tony Benn (Chesterfield): Why was it not revealed?

Mr. Rees: The Blunt affair had not broken then. I did not regard the Blunt issue of 20 or 30 years ago as important. But the hallelujah chorus loved it, even though it was about 30 years old. I thought that the important issue was what was happening at the present time. I sometimes think that a good leak is the best way of dealing with the hallelujah chorus.

There has been a drift in this Government. That drift occurred not because the Government did not have a majority — they can do almost what they like — but because of events. The hon. Member for Banbury (Mr. Baldry) asked me about Agee and Hosenball, a different issue. I would have supported the Government had they prosecuted Chapman Pincher under section 2 of the Official Secrets Act for "Their Trade is Treachery", whi contained much of the same information that was in t Wright book. Pincher now says that he was authorised a senior official of the security services, but my view is th the Government made a grave error in not prosecuti him.

Mr. Benn: Is my right hon. Friend now saying that thinks that the Government were right to prosecute to t to prevent publication of the Wright book?

Mr. Rees: I did not say that.

Mr. Benn: I am asking my right hon. Friend to mak this clear. He has admitted that, as a Minister, he kne things about national security — notably on the Blu case—about which he kept quiet.

Mr. Rees: On the Blunt case, I thought that, unless was necessary, it should not be said that the man, who ha been found out 20 or 30 years before, had been a spy. Wha was the point of revealing that news if his former master did not know that his cover was blown? That is all. It wa not a very important issue. I did not think that the Blun case was important years after the events occurred and wa prepared not to say anything about it.

Parts of the Chapman Pincher book should have bee prosecuted under section 2 of the Official Secrets Act Some relevations in the Wright book should have bee dealt with under section 2. [HON. MEMBERS: "How?"] The question is how could that have been done, because he had gone away. Of course, that could not be done with Wright but it could have been done with Chapman Pincher, whose book contained the same information from the same source as the Wright book. As for the part of the Wright book about dirty tricks, I will never let go. But other aspects on the time basis could easily be published. Some should not have been published. There will always be some aspects of the policies and actions of the security services that should not be published. The Bill does not say that everything should be published. We say that crimes concerning "secret and above" should be prosecuted, and not anything below. Because of the Government's dilatoriness, the Ponting events occurred. I am clear about Ponting: he should not have been prosecuted under criminal sanction.

Mr. Buchan: I am slightly disturbed by what is being said. Is my right hon. Friend saying that Chapman Pincher and not just Wright should have been prosecuted? I should have thought that he should say that instead the allegations should have been immediately investigated, hearing witnesses under oath, and that if any people were to be prosecuted it should be those who carried out the subject of the allegations.

Mr. Rees: I am making a distinction between the two. I have argued on the Floor of the House for an inquiry into the allegations.

Mr. Buchan: True.

Mr. Rees: I have. It is not a question of saying, "True". I am not talking about the allegations. I am merely saying that some aspects of the book plainly contravene section 2 of the Official Secrets Act.

Mr. Benn: But my right hon. Friend wants to amend it.

Mr. Rees: Prosecution would still take place in some circumstances under the Bill that my right hon. Friend and I support.

Mr. Peter Archer (Warley, West): Let me intervene just so that we will not be at daggers drawn over what may be a misunderstanding. I understand my right hon. Friend's assertion that they were infringements of section 2, but is he saying that it would necessarily have been in the public interest to have prosecuted under section 2?

Mr. Rees: That is a different matter. I am saying that, prime facie, the Attorney-General would have to examine aspects of the book and decide whether to prosecute. That would remain true under the Bill, which does not sweep aside prosecutions under the Official Secrets Act.

Mr. Michael Mates (Hampshire, East): The right hon. Gentleman also said—if I heard him aright—that there were parts of the Wright book that he would never let go. That means that he would have had to take exactly the same measures as this Government to try to prevent those very parts of the book from entering the public domain.

Mr. Rees: Let me give the hon. Gentleman a reply as blunt as the reply that I gave to my right hon. Friend the Member for Chesterfield (Mr. Benn). The answer is no. The information is half-way round the world; it is everywhere. What is the point of locking the stable door now? I refer only to certain parts of the book, because it does not matter whether the greater part of the book is published.

On serious injury, classification and national security, I would like to suggest how the Bill might be handled. I have just read a brilliant book about Rab Butler by Anthony Howard of *The Observer*. It refers to a private Member's Bill that came up on a Friday, which sought to loosen the bonds of literary censorship:

> "Rab, to the surprise of those used to the Home Office's obscurantist ways, had directed that the Department should not oppose the Bill but instead had authorised one of his junior Ministers to suggest that it should be passed to a Select Committee so that it could be put into a more workable form."

That took a year, and all aspects of the Bill were questioned.

Let me tell the Home Secretary what I think should be questioned in this Bill. On classification, evidence should be taken from civil servants. I query the way in which we have been dealing with classification. On television last night the former Lord Chancellor said that this was not the judges' role. He said that they were not very good at constitutional matters, although I am not sure that classification is a constitutional matter. Evidence should be taken from senior Civil Servants on how classification is carried out.

What about time? I saw all the papers of the second Franks Committee on the Falklands war, which, so the committee said, dated back to 1965. I went through all those papers from the Foreign Office and Ministry of Defence on behalf of my colleagues as part of our analysis. It was interesting to note that all the papers had been taken in when the Government changed, on the ground that the new Government must not see the documents of the previous Administration. Exactly the same paper was put forward to the new Government. They were not allowed to see the paper that had gone to the previous Government; they just saw the same information. Would that some of that information had been published. It would not have been to the detriment of the services had much of the information on the Falklands been published earlier.

How do civil servants deal with the time aspect? If I gave someone some of the classified documents that I have at home now, it would not matter a tinker's cuss. Those documents date from 20 or 25 years ago, but they are still classified. There is more to classification than what appears at the top of the paper. Sometimes classification depends on whether there has been time to look at the documents and on whether civil servants have been available to downgrade them. Let me give an example. After the Ulster workers' strike, I commissioned a paper in the Northern Ireland Office on what might be done in Ireland. It dealt with dominion status—whatever that meant—and the whole range of options. It was time to reassess. A heavy classification was placed on that document, quite properly, because people's lives — especially in the security forces—would have been put at risk if people had thought, "My God. They are considering pulling out." That document could be published now. Indeed, it could have been published a year afterwards. It is a very interesting little document, although it does not get one very far.

Mr. John D. Taylor (Strangford): Exactly.

Mr. Rees: Nevertheless, I bet that that document is classified as secret in the Northern Ireland Office, and it need not be.

I have mentioned the role of the judiciary. Let me make one point to the Home Secretary about something that has cast doubts on the Government's injunctions and so on to deal with lifelong confidentiality. In *The Times* on 10 December, Lord Hunt of Tanworth, taking the context of the Civil Service, Sir Robert Armstrong and the leading article of the day before, wrote:

> "In this context the issue of lifelong confidentiality is a red herring: what that argument is about is unauthorised disclosure."

Yet the Government are pursuing that line. Why should not a Select Committee of the House have a chance to question Lord Hunt — to ask him why, as a distinguished former Cabinet Secretary, he takes that view?

We need to examine the role of the Law Officers and the Cabinet Secretary. I make no personal comment about Lord Armstrong, with whom I worked for many years; I am not talking about him. However, over the past year, I have thought that we need to examine the role of the Cabinet Secretary in relation to the Official Secrets Act. We need to examine the role of the permanent under-secretary in each Department. How do permanent under-secretaries view their role? It was handled badly in the Ministry of Defence at the time of Blunt. Something went wrong in the Ministry of Defence, I presume before the matter reached the Law Officers. It does not normally work that way.

Let me give an example from Northern Ireland. A man was giving documents to a member of the hallelujah chorus. The documents were dropped through the door of a house in Bangor. The lady who cleaned there was the wife of a policeman and she took the documents, which were marked confidential, to the police. Eventually, the permanent secretary told me about the case. He said, "It is a matter for the police, but what about the Official Secrets Act?" I asked what the files were about. They were about a committee that I had set up to end black propaganda on the part of the Army. I considered them not to be so important and when the question arose

[Mr. Rees]

whether there should be a prosecution I expressed the view to the Attorney-General that there should not be, but that it was a matter for him to decide. No prosecution took place. Disciplinary actions were taken but that did not mean that the case warranted the application of the Official Secrets Act.

The Government should set up a Select Committee. By all means, let them publish their own White Paper while the discussions are taking place, but let them give the House a chance to discuss the issues. If they do not, we shall end up with a White Paper but there will be no legislation this year and I would be astonished if there were legislation next year. The questions on a number of these issues will be far too difficult. The arguments will take place on the Floor of the House and in Committee. We could have such discussions now, on this Bill. At the end of the day, the Government will have control of the proceedings. They could kill the Bill today or at any stage in Committee. They have a majority of more than 100, even given that Conservative hon. Members will vote against them. But let them give the House of Commons a chance to discuss the matter by setting up a Select Committee, as Rab Butler did many years ago to deal with a Bill. If they did that, they would be doing the House a service, just as the hon. Member for Aldridge-Brownhills has done us a service, particularly in the manner in which he presented his Bill.

10.48 am

The Secretary of State for the Home Department Mr. Douglas Hurd): It may help the House if I set out at this fairly early stage in the debate the Government's views on the Bill introduced by my hon. Friend the Member for Aldridge-Brownhills (Mr. Shepherd). The House will be grateful to my hon. Friend for providing us with the opportunity for a debate—*[Laughter.]* I have always said that. I congratulate my hon. Friend on the full, lucid and engaging way in which he set about his task today.

The question in the debate is not whether section 2 is acceptable, for we all know that it is not. Section 2 is too wide and too weak. It tries to cover too much ground and, partly for that reason, does so ineffectively. Of course, in practice, prosecutions are not brought against civil servants who disclose the colour of the carpets in their offices or what was on the menu in the staff canteen. But it is wrong in principle that the criminal law should, even in theory, deal with such trivia. As the right hon. Member for Morley and Leeds, South (Mr. Rees) said, the catch-all character of section 2 has serious practical consequences. It means that people are uncertain about the circumstances in which they are at risk of prosecution and conviction. Because section 2 is potentially oppressive, since it covers such trivial matters, it has come to be regarded as oppressive in all circumstances, and the misleading impression has got about that section 2 is concerned only with trivial matters.

For those and other reasons, the conclusion that section 2 needs reform has been common ground, at least since the Conservative manifesto of my right hon. Friend the Member for Old Bexley and Sidcup (Mr. Heath) in 1970. That thought underlay the report in 1972 of the Franks committee, which was appointed by my right hon. Friend and his colleagues. It underlay the White Paper, whose proposals were based on the Franks report, which the right hon. Member for Morley and Leeds, South a colleagues published in 1978. It underlay the Bill t Conservative Government introduced when they office in 1979. My right hon. Friend is right to sa as it stands, section 2 has no defenders.

In 1979, it was widely expected that a Bill to fu long-held ambition of narrowing the scope of sec would be received with reasonable enthusiasm. hoped that the proposals in the Bill, which were ba the Franks report and the 1978 White Paper—th hon. Member for Morley and Leeds, South now say he would have acted differently — would be supported. That was reasonable, but it turned out wrong. The 1979 Bill was lost in a thicket and had withdrawn. Some parts of it attracted very opposition. I am thinking especially of the fact would have protected all information relating to se and intelligence and would have provided for the question whether the disclosure of information relat defence or international relations was likely to serious injury to the interests of the nation to be de by a Minister of the Crown. The Bill ran into troub those and other grounds.

Since 1979, the Government have put no propos Parliament. That was a reasonable stance for my hon. Friends to take for some time after the collapse effort in 1979. After long consideration by dif Governments, a substantial effort had been made major proposal put forward. The debate that follow 1979 showed the difficulties but did not provide answers. It was legitimate for my right hon. Fri especially those who had had a hand in that enterpri make the distinction between criticising section 2 reforming it. The first was easy — it was com ground. The second had been genuinely attempted found to be dauntingly difficult.

When, early last autumn, my hon. Friend contemplated his Bill, he might reasonably have tho that that was still the Government's position. He may thought — although, as he knows, I went as far could as fast as I could to enlighten him — that choice lay between a private Member's Bill and the in of a Government still nursing their burnt fingers, fearing the fire and refusing to do anything sensibl effective about section 2.

That is not the position today. The question before House is not whether a further effort should be mad improve the Act. As I shall try to show, the choic between taking this Bill forward and waiting—not very long — for fresh proposals from Government which Parliament can decide.

On 3 February last year, we had an interesting del in the House—I rather think that it was a Supply of the late, lamented Alliance—in which I made it c that the matter should return to the agenda. Since A 1987 — I gently underline that date — Ministers officials have been working on a thorough and deep rev of section 2 to establish whether the difficulties can overcome and the Act reformed. By the end of last y we had reached a point which enabled me to announc the House on 15 December that we had made enou progress to be able to promise a White Paper in summer and to work towards early legislation thereaf So—trying to put it fairly—we had the coincidence my hon. Friend gaining first place in the ballot and be keen to take forward a subject of major importance

which he felt strongly, but on which, unknown to him when he began to think about it, the Government had already embarked.

That has created a tactical position which is painful for my hon. Friend and for me and the Government, although it is not the fault of either of us. We are faced with my hon. Friend's Bill, yet we have not reached conclusions on several of the matters that it covers. I make no apology for that and, especially after the fascinating speech of the right hon. Member for Morley and Leeds, South, who talked about the murky confusion that prevailed in 1978-79, it is not open to the Opposition to chide us for taking more than 10 months on a matter which took them five years with no legislative result. I regard the right hon. Gentleman as the hare who has bounded about in this race for some time and myself as the tortoise, who started much later. We shall see who reaches the winning post first.

As any reader of the Franks report can see, this matter goes to the heart of government. As the right hon. Gentleman said, it is not a matter on which Ministers can take a general decision to legislate and officials of one Department can go away and work up a proposal. This involves many agencies and Departments. Not only the principles, but the details are crucial to them. That is why it is not sensible to scratch and scramble at the issue. It is not sensible to take at a gallop the necessary detailed work to get round a tactical difficulty. It would not be sensible for Parliament to plunge into the subject without having before it the Government's proposals.

Mr. Allen McKay (Barnsley, West and Penistone): Will the Minister answer a simple question? Is there anything in this Bill which he would not have in his?

Mr. Hurd: If the hon. Gentleman has been following my exposition, he will understand that I cannot answer that question — [HON. MEMBERS: "Oh!"] Perhaps I should try to explain it again. In 1979, following a period of Government by the Labour party, which made no such major effort, the Conservative Government made a major effort which was defeated. For some time after that, the view was that the subject was too difficult. That view no longer prevails, and since April 1987 a major effort has been under way. I suppose that we are about two thirds of the way through that effort, but it would not be sensible to set before the House, as a critique of my hon. Friend's Bill, the two thirds of the ground that we have covered and our provisional conclusions. Hon. Members will accept that, once we have covered all the terrain, Ministers will consider the full picture and ratify the provisional decisions that have been made. It is precisely to avoid such confusion that the Government are taking the line that I advocate on the Bill.

Mr. Roy Hattersley (Birmingham, Sparkbrook): This is a small question, but one on which the entire debate may turn. As I understand it, the Home Secretary is saying to the House, with as much authority as the Government possess, that the Government believe that the House should wait until June; however, they will not tell us what we should wait for.

Mr. Hurd: What the right hon. Gentleman is being asked to wait for is a White Paper in June, followed by a debate in the House before the summer recess, to which my right hon. Friend the Leader of the House committed us yesterday. That will be followed, we hope, by early legislation, which will be considered and decided in the House. It will then be for the House to decide whether it likes the proposals.

Mr. Campbell-Savours: What does "early" mean?

Mr. Hurd: The hon. Gentleman has been in the House for long enough to know what "early" means in this context.

My hon. Friend the Member for Aldridge-Brownhills has tried to be helpful. He has offered to take on board any specific points, and has been ready to negotiate changes. But, as he knows, and as I have just explained, we are not in that position. We have worked out our own ideas on some points, but not on others. It would be silly for Ministers to start pronouncing on part of their work until they can consider the whole. The Committee stage of a private Member's Bill can, of course, be interesting and fruitful, but equally it can be unpredictable and confusing, because neither the private Member who is sponsoring the Bill, nor his hon. Friends, nor the Minister is in effective charge. I am sure that it is much better to proceed instead in the orderly way that is traditional for important legislation on the machinery and methods of government. There should be a Government Bill on which Parliament should pronounce. The Government should propose, and Parliament should dispose.

Mr. Dykes: I am grateful to my right hon. Friend for giving way. Perhaps he does not realise that he is being condescending — accidentally or unwittingly — which is not normally characteristic of him. Does this not make matters more difficult for the House? Can he not even give some putative, theoretical examples of the difficulties of reaching final conclusions at this stage? Otherwise he is saying, in effect, what hon. Members on both sides of the House will resent: that the subject is not suitable for parliamentarians.

Mr. Hurd: My hon. Friend is simply not following my argument. Not only is the subject a matter for parliamentarians, but it is a matter on which only Parliament can decide, and which Parliament will wish to discuss in detail. I am merely suggesting that is better for that detailed discussion, and those decisions by Parliament, to take place on the basis of proposals put forward by Government.

I was flattered by the constitutional doctrine advanced by my hon. Friend the Member for Banbury (Mr. Baldry), but I am not asking the House to accept a blank cheque on the basis of trust in my judgment. We are not implying that these are matters for dictation by Government, rather than for discussion in Parliament. I certainly would not ask the House to accept my views on how the law should be changed without discussion, as though the fact that they were my views, or those of my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister, settled the matter. That could not conceivably be proper.

Parliament, not the Government, will decide whether section 2 is to be reformed, as we were reminded bitterly in 1979. What the House must decide today is whether, on a matter that lies at the heart of government, to proceed with a private Member's Bill or to wait for a short time — we have defined a short time — until the House can analyse and consider the Government's proposals. It is plain to me which of those two courses offers the greater opportunity for reflection, discussion and a good outcome.

[Mr. Hurd]

Another fairly dotty notion going the rounds is that the Government intend simply to propose some tyrannical tightening of the Act. That would suggest that we would have no regard to the Franks report, to the 1979 experience or to today's debate. It surprises me that anyone should take such a charge seriously. After all that has happened, it would hardly be sensible for us to suppose that either House of Parliament would accept such a measure.

Mr. Buchan: If the Home Secretary is taking that view —if, indeed, he takes a view indicating basic agreement with the hon. Member for Aldridge-Brownhills (Mr. Shepherd)—why in heaven's name should a senior civil servant of this country, and indeed the country, be put into the ludicrous position of pursuing past tales from one court to another throughout the world? If that is the intention, it does not add up.

Mr. Hurd: The House has had a full account of, and debate on, the attitude that the Government have taken during the different "Spycatcher" trials, and I do not wish to be diverted to that subject now. I am merely saying that it is dotty for any serious critic or commentator to suppose that we would see any point in putting forward to either House a substitute for the Bill that simply presented some tyrannical tightening of the Act.

Mr. Alex Carlile *rose*——

Mr. Hurd: I want to get on, because, as you, Mr. Speaker, have warned us, many hon. Members wish to speak, and the speeches so far have taken up a certain amount of time.

Let me go over the terrain to illustrate the point that I have just made. We want legislation that is effective, enforceable and reasonable. "Effective" means clear and intelligible. "Enforceable" means that the legislation should not pose undue challenges to the prosecuting authorities or the courts. "Reasonable" means that new legislation should not just bring about a narrowing of the scope of the criminal law, but should command the confidence of juries. That involves taking into account the criticisms made of the 1979 Bill.

Anyone who wishes to narrow the "catch-all" range of section 2 faces the same set of complex and sensitive issues. Once we decide that it is wrong for the law to penalise all unauthorised disclosures of official information, we have to tackle the problem of deciding what disclosures of what information should in future be unlawful. That sets off a series of interrelated questions. We have been steadily working our way through those questions since last Easter, and we have not yet finished the work. They are the questions addressed by the Franks committee, the Labour Government and now my hon. Friend.

What are those questions? First, we must ask to what categories of information the legislation should apply. The Franks committee recommended, for example, that all Cabinet papers should be protected, as should all information on currency and the reserves. We concluded that it was not necessary to cover those categories in the 1979 Bill. Should we now go back to Franks, should we stick with the 1979 categories, or should we narow the field still further?

Everyone would agree that security and intelligence information should be covered, but, in our view, that is not enough. For one thing, sensitive defence informat clearly be protected. But how much more info needs the safeguard of a criminal sanction? Shou be Government papers, or should it also be info provided in confidence to the Government?

Once we have got through that filter, we are fa another set of questions. Should the disclosure o I stress the word "any" — information in categories be an offence, or should it be an offe if the disclosure is likely to cause damage? If we de there should be some test of the damage likely to b by disclosure, should there be one general test, or tests relating to different categories of informatio

Sir Nicholas Bonsor (Upmin[illegible]r): As my rig Friend knows, I am one of the Bill's sponsors. W Bill was first put forward, none of us knew t Government were proposing legislation.

My right hon. Friend said earlier that the Ho a choice between this Bill and Government leg later. Surely, however, the result of today's th Whip is that the Bill cannot proceed to a Committe Therefore, the points that he says are at the hear proposals for his legislation cannot be discusse Would it not be very much to the Government's adv if the Bill went to Committee and the issues we explored? That would give us a clearer indication the Government should do before my right hon. puts forward his legislation.

Mr. Hurd: That is the difficulty. My hon. Frie put it very well. I do not deny that there is a diffi am illustrating the wide terrain that a measure cover, to show that we are not after some quick sn the issue—some tyrannical measure that simply b up the mouths of officials. We are covering that g but we have not yet finished covering it. The diffic going into Committee at this stage is that we are no with our proposals on all the points involved.

I have pointed out the new development since m Friend the Member for Aldridge-Brownhills start initiative. We have been at work on the matter Easter, and have committed ourselves to produ White Paper with our proposals by June. Of course will be a Committee stage; of course it will be a d examination. However, I feel that that Committee should be on the basis of Government proposals.

Dr. David Owen (Plymouth, Devonport) *rose*—

Mr. Campbell-Savours *rose*——

Mr. Hurd: I shall give way—I think for the las —to the right hon. Gentleman.

Dr. Owen: Surely the time for a three-line Whip, i a time ever exists with a private Member's Bill such a is on Third Reading.

Mr. Hurd: I have tried to explain why I believe th procedure that we are proposing is sensible and or The choice before the House is whether to follo procedure that we have outlined during the past few or to give the Bill a Second Reading and sent it Committee when Ministers have not cleared their on their ideas on answers to some of the questions have been raised.

The facts are that since last Easter we have had in a serious enterprise to find an acceptable replacemen section 2. That work is taking us over the issues that I

described, many of which are addressed in the Bill, and a White Paper with a view to legislation at the earliest opportunity is a commitment—I repeat that I hope to lay the White Paper before Parliament in June and, as my right hon. Friend the Leader of the House made clear yesterday, the House will have an opportunity to debate it before the summer recess——

Mr. Tony Marlow (Northampton, North): Will my right hon. Friend give way?

Mr. Hurd: I am coming to an end. I believe that this is the orderly path to a reform of section 2.

My colleagues and I will listen attentively to the rest of the debate. My hon. Friend the Member for Aldridge-Brownhills has had his success and nobody can or, in my judgment, would want to take away that success. *[Interruption.]* My hon. Friend has had his success. He has had his debate. He has taken his initiative and secured from the Government assurances which I think most people would regard as adequate. The orderly path now is to wait—not much longer, but a little longer—to digest and discuss the Government's proposals and any amendments proposed to them and for Parliament to decide in a measured way whether those proposals are ones which it wishes to take forward.

Nothing will be lost except a little time. After 76 years, that is a small price to pay for the chance of putting to rest an issue which, as the right hon. Member for Morley and Leeds, South so clearly illustrated, has troubled successive Parliaments and Governments.

This is not a languid, academic or spoiling exercise on my part. Perhaps I could add a personal word. I have worked as a Crown servant for 14 years and as a Member of this House for another 14. From both angles I have watched this problem deteriorate. The morass has become muddier, the thicket more impenetrable.

Many Governments, including this one and the Labour Government, have put out more and more information, but they have found it more difficult to protect that small portion of what one might call official information which has to be protected. I have believed for some time that the task of reforming section 2 has now become crucial for the proper functioning of modern democratic government in Britain. We now have a choice of procedures. I believe that we have set about the issue in an orderly and sensible way. That is what we intend, and it follows with regret that I must recommend that the House does not give the Bill a Second Reading.

11.14 am

Mr. Roy Hattersley (Birmingham, Sparkbrook): I also congratulate the hon. Member for Aldridge-Brownhills (Mr. Shepherd). I congratulate him on many things; on having coined a new phrase for the political lexicon—some of us have attempted to do that for 25 years and failed, but he has done it this morning — on his demeanour during the past month, and on the content of his Bill.

I feel just as warmly about the content of the hon. Gentleman's Bill as, apparently, does the Home Secretary. Indeed, the only thing that divides the Home Secretary and me in our admiration for the proposals is that I propose to vote for them and the Home Secretary proposes to vote against them. I confess that I would go further than the hon. Gentleman's proposal. I should like there to be a freedom of information Bill which requires, rather allows, the publication of information which i damaging or potentially damaging to national securi which it would be in the public interest to publish.

The Bill has the overwhelming advantage of refo section 2 of the Official Secrets Act 1911. Although been tolerated for so long, it ought not to be tolerate longer in a free society. The section allows the suppr of whatever official information the Government choose to keep secret. The information may be suppr for wholly legitimate reasons or simply becaus Government find it inconvenient to allow the p people to know what they ought to know and have a to know. That is our complaint and has always bee complaint about section 2.

Since the hon. Member for Aldridge-Brow published his Bill, the 30-year rule has presented us an overwhelming example of the misuse of section Governments. I refer, of course, to the way in whic years ago, the Government dealt with the Winc disaster. We now know, simply from the publicati Government papers, that the Cabinet of the time de to conspire against the British people to keep two t secret. The first was the nature and cause of the dis and the second was the inability of the Atomic E Authority as then constituted to ensure that an disaster would not occur.

It seems to me self-evident that such action was d against the national interest by any standards. It deeply against the welfare and interests of people lived in the vicinity of Windscale, and it was in a real a conspiracy. Any civil servant, however, who cho protect the people of the area by telling the truth, w the Government would have suppressed, would have prosecuted. That is self-evidently preposterous immoral and a situation which we can begin to chan voting for the Bill.

I want to make it absolutely clear that those of us support the Bill do not believe for one moment anything in it poses any real threat to those secrets w need to be kept secret in the name of genuine nat security. I go even further. I do not believe tha omnibus power which allows the Government to sup anything that they choose to suppress, has done any service to security or the security services' record.

One of the reasons why the security services have such a deplorable record, especially in the 25 years w followed the war, is that they concerned themselves fa much with irrelevant trivialities and not enough wit central issues of national security. If there were sensible and sensitive powers, and if the security ser were under some control through the House, I believe they would operate more efficiently as well as democratically. They have nothing to lose from the Gentleman's Bill.

I repeat and emphasise that I do not think that is any disagreement in any part of the House abou need to keep secret that information which might be an enemy or potential enemy. The argument concern Government's right to keep secret from the British pe information which an enemy or potential enemy al certainly already knows and which it is in the interes the British people to be told.

The Bill draws the proper line between necessary se and news manipulation dressed up to look like the n of national security. It defines the classes of informa

[Mr. Roy Hattersley]

which are protected by criminal sanctions, it offers as a defence against prosecution the national interest and the previous availability of published information, and it offers an independent authority — the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council — as an arbiter of security classification. Those are the bones of an acceptable official information Bill.

I do not believe that many of the hon. Members who will vote for the Bill today will do so in the belief that it is perfect in every particular. Indeed, as I understood the speech of the hon. Member for Aldridge-Brownhills when introducing the Bill, he is not making that claim. If the Government are sincere in the belief that they are to build on what he proposes, the Government's clear duty is to allow the Bill to proceed to Committee and to try to make the necessary technical alterations and improvements there. Even at this late hour, I urge the Home Secretary to consider that possibility.

I do so especially in the light of two criteria which, according to newspapers—I do not know whether they were press leaks, unauthorised briefings or simple speculation—were regarded by the Government as the stumbling block. I understand from those newspaper reports that the Government's objections to the Bill centred on two areas of defence: the public interest criterion and the criterion that the information is already in the public domain.

I want to make it absolutely clear that, in the present situation, we regard the second criterion — that the information is already available from other sources—as of crucial importance to the freedom of this country and this Parliament. Prosecuting for the production and dissemination of information that is already available is not intended to keep the information from a potential enemy but it is, by definition, intended to keep that information from the British people.

If one considers the Government's record during the past two years, when they used vast amounts of taxpayers' money to launch vastly expensive actions against newspapers that want to do no more than publish what is generally and genuinely known, one knows that the Government are doing so in the knowledge that, even if the newspapers win in court, the delay and the costs will have penalised them. The Government's pursuit of newspapers for wishing and intending to publish information that is already known has been used in a deeply unscrupulous way as an attempt to bully and blackmail newspapers into a code of conduct that the Government cannot support by any more logical or acceptable means.

The Home Secretary's response to the Bill was to ask the House to wait until June. He said, "Wait for a definable time," but he could not define for us what we had to wait for. I cannot believe that this House of Commons is so supine as to buy the Home Secretary's pig in a poke, because we would be doing so in the most extraordinary circumstances. I do not want to say anything about the Government that would deter their opponents on the Government Back Benches from voting for the Bill, so I am using my words carefully. However, to say to the House, "Trust the Government over official secrets; trust the Government over news manipulation; trust the Government over their attitudes towards television; trust the Government over their performance and proposals for manipulating or suppressing the news," is, i recent events, to make an unreasonable requ least.

Let us consider recent events that might le Members to feel that the request to wai without any assurance of what June w unreasonable. We are asked to trust the Gove for two years, have been engaged in the blac the "Spycatcher" affair. The Cabinet Secret humiliated and the Attorney-General ma ridiculous to limit the sales of a publication, from a publication, which has already sold 5 in the United States and which has, I susp reached the shelves of the Kremlin. I find it to trust the Government when I think of the v they have behaved over that affair.

We are asked to trust the Government exactly a year ago today, either sanctioned o —they certainly approved—a night raid o studios in Scotland. They defended the remo BBC of large amounts of BBC property. Ther later, they blandly announced that the BBC wrong and there were no grounds for prosec any action. I find it difficult to trust that Gov waiting until June.

We are asked to trust the Government prohibited the broadcasting by the BBC of documentary programmes which, it is gener have been produced by responsible producers were approved by the D-Notice committee. I able to trust that Government by waiting without knowing what they propose.

Most absurdly of all, we are asked t Government which prohibited the circulati Cavendish's Christmas card. The fact Government have behaved ridiculously over t should not prevent us from understanding possible to be ridiculous and tyrannical simu The fact that the Government have made themselves over the Cavendish affair should the fact that to tell a man who produces a br novelette or novel — which, having read it seem to me to contain much significant info that when he sends his Christmas card to friends, it will be illegal if any newspaper reproduce its messages, does not seem the Government whose attitude to the Official Sec June will be something on which we can plac reliance and to which we can give absolute cre

From the point of the Cavendish affair, it is to understand exactly the Government with wh dealing. I repeat that I do not think that Mr. C Christmas card contained much of significa important to remember that Mr. Cavendish is Wright is said to be by Government so disgruntled failure", who wants to get his own b security services for paying him an inadequate p is a man who thinks that he has something to context of the Bill, it is worth noting exactly so things that he does say and that the Governme suppress.

There was a time when every word of Mr. C Christmas card would have resulted in the edit *Sunday Times* and *The Observer* going to priso been reproduced in their newspapers. If they had for instance, Mr. Cavendish's view that

"May is always a beautiful time in Berlin—a time for picnics",

that would have been an offence that would result in a criminal prosecution.

However, there is more to the Christmas card than that. Mr. Cavendish went on to "confess"—I use his words exactly—that when he read stories that were already currently in circulation and already published in newspapers of MI5 complicity in events in Northern Ireland, of the so-called Loyalist strike in particular, they "tie in with many events to which I have been privy over the last ten years".

Indeed, Mr. Cavendish is explicit about Ireland:

"MI5 were bitterly jealous of MI6's move into Ulster, since they believed that Northern Ireland was clearly their territory as part of the United Kingdom, and information which is now emerging seems to confirm that MI5 took active steps to 'sabotage' the work of SIS . . . Smear campaigns were being organised against anybody of consequence who appeared to be sympathetic to the position of the Catholic minority in Ulster or who showed that he believed in a settlement based on radical changes in the Northern-Southern Irish relationship. Among those targeted were Edward Heath, Harold Wilson, Edward Short, roughly twenty other MPs and also the first Catholic Chief Constable of the RUC".

It seems to me, as it will seem to many of my hon. Friends, that these are matters not so much for suppression as for investigation. It seems to me—as, I think, it will seem to many hon. Members of all parties and, indeed, to the country—that a Government who choose to suppress such charges are not a Government who can legitimately say to the House, "Wait until June. We shall produce something that is acceptable in that particular."

Nor has the Government's conduct concerning the Bill done anything to increase confidence in the Government's integrity over this matter. I am sure that hon. Members of all parties will deeply resent the notion that there are some subjects that are too important for the House of Commons to discuss on Fridays. This is an ideal subject for private Members' legislation, for it is a classic——

Mr. Hurd *indicated dissent*——

Mr. Hattersley: By blowing his exasperation, the Home Secretary demonstrates my point exactly. It is ideal for the purpose on this occasion, because it is a classic example of Parliament attempting to restrain an authoritarian Executive. Whether the Home Secretary knows it or not, that is a large part of what the House of Commons is for.

The hon. Member for Aldridge-Brownhills said that he found some irony — or perhaps he used the word paradox — in the distinction of attitudes between individuals when they moved from one side of the House to the other. Irony or paradox was a charitable way of describing it. I am sure that he is no more surprised by the change in attitude than I am, because the nature of the problem is that Governments — I freely admit, all Governments—are over-inclined to secrecy. Nobody is suggesting for a moment that it is a party issue. As I understand the hon. Gentleman, when he talks of wanting to curtail Governments, it is not this Government whom he wants to curtail, but Governments in general. On a private Members' day, the House of Commons should say that there are some things that are for the House of Commons and strong occasions when the House of Commons insists on imposing its will on the Government.

If any of the weaker-minded members of the 1922 Committee are here, I shall provoke a small groan by saying the words, "when we are next in governm me explain my point. When next the Labour p government, I have no doubt that there will be tir Ministers curse under their breath the passing o through all its stages, because there will be thing shall want to suppress. Looking at the matter objectivity of Opposition, we realise that it will be in the future as it was in the past. We shall often suppress things that we should not be allowed to The House of Commons should prevent us fro that when our time comes, as it should pre Government from doing it now.

Mr. Ivan Lawrence (Burton): As I understand hon. Gentleman's argument, it is based main pouring scorn on the Government for trying to stable door after the horse has shot away, par pouring scorn on the handling of the Cavendish Wright cases. He has not suggested that it would h wrong to bolt the door in the first place and stopped the horse from leaving. If that is so, will to any part of the Bill of my hon. Friend the Me Aldridge-Brownhills (Mr. Shepherd) that de bolting the door in the Wright or Cavendish ca does not, would it not be better for the House to w Governmeat proposals appear, which would door?

Mr. Hattersley: Had the hon. and learned Ge not intervened, I should not have been so unkind that on Sunday morning on television he promised hon. Friends and the British people that the Secretary would describe his proposals for a Bil morning's debate——

Mr. Lawrence: I said that the Home Secretary describe his reasons for opposing the Bill, as he h

Mr. Hattersley: The hon. and learned Ge promised us that we would be told what the alt was.

Let me answer the hon. and learned Gent question directly. The point about the bolting of th door is covered in the Bill in two ways. First, t Member for Aldridge-Brownhill does not touch s of the Official Secrets Act, which has an enormo direct influence on security matters in general, and of the terms — not all — that the hon. Ge suggests. Secondly, by defining and differe between those which are genuine secrets and thos are not, he makes a group of secrets still sub penalties, were they to be revealed.

There is nothing now in section 2 that preve horse leaving the stable with the same alacrity tha be able to leave if the Bill is brought into operati the secrets that I have listed this morning as being to attempts at Government suppression have stable. The Government have been trying to bolt th not because they thought the horse could be within the premises, but because they wanted to s British people knowing what was going on — alternative, which is to stop those who may be our e or potential enemies.

Mr. Campbell-Savours: May I take my righ Friend back to the issue of Cavendish as against th of Wright? Is it not true that the Government, in tr prevent Mr. Cavendish from publishing, misund

[Mr. Campbell-Savours]

the position? Mr. Cavendish has not worked for the security services for a long time—for decades. All that he has said about what happened in the 1970s is based on hearsay. He has no evidence—he has simply purloined the material from others and put it in a Christmas card. Why are the Government so sensitive to what he has to say, when he does not back it with evidence?

Mr. Hattersley: As I hope I made clear, I was not enormously impressed by what Mr. Cavendish wrote. In a sense, that makes the Government's attitude in suppressing him all the more absurd. I repeat that the Government have behaved absurdly over Cavendish and Wright. When my next book comes out, I hope that the Attorney-General is prepared to promote its sales in America in the way that he promoted the sales of Mr. Wright's book. I do not think that half a million copies would have gone into American homes had it not been for the Government's activities.

While the Government have made asses of themselves, or a single ass of their collective self, over these matters, it is enormously important for the House and the country to understand that simply because the Government behaved foolishly does not mean that they did not behave tyrannically. They were absurd to do what they did, and in a democracy that was wrong. Today we are considering not the absurdity but the iniquity of Government. Because of that record, I could not say that everything will be all right in June when the Government introduce their new proposals.

As I understand it, and certainly as I understood the Home Secretary on the radio this morning, when he was so emollient that for a moment I believed he would support the Bill, one of the Government's principal objections is not the context of the Bill, about which the Home Secretary was remarkably eloquent during his speech, but the occasion on which the Bill was presented to Parliament. That raises a third question of principle. The first is the content of the Bill, which I support on principle. The second is the Government's record on those matters. I am not prepared to cast a vote that suggests that I trust the Government on that.

The third is the Government's attitude towards Parliament. At 2.30 pm we are voting not simply for a free press but for a free Parliament, a Parliament that is not prepared to be told by the Executive that this is not a subject that we should discuss, and upon which it is not prepared to be told by the Prime Minister that it is too complicated, technical and important for us to deal with on this occasion. For all those reasons, I hope and believe that my hon. Friends will support the Bill.

11.37 am

Sir Ian Gilmour (Chesham and Amersham): The issue on which the right hon. Member for Birmingham, Sparkbrook (Mr. Hattersley) ended is extremely important, and I shall return to it in a moment.

I am proud to be a sponsor of the Bill of my hon. Friend the Member for Aldridge-Brownhills (Mr. Shepherd), which he introduced so ably. I listened carefully to what my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary said. I shall not lavish compliments on him, because it would embarrass him in more than one way. But I am not sure that his high qualities were necessarily an advantage to the Government this morning. Asquith was a Prime Minist much in the news lately. I think that it w once said of him that Asquith's lucidity disadvantage when he had nothing to say right hon. Friend's shining integrity is disadvantage to the Government when he h essentially shabby case.

Since the gravamen of the case is that t claim, in effect, a unique and exclusive rig these matters and that my hon. Friend th Aldridge-Brownhills is badly out of step a in attempting to do so himself, it is relevant Government's handling of those matters ov months, to see how justified that claim is, the light of the principles that my hon. Frie his Bill.

Like, I imagine, every other Member o have read "Spycatcher", and there is no qu it is a shocking book, written out of malic should never have been written, and it sho seen the light of day. I entirely sympat Government's original attempt to stop it And of course, I entirely agree that the should be kept secret. But the question is whom those secrets should be kept. It is powers from which we wish to whithold kn security services and other matters, not behalf of whom the security services are s operating. Indeed, a good working rule w that if the Russians know something, the can know it too. As we can confidently as Russians are capable of reading the Australi and of buying "Spycatcher" in America, t know all that is contained in it. If the Go followed tht simple rule, they would have sav a great deal of trouble and the taxpayer a money. There are three principles or tests in and my hon. Friend's Bill contains them.

The first applies only to a Governme democratic society, and the second tw Governments of any society. The first is t desirable the end, there are limits to the Government can use to attain it, because t those means would endanger the basis of th our society. In a free society, the end does n means.

The two principles that should apply to democratic or not, are, first, that a Governme at least in accordance with common sense a that the means employed should have som chance of attaining the desired end.

To prevent the press from doing its p reporting — not, I emphasise, disclosing — great public interest, the Government have re indiscriminate use of injunctions. That is a rev practice that obtained before the Licensing Ac end in 1695, and is quite unacceptable in a One of the greatest prides of our society du 200 years has been that, unlike practically country, we have had no prior restraints on Unfortunately, the Government have broke tradition, and both Lord Bridge and Lord Ol out what a perilous path the Government were by doing so.

The Government may say, "We have onl injunctions; it is the courts that have granted

is true, but it is no part of a Conservative Government to makes asses of the judiciary or to persuade its members to make asses of themselves. The humiliating subservience of the judiciary to the Executive in the 17th century is well known. I hope that the current judiciary will take a careful look at the 17th century.

The second principle—that a Government should show proper common sense in their actions—has not been adhered to either. For the Government seriously to argue, and for the courts seriously to accept, that British newspapers should not publish what has been written about and is common knowledge in Australia, the United States and many other countries, is not just a defiance of common sense but a groteque absurdity. Why should the British people be singled out as the only people in the world to be kept in ignorance of what everyone else knows? Both Lord Bridge and Lord Oliver made that point well. One of them spoke about the idiocy of trying to create a cordon sanitaire around the country.

On the third principle—that the means used by the Government should have some likelihood of attaining the end—the Government have again fallen down. As the right hon. Member for Sparkbrook said, we all hope that the Attorney-General will shower injunctions on any books that we might write. I have always enjoyed rather modest sales of my books, but obviously that can easily be remedied with the help of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State and the Attorney-General. Saatchi and Saatchi could not have promoted Mr. Wright's book better than the Government have done. The only result they have achieved so far has been the promotion of his book. It is rather fortunate that the rules that apply to the improper use of expenditure by local government councillors do not apply also to central Government, because if they did some of my right hon. Friends would face a rather hefty bill.

The secrecy laws should be directed against hostile Governments, not the British public. The Bill is a courageous and successful attempt to deal with that. If the principles of the Bill had been followed, the Government would not be in such serious trouble in these matters. My hon. Friend the Member for Aldridge-Brownhills outlined his Bill so carefully and fully, and defended it so well, that I do not need to take up the time of the House by discussing it further.

I wish, instead, to concentrate on the Government's attitude to the Bill. We all know that for many years—and for long before this Government came to office—the House of Commons has been a pretty poor thing in many ways. It has lacked independence and has been bound hand and foot to and by the Executive. However, usually the conventions of politeness and courtesy prevail, and the House is flattered and cajoled into thinking that it enjoys some power and decides matters of moment. We all know perfectly well that it enjoys nothing of the sort and that matters of moment are decided in Whitehall, not Westminster.

The Executive does not usually flaunt its power over us, however, and the decencies are preserved. Today, those conventions have been abandoned and what Burke called the decent draperies of life have been torn asunder. The Executive is dictating to the House in all its naked crudity. I do not understand why the Government are so frightened of the House of Commons. We all know that that is a much better way of producing legislation than by the Executive sitting around in secret.

As my right hon. Friend the Home Secretar House will have to discuss these matters when his Bill forward—unless the Government sh Speaker with injunctions. I daresay that that wil not happen—although, as my hon. Friend th for Aldridge-Brownhills said, one cannot be t anything these days. The Government today what they have been doing in the courts durin few months. They are still wearing the same bo that they wore in the courts. Their imposition line Whip is the parliamentary equivalen injunctions that they have taken out against alm serious newspapers. In both cases, the procedur misconceived and authoritarian and a sorry Executive arrogance. I shall certainly oppose afternoon.

11.47 am

Dr. David Owen (Plymouth, Devonport): Thi a day on which the House exerts its control Executive, and that would be a day of pride. Inste probably be a day of shame. The Home Secr given the game away. I did not expect him specifically when the Government intended to their mind, but he has told us that it will be in said that there would be a White Paper, and Government decision.

If the Bill is committed to a Standing Commit have moved on to the House of Lords Government make up their mind on the issue time, the Government will tell us their view of a has already been discussed. It is not necessary Home Secretary or a junior Minister to p definitively on all the Bill's clauses during its C stage. It would be an advantage, of course, wer do so, but the Bill can go through its stages wit Government giving their definitive view of it.

The Government's view about the Bill could clear in another place where it could be amen brought back to this House. I will come later to th why many of us are concerned about the Gove position. The reasons relate to the whole que closing the stable door or blocking the mechanism the current position, if the House refuses to give a Second Reading, we accept that at the very leas continue with the present fiasco of the Official Sec 1911 for at least another year. That is an e important year to lose.

The Home Secretary was not able to tell us Government feel are the sticking points on the Bill not able to say whether they were concerned ab judicial review of the over-classification of docum the public interest defence for the public disclo confidential information. The Home Secretary over the facts that his immediate predecessor undertaking, in the wake of the decision taken European Court of Human Rights in the telephone tapping case, to implement the recom tions of the Law Commission on the remedies breach of confidence and the fact that the public defence in the Bill is modelled on the Law Comm recommendations.

It would not have been too hard for the Secretary to tell us whether he agreed with his pred and the Law Commission. After all, the Governme been aware of the recommendations for many

[Dr. David Owen]

However, we must wait until June. We are content to do that. We will receive the Government's view in June. If the Government agree to impose fundamental stops on this legislation, they will have to go to Conservative Members and explain the case for a three-line Whip. However, to apply a three-line Whip on a private Member's Bill in this way is an utter disgrace and ought to be rejected decisively.

Mr. Marlow: What is a little confusing for many of us on the Conservative Benches who wish to support the Government is why the Government take the view that it would not be helpful to them, if they are going to make up their mind in June, to have had the views of the House in a Committee stage before June. Surely that would be helpful for the Government?

Dr. Owen: I totally agree with the hon. Gentleman, at least on this occasion. I confess that I for one would be ready to serve on the Committee. Indeed, it would be unusual because in Committee on this Bill there might be many right hon. and hon. Members who have held office as Home Secretary, Foreign Secretary or Defence Secretary. They would be ready to give their judgment on this private Member's legislation. That would be immensely valuable for the House.

We have all been down this secrecy path before. Those of us who have been Ministers are all sinners. The ABC case, which was brought in good faith, turned out to be a complete disaster. The Attorney-General at the time was careful to consult, but made the point that he had taken the decision himself to pursue the trial. I initially said no, and I wish to hell that I had continued to say no. There was a most extraordinary exchange during the trial. A witness was asked to look at a photograph of a sign at the entrance to the military base. The exchange went like this:

"Is that the name of your unit?

I cannot answer that question, that is a secret.

Is that the board that is up outside the door of your unit?

Yes.

Read it out to the jury.

I cannot do that, that is a secret."

Indirectly I was a party to that farce. We have all been party to such farces and it is high time that the farce was ended.

I have concluded that the Government are not the best body to end the farce. When we enter Government, we begin to accept all the advice of officialdom and begin to believe the case for secrecy and to a great extent we lose our common-sense. We need the common-sense and common wisdom of the House of Commons. The hon. Member for Aldridge-Brownhills (Mr. Shepherd) is to be congratulated on bringing forward his Bill. It is an honour to be a sponsor of that legislation.

I want to consider the most serious reason why I believe that legislation is important now. I have read "Spycatcher" and I was appalled. I did not expect to be, and I was rather lulled into believing that it was a book that might be acceptable. The book contains information which should not have seen the light of day under any circumstances. I have watched as invaluable secrets have been disseminated over the past eight years in an appalling way. We have seen secrets pouring out of GCHQ—the ABC trial related to GCHQ—and we have seen the effect of the Government's good intentions in trying to keep things secret. However, they have allowed massive amounts of secrets to come out. The we have lost very valuable secrets be to grapple with this issue.

I agree with my right hon. Frie Morley and Leeds, South (Mr. R "Spycatcher" should have been pr published. However, more important, book "Their Trade is Treachery" prevented from being written. I investigative journalism had been ca Economy with the truth was not pr Robert Armstrong in the Supreme C Wales. Sir Robert was a victim of the Her Majesty's Government being e truth.

It is now clear from the eviden Armstrong gave recently in a United Mr. Justice Scott that he had not bee gave evidence in Australia that there w between Sidgwick and Jackson Ltd. Chapman Pincher's book "Their Trad an anonymous member of the securi services. Nor was Sir Robert even info and Jackson had been told, through t the security services that they were action to be taken to prevent publicati suggesting any modification to the te Sir Robert knew of that only when, a saw an advance copy of Chapman Pi book "A Web of Deception".

The House of Commons must have is inconceivable that senior members intelligence services did not know of t by the Prime Minister at 10 Downi attended by Sir Robert Armstrong— the Home Secretary—to discuss the Prime Minister should make on pub Trade is Treachery". That meeting had a decision not to seek an ex-parte inj publication of the book "Their Trade i decision was based on an examination b of the page proofs that Sir Robert Ar before 12 February 1981. Did Sir Rob page proofs had come from? Did he be been stolen? And why was he not told given to the security and intelligence se

That is a classic example of se Government machine preventing seri decisions. We have that farce. The old operates. That informal mechanism for those circumstances has been used befo that the old boy network excluded the P Robert Armstrong and, presumably, th and the Foreign Secretary. That raises Who did know? What did senior offici and intelligence services know about it? I wanted Sir Roger Hollis to be named in t they let that book out? They must hav source of Chapman Pincher's inform Wright.

A good book has been written abo called, "Ferrets not Skunks". There are some skunks. Peter Wright is a skunk. our words. He is no hero. It is outrage seems to want to publish every petty pie anyone who has ever worked in the secu

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there is some honour about it. It is an outrageous breach of honour. We cannot legislate for honour, but at least let us put some legislation on the statute book which provides some way of getting to grips with this serious and massive problem.

The problem is no longer what to do about "Spycatcher". That book has long been in the public domain and everyone has copies of it. If the House had a proper scrutiny of the security and intelligence services, we would be examining why the security and intelligence services, who are paid effectively and directly by us, did not tell their responsible Ministers about what was happening. Are they still holding office, or have they been sacked, as they should have been? It is an outrage that nobody seems to have discovered the evidence that Sir Robert Armstrong gave in the courts a few months ago. That is far more serious than anything that came from New South Wales. It reveals that the security and intelligence services are not even telling the Prime Minister about what is happening. I do not believe that that can be tolerated any longer.

The House has been totally excluded from any form of scrutiny of the intelligence and security services. In the debate that was instituted on these Benches the Home Secretary seemed to be more open-minded about the question of scrutiny. He wanted time to take it away and look at it. It is high time that he came back to the House with detailed proposals.

Mr. Dalyell *rose*——

Dr. Owen: If the hon. Gentleman will forgive me I will not give way.

It is high time we grappled with the absurdity of the Official Secrets Act. It is pretty pointless making party political points on both sides of the House. We have all failed to carry out our responsibilities in Government. It is now time for the House of Commons to take this issue on, and today is the day. Today is the day, above all, because we are debating a private Member's Bill and all hon. Members can say goodbye to the Whips. It is a day when the Patronage Secretary can get stuffed, and that is what he should have done.

12 noon

Sir Geoffrey Finsberg (Hampstead and Highgate): As the first non-Privy Councillor permitted to take part in the debate, may I start by saying that I found the speech of the right hon. Member for Plymouth, Devonport (Dr. Owen) very interesting. He said that it was time the Home Secretary took on board possible scrutiny of the security services. He will remember the rather pleasant four years that he and I spent on the old Defence and External Affairs Sub-Committee of the Estimates Committee. It met in private and, in a limited sense, performed the duties the right hon. Gentleman has just mentioned. The problem of the present Select Committee on Defence is that it meets in public and cannot, therefore, do the same sort of work as the Committee on which we served. Perhaps there is a lesson to be learned from the fact that the more that comes into the public domain in that way, the less one actually knows.

The right hon. Gentleman said that the Bill should be allowed to proceed and that it should go into Committee. However, I think that his timing might have been a trifle awry. He said that, by the time the Government White Paper was published, the Bill would be in
I have a feeling that it might not have go
He said that he would then expect Govern
to start changing the Bill dramatically i
come back for the overspill Session. He
ministerial experience, as I do fro
parliamentary draftsmen cannot work a
something as complex as this. There
happens, this Bill will not get through
Therefore, we will be no worse off if we a
of my right hon. Friend the Home Secret
explain why I think that we should do so.

My right hon. Friend the Member fo
Amersham (Sir I. Gilmour) made a fascin
He said that, if the Russians know abou
people can too. Has he never heard of d
disinformation? Does he not recall the sto
to the Germans about D day, the mo
Enigma? We cannot accept that simple st
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I am here not because there is a Whip
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Member for Aldridge-Brownhills (Mr. S
usual purpose of a private Member's Bill i
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security right across the board. That is why
that this is the right way to do it.

The other purpose of a private Member'
forward a vehicle in which the Government
[Interruption.] This may be a matter that i
uneasiness. I am trying to say that my h
Member for Aldridge-Brownhills was
consider the concept, but a private Member'
right way to deal with a subject such as th

Mr. Frank Cook (Stockton, North) *rose*

Sir Geoffrey Finsberg: I shall give wa
Gentleman in a moment.

The Government cannot permit the B
when they have said very firmly that t
produce a White Paper and to legislate.

I wish to take up a point made by the
Secretary, the right hon. Member for Mor
South (Mr. Rees) who put forward
proposition which is worth considering. T
remember that there is a procedure for a Bill to
Reading and then to go to a Special Standi
When I was a junior Minister, that procedure
mental health Bill. It provided an opportu
close examination. But it has a drawback: it i
The Committee may have only a limited num
and it must report within a limited period.

Perhaps we should consider the othe
forward by Lord Renton when he was a M
House—the idea of providing an opport
production of a White Paper, allied to a d
is how the Law Commission works—and
it to a Select Committee. That might be the
way forward and would take up the points
right hon. Members for Devonport and fo

[Sir Geoffrey Finsberg]

Leeds, South. That would provide the opportunity for everyone to give the evidence needed. It would give Parliament a chance to consider what the rights of Parliament were against the rights of the Executive. I put that thought into my right hon. Friend's mind to see whether he would like to consider it. That would still give us the opportunity to have the Act of Parliament in the next Session.

Mr. Marlow May I put the same point to my hon. Friend? What would be the disadvantage to the Government if the House, through a Standing Committee, could discuss and debate the issues in the Bill before the Government come forward with their own proposals?

Sir Geoffrey Finsberg: I would very much resent being a member of a Committee, sitting week after week and blocking the private Members' list, unless the Leader of the House opens up a second Committee, and, after three months or so, finding that all my work has been negated because there is a totally new Bill. I would rather proceed in the way suggested, because it is a more open way of proceeding.

The right hon. Member for Birmingham, Sparkbrook (Mr. Hattersley) made a rather inflammatory statement last weekend. He said that he hoped that Conservative Members would have sufficient guts to come and vote for the Bill. I am sure that the right hon. Gentleman has a greater knowledge of guts than I have. Having listened to his speech, I know why it is apparently rumoured that he will no longer be a contributor to *Punch*.

Mr. Frank Cook: I do not know how the hon. Gentleman manages to find that comment inflammatory, but I hope that it has illuminated something for him. He seemed to be suggesting that the hon. Member for Aldridge-Brownhills (Mr. Shepherd) had no right to introduce such a Bill. Is he really suggesting that there is any subject, or group of subjects, that we, as elected representatives of parliamentary constituencies, must consider to be outside our care or outside our specific, individual influence? If that is so, it is clearly running counter to any idea that I have ever had about representative parliamentary democracy.

Sir Geoffrey Finsberg: I am glad that I gave way to the hon. Gentleman because, clearly, there is a misunderstanding. I was trying to draw the distinction between a Bill and a discussion. My hon. Friend the Member for Aldridge-Brownhills said, quite rightly, three times that we should discuss this matter. Clearly, I did not get my point over to the hon. Gentleman. I am entitled to my view, and my hon. Friend is entitled to his view. We may both be right, but, in my view, this is not an occasion for a private Member's Bill which requires such detailed legislation. The subject is different. One may have debates willy-nilly, and as often as one wants.

I wonder why there is such sudden interest in the subject. We knew that there was a long gap. The former Home Secretary, the right hon. Member for Morley and Leeds, South made the point that he was not able to proceed because the Liberals wanted too high a price to leave the Government in power to produce legislation. That is understandable and acceptable. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State made the point that this Government tried, but got their fingers burnt. A Bill is now two thirds of the way forward. I hope that my right hon. Friend will accept that there is a little uneasiness about the word "early". He may be following the convention that one must not anticipate the contents of the Gracious Speech. If that is what he says, we can accept the word "early".

What is the Official Secrets Act? The trouble is that there is a blurring in the public mind and the media between sections 1 and 2. On taking office, the right hon. Member for Sparkbrook and I signed a document under the Official Secrets Act, which is binding lifelong. He and I have no right at our discretion to say that, in the national interest, we should reveal something that has come into our possession. If one does not accept that concept, one should not accept office. There is a duty in accepting office.

During my period in office, particularly at the Department of Health and Social Security, more and more documents appeared in the public domain. Such documents were restricted or confidential. Copies appeared. They were not leaked, they were clearly stolen and, perhaps, sold to the press. There is a real danger. When they are considering ideas for policy, Ministers in effect play ping-pong. They bounce ideas to and fro to try to find out the facts and to determine reactions. If every concept were to appear in the public domain, Ministers would become much more wary about even putting ideas forward. Ministers may meet and discuss without the benefit of the knowledge and advice of the Civil Service. Such knowledge and advice are of enormous value. The overwhelming bulk of the Civil Service produces impartial advice on which Ministers can draw and test their opinions. That process is at risk if matters get into the public domain, unless something can be released because there is no further value in its being kept secret.

I have one piece of advice for my right hon. Friend the Leader of the House. I only wish that there might be a clause in a piece of legislation that would retrospectively cancel the pensions of those who break their oaths, whether they reside in the United Kingdom or in Australia.

Where is the massive demand coming from? Let it be clear that it is not coming from our constituents. On average, I receive 60 letters a day. Hampstead and Highgate is a rather literate area. I have received five letters on this subject, two of which have come from journalists.

I wonder whether we are not being pushed into believing that there is a demand for a major change that might go beyond the removal of the section that has worried us for a long time.

In a debate about the press in another place this week, Lord Longford said:

> The popularity and credibility of the British press has never been at a lower ebb . . . Many of its employees behave routinely in a fashion more appropriate to wild beasts than professional writers . . . A significant portion of the tabloid press is wholeheartedly devoted to peddling fantasies, often malevolent ones."—[*Official Report, House of Lords;* Vol. 491, c. 1314.]

We must be cautious before we give in to any sort of pressure.

If we are to change something that has existed for over 60 years, slightly amended—at least one Government found it difficult to do so, and a second were rebuffed—

it would be sensible to wait a further three months for the White Paper. I shall certainly vote against the Second Reading of the Bill.

12.16 pm

Mr. Tony Benn (Chesterfield): I shall support the Bill to prolong the debate—not that I think that the Bill goes anything like far enough.

We have had an interesting debate and the hon. Member for Hampstead and Highgate (Sir G. Finsberg) made a powerful case for the cancellation of *Hansard*, because if people were to read what was said here hon. Members might be nervous of speaking. Then when the right hon. Member for Plymouth, Devonport (Dr. Owen) offered to go on the Committee I thought that that would be another little group that he could split into five parts.

We have had a marvellous debate, but the House should be candid with the public, who will be reading *Hansard*, probably with some interest.

Why are we having the debate? It is because certain public servants, for one reason or another and in many cases honourably, have spoke the truth on matters about which the Government did not want the truth to be known. Sarah Tisdall was betrayed by *The Guardian*, which is supposed to be a liberal newspaper, and served a sixth-month sentence. In my opinion, that woman was moved by conscience. Clive Ponting came out with information that was embarrassing to the then Secretary of State for Defence. Cathy Massiter said that people who were active in the peace movement were having their telephones tapped. We have also had the case of Peter Wright, and I shall return to him later. There was the 30-year rule on Windscale and the fire of 1957. The only leak that the Government are afraid of at Windscale is of information about what happens there. They do not mind radioactive leaks, but if information gets out it could be damaging to their nuclear policy.

That latter point matters very much because as Secretary of State I received claims for compensation from people who died of leukaemia as a result of working at Windscale. As Secretary of State, I did not know that the Prime Minister of the day had suppressed information that would have been relevant to people who had a claim.

Mr. Ray Whitney (Wycombe): The right hon. Gentleman referred to the case of Mr. Ponting and the embarrassment that it might have caused the Government. When I was head of the Overseas Information Department and the right hon. Member for Plymouth, Devonport (Dr. Owen) was Foreign Secretary, information came across my desk many times that would have been deeply embarrassing to the Government if I had published it or used the Ponting method. For example, the conduct of the then economic policy of this country. Would the right hon. Gentleman have approved of my leaking that information?

Mr. Benn: I am talking about people who were motivated by conscience to reveal what they thought should be in the public domain. I am not arguing about other examples—that information would have come up if something had happened.

An interesting factor in the debate is the way in which alliances have run. As the right hon. Member for Devonport said, this is not a party matter. We have seen an alliance of former Home Secretaries—who have been involved to some extent and who do not want the degree of freedom of information that, on the whole, the public want, even if they do not write to the hon. Member for Hampstead and Highgate about it. The public are not fools. They have watched Colonel Oliver North being grilled before the American Senate under what I would call the 30-minute rule, whereby the news comes out as soon as the event has occurred. Here it is concealed. People want to know more about what Government do. Of course they do. Why else was there such a struggle to elect people to Parliament in the first place?

I must say one thing for the Government: I understand why they have a three-line Whip. I understand why they sent Sir Robert Armstrong to Australia and ruined the end of his Civil Service life. I understand why they brought injunctions against the newspapers. The Government do not want what the security services are doing in Britain to come out. There is no point in saying that the Government have been silly and absurd and made people look ridiculous. In a limited way I can confirm, from my knowledge as a Minister in a Government whom Peter Wright tried to destabilise, what he said happened. Who benefited? The Conservative party. That is why the Prime Minister defends MI5. It helped to get rid of the right hon. Member for Old Bexley and Sidcup (Mr. Heath). I have evidence of that as well. The right hon. Gentleman must know—this appears to have come out of the Cavendish Christmas card, which I have not read because I am not on his mailing list—that efforts were made to discredit him as leader of the Conservative party. I have evidence of some of the reasons.

Of course the Prime Minister does not want to bring to light the process by which Wilson was removed and the right hon. Member for Old Bexley and Sidcup discredited. MI5 is still doing it. Does anyone think that it ended when Peter Wright resigned? MI5 is still discrediting people whom it regards as acting contrary to the national interest, as MI5 defines that national interest. Does anyone think that the fabrication of false information and its publication in the foreign press ended when the Labour Government left office? Of course it did not. It still continues. That is what the three-line Whip and the threats in the press are about. Any Conservative Member who wonders how such a nice Government could do such a horrid thing had better think about the reality behind the argument.

Then we come to this marvellous principle about confidentiality—whatever one's position in the public service, until one dies everything learnt while there must remain secret. The whole idea is absurd. The hallelujah chorus does not rely on press releases; it relies on Bernard Ingham, who is paid to issue confidential information daily to benefit the Prime Minister. Whatever damage Clive Ponting did to the right hon. Member for Henley (Mr. Heseltine) was nothing compared with the damage done to the right hon. Gentleman by Bernard Ingham on the Prime Minister's instructions. A Prime Minister who talks about keeping everything secret but who, using a civil servant, pumps out secret papers to get rid of a Cabinet colleague is an absolute disgrace.

There has always been a highly selective leaking of confidential information. I must confess that I have rather less sympathy than perhaps I should with all the pompous editorials about the freedom of the press. The warnings about what the security services have been doing in Britain have been given time and time again over the years by my

[Mr. Benn]

hon. Friends. But when we said it, those editors said it was the paranoid Left talking about those wicked "conspiracies."

But when there is interference with the papers' right to publish what they want on a Sunday they are on their high horses and talking about the need for a free press. They know what we ought to tell the public through *Hansard* today: government is lubricated by the selective leaking and briefing that go on all the time. Therefore, it is in the interests of the press to support the wider question.

I did not quite understand the allusion made by my right hon. Friend the Member for Morley and Leeds, South (Mr. Rees) to Chapman Pincher; perhaps he will explain it later. My right hon. Friend thought that Chapman Pincher should be prosecuted. Chapman Pincher has been the press officer for the Right wing of MI5 for years.

Mr. Campbell-Savours: He admitted it.

Mr. Benn: I do not know whether he admitted it, but it makes no difference to what is happening. We all know what is going on. The service is being protected on the basis of confidentiality.

I shall now deal with the legitimate questions that the House should discuss when this matter arises. Who wants to know the individual secrets? But the question of what is and should be secret is a policy matter. For example, on defence, everyone accepts that one does not want to let out information about the performance of one's latest aircraft or missile, but the policy of the Ministry of Defence is a matter of public concern. It is the same with commercial information. No one wants to make available to our competitors abroad information that could damage British industry. Nobody thinks that the Budget should be announced by the *Financial Times* the day before — except Hugh Dalton, who had a little arrangement with the *London Evening Standard*, which managed to get the information out a little earlier than *Hansard*. Everyone accepts that if one leaks one's intention to devalue the day before, one has devalued from the moment of the leak. No one thinks that personal information should be available, although the Government have never answered the point that MI5 is wired into the Department of Health and Social Security computer in Newcastle. Personal information is made available to the security services, but the Government wish to conceal that.

It is for Parliament to decide the categories of secrecy. For my part, I do not want to know any of the secrets that the security services know, if those secrets would impinge upon national security. If one hears that there is to be a bomb attack tomorrow, one does not want Parliament to discuss it today because that means that one can do nothing about it. However, the security services are part of the defence of the nation. We know the identity of the chiefs of staff and we should always know who are the heads of the security services. We know the defence budget; we should know the security services budget and we should certainly know and discuss and decide who is a legitimate target for surveillance. In the Prime Minister's view, it is the "enemy within". Anyone who takes a view contrary to hers in industrial matters is now undoubtedly the subject of inquiry by the security services.

In the end, those who work in the security services have to rely on their consciences. It is very important for us to say, and for every generation to repeat, that conscience is above the law because the law is man made. Whether at the time of Nuremburg or long before or today, people are sometimes so deeply moved by what they think is being done secretly that they are prepared to break the law and take the consequences, as Sarah Tisdall did. That is the foundation of the liberties of the people of this country and it has to be said.

The underlying question is, "What is the real issue?" As has emerged from the debate, it is the relationship between Parliament and the Executive. What are the powers that Prime Ministers use—be they this Prime Minister or the other Prime Ministers to whom I shall come in a moment? The powers of the Royal Prerogative, are abused by Prime Ministers to preserve the security services from public scrutiny. Ministers are appointed by the prerogative, as are the heads of the security services. The security services have the power to bug and burgle under the prerogative, just as the Postmaster General had the power to open letters under the prerogative. With that power, the Prime Minister decides on classification, defines security — through her Ministers — prosecutes, or orders injunctions, appoints the judges and then appoints the chairman of the BBC to ensure that there is no public discussion of matters that she does not want to be discussed.

The BBC is supposed to be an independent agent. When its programme on the security services was banned, it should have broadcast 45 minutes of silence, punctuated by a statement that the Government had banned the programme. Through the powers of patronage, the Prime Minister has reduced the BBC to a crawling, creeping servant of Government policy. She has followed that today with a three-line Whip designed to do to Tory Members what she has done to the BBC.

To be fair, I should say that all Prime Ministers have been the same. In case hon. Members cannot wait for it to appear in my diaries, I should tell the House that James Callaghan was passionately opposed to a Freedom of Information Act. He loathed the idea of anyone knowing anything. There was a hint of memories of the armalite coming from the recesses of the mind during the speech of my right hon. Friend the Member for Morley and Leeds, South. No Executive wants Parliament, the public or the press to criticise it effectively. People should also think carefully about the deafening silence from Wilson and Callaghan on the revelations in Peter Wright's book——

Mr. Martin Flannery (Sheffield, Hillsborough): And on Chevaline.

Mr. Benn: There were other matters, too. The most important matter is the relationship between Prime Ministers and the security services. We do not know whether Prime Ministers know too much about the security services, or whether the security services know too much about Prime Ministers, but neither position is satisfactory.

I understand why the Government believe that, but I do not understand why Parliament accepts it. Today, we have the power, if we choose, to carry this Bill into Committee — no more than that. Not even the hon. Member for Aldridge-Brownhills (Mr. Shepherd), who introduced the Bill with a lucid speech, honestly believes that he will get it through with the entrenched power of the Premier against him. After all, the final reserves of

prerogative power of any Prime Minister is the witholding of honours from Tory Members who do not vote according to a three-line Whip. Peerages do not come so easily to those who have been difficult. I warn Conservative Members who might be influenced by the arguments that I understand they may not be invited to the royal garden parties if they are a bit rebellious.

But the House has the power to enforce its will today. By enforcing its will, it will not be endorsing the Act that would emerge from this Bill, but enforcing the right to debate the central questions at greater length. I have been in this place for far too long for my good, although that has been compensated for by the benefit which the House has received from my sacrifice. I did not think that I would live to be a Member of Parliament where clerks are vetted, research assistants are vetted, members of the press are vetted, Members are vetted and Mr. Speaker receives a briefing on behaviour from the Serjeant-at-Arms. I did not think that I would live to serve in a Parliament vetted by Government. We were elected by the people to check and control the Government. Until we get that right, we cannot complain if we continue to have the problems from which we have suffered in recent years.

12.34 pm

Mr. Edward Heath (Old Bexley and Sidcup): Let me join those who have congratulated my hon. Friend the Member for Aldridge-Brownhills (Mr. Shepherd) on the Bill that he has introduced today, and also on the way in which he has presented it. It displays a workmanship that is thorough, detailed and worthy of admiration. I therefore regret all the more that the Government have introduced an entirely separate question which, certainly in the press and probably in the rest of the media, detracts from the debate that we are having here on what is a central issue in modern politics: the display of information.

By decreeing a three-line Whip today, the Government are challenging the whole basis of private Members' time. This is the first occasion that anyone can recall, or find in history, on which a Whip of this kind has been issued. Having been a Whip for eight years, and Chief Whip for four of them, I remember well that we always set out to respect private Members' time — simply because the pressure of private Members on us was so great. That seems to have changed today. In that regard, I find myself in some sympathy with what the right hon. Member for Chesterfield (Mr. Benn) has been saying.

If we allow this to pass today, it will be cited in future by the Government as a satisfactory precedent for imposing three-line Whips on private Members' debates and legislation. That is entirely unacceptable, to me at any rate and, I hope, to the great majority of my colleagues on the Back Benches.

My right hon. Friend the Home Secretary used a phrase that I used just before him on the radio this morning: that it is not for a Government to decide issues. My hon. Friend the Member for Hampstead and Highgate (Sir G. Finsberg) said that the Government could not permit the Bill to be passed today. There is no question of the Government permitting or not permitting a Bill to go through: it is the House that does that. But my hon. Friend's words epitomise the attitude that the Government have only to decree something for it to happen.

My right hon. Friend the Home Secretary said that it was for the Government to propose and for the House to decide. That is quite correct. What he did not say was that, on a private Members' day, it is for private Members to propose as well as for the House to decide. My hon. Friend the Member for Aldridge-Brownhills was entirely right to propose a Bill of this kind, to which he attaches the greatest possible importance.

Like my hon. Friend, I regret that my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary was not able to deal with particular issues, and to say which of them he regarded as going in the right direction and which he would like to change. We shall accept my right hon. Friend's view that he is not in a position even to say that. However, let me tell him, my right hon. Friend the Leader of the House and my right hon. Friend the Government Chief Whip that, if a three-line Whip had not been imposed, they would have stood an infinitely greater chance of persuading us to tell my hon. Friend that — in view of the commitment to deal with the matter in June with a Bill in the next Session of Parliament — it might be best, after a full debate, to withdraw the Bill. However, the imposition of the Whip is a challenge to all of us to say, "Of, course we shall not ask you to withdraw the Bill. We shall not try to defeat it; we shall support it."

I believe that today's debate is valuable as well as important. It is said that the issue is very complex, and that we are such simple people that we cannot possibly deal with it; only the Prime Minister and the Home Secretary can do that. However, let me point out that, on the Floor of the House, there are many more people who have had to handle security matters, from the highest level downwards, than there are in the Cabinet or among junior Ministers. Those with any experience of such matters can now be numbered on fewer than the fingers on one hand. It is in the House that we can make a contribution, and, therefore, a debate in Committee would be extremely valuable. The timetable has been described by the right hon. Member for Chesterfield.

If the matter had been looked at from a rather different viewpoint, a more acceptable solution might have been found. It is said that my hon. Friend was told early on that the Government were going to carry out this programme, but I can find no trace of that in the correspondence that has passed. I have not handed that correspondence to the press or to anyone else, although it is not particularly secret or confidential.

There is no trace there of either the Prime Minister or the Home Secretary saying, "We give you this assurance that the Government are so far advanced with their plans that the White Paper will be published in June and there will be a Bill in the next session, so perhaps you might like to take some other subject." Firm undertakings have now been given. I sincerely hope that my right hon. Friends will be able to carry them out. I have had some experience of dealing with this subject in a White Paper and legislation, and I know what the difficulties are.

Another possible arrangement, although it is too late for it now, would have been the procedure which was followed in, I think, 1952 or 1953, when we had to reform the Army Act. Instead of going through the normal procedure, we set up a special Committee. I recall that Sir Patrick Spens was the chairman. All parties took part, and the sole purpose was to make agreed recommendations on what the new Army Act should be. It worked extraordinarily well. The result was that the Government felt able to accept all the recommendations without controversy. The matter came to the House and the Bill

[Mr. Edward Heath]

passed through quickly. If we had gone through the other processes, the Bill would have gone on for endless nights and we might never have reached an agreed solution. That is another means of dealing with a situation such as this if it is approached with the right attitude at the right time.

The right hon. Member for Plymouth, Devonport (Dr. Owen) and for Chesterfield dealt at considerable length, based on their own knowledge, with what is essentially the internal control of the security services. I am the first to agree that this is a matter of vital importance, particularly because of some of the information that has emerged in the past two or three years. It is not, however, covered by the Act which is being amended, or by the Bill. It is an entirely separate issue which deserves serious consideration by the House.

We are in an extremely silly position — we do not even admit the existence of the security services. There is no such thing as MI5 or MI6. There is no budget for them, because the House never discusses them. What a contrast that is with the United States. One year ago, I was asked to take part in a television programme in Washington. Sitting on one side of me was the head of the Central Intelligence Agency and on the other side was the head of the Federal Bureau of Investigation. They were both fully known, they both fully accepted their position, and they answered questions from us and the press. That is at least realistic.

As for control, I am still not absolutely convinced that the House, or representatives of it, are capable of controlling the security services. From my discussions in Washington, it is apparent that neither the leaders of the press nor Congress are satisfied that they control the inner workings of the security services. I should have thought that it had emerged clearly from the Irangate hearings that they do not control the inner workings of the security services.

Mr. Benn: Leaving aside parliamentary control, to which the right hon. Gentleman has referred, when he looks back on his experience, is he satisfied that there was adequate ministerial control of the security services when he was responsible for the Administration?

Mr. Heath: As far as I know, yes, because that was one of the matters on which I took a firm stand. I instituted machinery which dealt with these aspects. I have always believed that there must be severe limitations on the work of the security services internally, to say nothing of their activities overseas. I am perfectly prepared to consider any evidence which may be brought forward suggesting that that was not the case. So far, I have not seen any. From 1970 to early 1974, I believe that control was firm through the institution that I had established.

Mr. Campbell-Savours: Is it true that the right hon. Gentleman made a telephone call to a solicitor acting for Mr. Colin Wallace about developments which took place during that period in relation to him?

Mr. Heath: My solicitor? What is his name supposed to be?

Mr. Campbell-Savours: Acting for Mr. Colin Wallace.

Mr. Heath: No. I shall look up my telephone account. This is a separate question of the inner control of the security services. Secondly, we come to the question of clause 1 of the existing Act, which must be enforce although, as we realise full well, we are not always effec in achieving our aims by it.

The third part is the question of information and cla 2 of the existing Act. As has already been mentioned the election manifesto of 1970 I pledged the party eliminate unnecessary secrecy concerning the working Government and the operation of the Official Secrets A We put that in hand immediately by establishing Franks committee in the spring of 1971. It reported 1972. We then had discussions preparatory to introduc a Bill in 1974 if we had been re-elected. Those discussi were not especially helpful.

I invited the editors of all the press to No. 10 to disc with them the Franks report and the way in which could amend section 2 to meet the need for an open soci and a free press, while at the same time safeguarding su national interests as were natural. I am afraid that the o reply that I received was that section 2 should be wip out, nothing should be put in its place and everybo should be free to publish everything, except what ca under section 1. That was not acceptable to us. Indeed do not think it would be acceptable to any Governme or to the House of Commons. However, that is as far we got in those discussions, which I regarded as importa

On the second part, to eliminate unnecessary secre concerning the workings of Government, I believe that t is where we have all failed to move into the present decad I asked Sir Donald Maitland, my press officer, to discu with the lobby the abolition of the lobby. I have alwa regarded the lobby as a pernicious system, and still do. T only way in which we shall achieve open discussion is abolishing the lobby system and by the press having acce to officials and Ministers and having to declare, and bei able and free to declare to whom they have spoken a what people have said. Of course, that idea met enormo resistance from the lobby, which obstructed it — rather it flatly said that it would not accept abolition. W had not reached the stage of finally saying, "You a abolished."

I had open conferences on the two main measures f incomes policy, which were by open invitation to t world's press. The lobby reaction was, "We shall n come." However, when its members found that the world press was there, they said, "Yes, we shall come but we sha not ask any questions." However, when they were the and the world's press were asking questions, the resistance slowly ebbed and those journalists jumped u to ask questions.

I am absolutely convinced that the abolition of th lobby is the answer to the question of handlin information. After all, it is only trying to maintain th situation in which, initially, Parliament was never reporte but now it is reported only by the lobby, with its ow selection and its own juicy bits — [AN HON. MEMBER "The right hon. Gentleman is upsetting them."] I am no aware of upsetting the lobby. That is not quite so necessar for me as—*[Laughter.]* This is a serious point.

My next point relates to our position in Parliament, i connection with Government and Whitehall. The Unite States' constitutional system has many disadvantages which have become more and more apparent, especiall the difficulty of obtaining a suitable President. But it ha one advantage, that Congress is not beholden to th President. It is not beholden to the Administration in an

way. Therefore, its debates are free and it searches out its information from every quarter. It has a statutory right to that information, as individuals as as well as a whole.

Irangate has been mentioned. In a similar situation, can one imagine an Irangate inquiry here? Not for one moment—not carried out openly, in front of television, with officials being made to answer and people not being told by the Prime Minister, "No, you can't have him. You'll have Sir somebody or other or Lord somebody or other because he is my choice." That would not happen. There is a difference between the American open system, with all its faults, and our system. That is what I believe we must move on to.

One aspect of the matter is the 30-year rule, which has also been mentioned. I confess that I did not see the relevance of either the question or the answer yesterday afternoon to the Prime Minister as to whether it was true that Hugh Gaitskell's file had been suppressed under the 30-year rule. We are now in 1988, and if we go back 30 years that takes us back to 1958. Hugh Gaitskell did not die until 1961. The Prime Minister said that everybody in the House would understand the reasons. I confess that I am so ignorant and uneducated that I do not understand the reasons, on any point. Perhaps there is a reason, in which case I should like to know it.

Soon after I became Leader of the Opposition, the then Prime Minister, now Lord Wilson, said to me that his view was that the 50-year rule was far too long and asked whether I agreed. I said that, personally, I did, but I had to consult my predecessors, Sir Anthony Eden and Mr. Harold Macmillan, about their views before I gave him a substantive answer. I discussed the matter with both of them and they agreed with me that it was better to come down to 30 years. The Prime Minister decided that there would be a 30-year rule, with exemptions, not a 50-year rule. I now believe that it should be changed this time. Perhaps with advancing service in the House, I am beginning to realise that there is a period of history in which I moved, about which I shall never know the truth. I find that disconcerting and, to say the least, worrying. I therefore believe that, in so far as we move into much more open information, the 30-year rule should come down.

What has emerged about our own nuclear or atomic problems must make one or two people think again about the harsh words that they uttered over Chernobyl. It is not only such societies that do not give immediate answers to questions. It has taken the House 30 years to get an answer to questions. Therefore, in future we might be a little more careful about our own attitudes towards the problems of those outside these shores.

I shall support the Bill because I believe that my hon. Friend the Member for Aldridge-Brownhills has produced a workmanlike job and we can benefit by having further discussions in Committee. I want to establish firmly that the Government cannot issue a three-line Whip on a private Members' day.

My right hon. Friend the Home Secretary touched on this matter at the end of his speech. Legislation can do only a certain amount. It cannot deal with the whole problem. The problem is that of people. To talk about silence for life is not realistic for people. They say that, by the time they have retired, those things are just history. Other people have written about them—Ministers and Prime Ministers have all written about them. Journalists to whom others have talked have all written about them. Those people ask why they are in that exceptio position. It is a matter of people's feelings and their vie about their lives.

Mr. Andrew Rowe (Mid-Kent): My right hon. Frie has good reason to know that I have just started readi the Colville diaries. The first thing that I read was that was not entitled to keep a diary. Is that not a go illustration of the point that my right hon. Friend is tryi to make?

Mr. Heath: My hon. Friend has touched on a rat delicate question for those of us who are acquainted w the matter. It was always understood that Sir John ga an undertaking to the other private secretaries that diar would not be published. Indeed, a large number of su very delicate situations still exist.

We are dealing with people, and it is the choice people that matters. In the inner control of the secur services, the first point to remember is the selection people and their admission to them. They contain so admirable people. Unfortunately, I have had to disappoi some of them. They came to me and spoke about some their great achievements. I said, "Admirable; you ha done very well and produced great advantage for t nation." "We can popularise and publish them, can't we they asked. "No," I said, "I am sorry, but you cannot. N one is to hear a word about them. They are yo achievements and you must be satisfied with that and ke them within the security service."

However, I also met people in the security services wh talked the most ridiculous nonsense and whose whc philosophy was ridiculous nonsense. If some of them we on a tube and saw someone reading the *Daily Mirror*, th would say, "Get after him, that is dangerous. We must fi out where he bought it."

The second point about people is that we must treat o public servants well. Many harsh words have been sa about Mr. Wright. I must confess that I have not read h book. A friend of mine in America sent me a copy b special messenger as soon as it was published, but I w told that I should not read it. I was also told that if n housekeeper wanted to stand by the fire and read it to m that would be all right. I have not run any risks from th security services or anyone else by reading that book.

There was a stage when Mr. Wright felt that, havi given years of hard service faithfully, he was not w treated. My judgment is general—that one must loc after one's public servants properly. With the country in its present state, the morale of the public service is low almost every sphere, and it must be raised. That can b done only by looking after our public servants proper and by showing them that we respect their work. Some c them may occasionally go wrong, but the number minute compared with other countries.

I support new legislation in this area, and the Bill is we on the way to providing that. I do not doubt that oth matters must be considered—for example, whether th Judicial Committee of the Privy Council is qualified t take decisions. All such issues can be argued, and that where the complexity lies; it does not lie in the principl of greater information and security for the nation that w are trying to achieve. Such principles are clear and th complexities lie in the machinery for achieving them. Thi is where this House can contribute a great deal. Above al we must always remember that the final answer will re with people, and will turn on our relationships with them

12.58 pm

Mr. Frank Cook (Stockton, North): The right hon. Member for Old Bexley and Sidcup (Mr. Heath) referred to the principals of the CIA and the FBI sitting shoulder to shoulder with him on television. Together with many dozens of other people, I was shown around the White House by a gentleman who described himself as "Wilbur C. Eisenstein of the US secret service uniform branch". That is another example of the different attitude of regimes in other countries.

As a humble Back Bencher, I want to commend the hon. Member for Aldridge-Brownhills (Mr. Shepherd) for his determination and courage in bringing this Bill before the House. I commend him also for the manner of his presentation today. He was very erudite and good-humoured. I contrast that with the discomfort displayed by the Home Secretary with whom I have great sympathy. In allowing himself to strike the posture that he has shown today, he has created a "knight's fork" for himself later this year. Clearly, he will have difficulty delivering if the Government's attitudes remain the same as they have been over the past two or three years. The Home Secretary is offering assurances that all will be well come June, yet those assurances are offered by a Government who have already behaved badly in the Tisdall case and are now behaving in a quite cretinous fashion over the issues of Cavendish, Wright and Duncan Campbell.

My right hon. Friends the Members for Birmingham, Sparkbrook (Mr. Hattersley) and for Chesterfield (Mr. Benn) and the right hon. Member for Old Bexley and Sidcup (Mr. Heath) referred to Windscale and the 30-year rule. It is true that we now know that certain matters were kept out of the public eye 30 years ago. Those matters have now been released under the rule. However, we also know that three areas of that issue are still kept secret by the Government today. At least one of those could have a direct bearing on any medical assessment of the biological effects on the Windscale community and those immediately adjacent to it.

The hon. Member for Hampstead and Highgate (Sir G. Finsberg) asked where the pressure was coming from for the measures that we are considering today. He said that the pressure was not coming from the constituents. How on earth can we expect constituents to apply pressure on matters about which they are kept ignorant? People cannot apply pressure about something until they know that a situation exists. Once again we must commend the hon. Member for Aldridge-Brownhills for bringing the proposal forward today.

I do not intend to deal in detail with the proposals as I want to be brief. Hon. Members who have spoken, and others who wish to speak, are wiser, more experienced and certainly more eloquent than I can ever be. I take heed of the right hon. Member for Chesham and Amersham (Sir I. Gilmour) who counselled the Government to take a careful look at the 17th century. We are not talking about anything new today. As we have already heard, all Governments have readily been anxious to keep secrets. To highlight that, I want to refer briefly to William Fordyce's "The History and Antiques of the County Palatine of Durham Volume 2" published in 1857. It has been in the Library for some time. It states:

"The Speaker has issued a warrant against the printers of the *Gazetteer* and the *Middlesex Journal*, two of the papers of the day, on a charge of misrepresentation of the proceedings of the House."—

the House of Commons.

"As the printers refused to appear at the bar, a proclamation was issued for their apprehension, and were brought before Alderman Wilkes and Oliver, by they were not only discharged, but bound over to pr the person who made the capture."

So the two aldermen were charged to prosecu decision of Parliament, but refused to do that and the victims to prosecute the person pursuing them.

"Mr. Miller, printer of the *London Evening Pos* likewise been taken into custody by a messenger fr house on a similar charge . . . The sarjeant-a consequently attended at the Mansion House, to dema bodies of both printers and publisher; but as he h applied to a magistrate to back the warrant, or to any officer of the city to assist him, his lordship informe 'that as long as he held the office of lord mayor, he w guardian of his fellow citizens' liberties, and that no po earth should seize a citizen of London without authorit him or some other magistrates of the franchise accordingly declared Miller at liberty, made out a war commit the messenger for an assault and false imprison

That is an example of Parliament at that time thought to be exceeding its responsibilities. Perhaps see some similarities today. It goes on to say:

"The House of Commons was indignant at this de of its authority and ordered the Lord Mayor an Alderman Oliver to attend in their places (together Alderman Wilkes)".

It would appear that when they appeared before th there must have been a three-line Whip in operation archives tell us that on a Division of 282 to 39 the Mayor was committed to the custody of the lieuten the Tower and was imprisoned, together with the others.

The result of that imposition of a three-line Whip, later on, was that

"The excitement out of doors was very great."

The committal and imprisonment of the Lord May London was felt to be an event of peculiar extraordinary importance—so much so that when were committed to the Tower, to the people of Lo picketed this place. That must have been one o original lobbies. When the Lord Mayor was taken here by the Deputy Serjeant at Arms for incarcerati the Tower, the crowd removed the horses from the c and drew the coach themselves, by manpower, to the of the City and ordered its contents to disembark. Lord Mayor and aldermen——

Mr. Rupert Allason (Torbay): I am falling asleep.

Mr. Cook: I am giving the House a history lesso you care to sleep——

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Mr. Harold Walker): Order. very wide awake.

Mr. Cook: I was not referring to you, Mr. De Speaker.

When the crowd had ordered the travellers in the c to disembark on the way to the Tower, the Lord M had to protect the Deputy Serjeant at Arms by assurin crowd that a friend was simply taking him home for a of Horlicks before he went to bed. The Lord Mayor s the evening not in the Tower, to where he had dispatched, but in the Mansion House and had to along to the Tower quietly the next day and turn hi over. It said:

"He was . . . honoured with the freedom of the ci Worcester, and of the town of Bedford"—

I hope that hon. Members are taking note of these pl —

"and addresses were forwarded from the counties of Carmarthen, Pembroke, and Cardigan, the towns of Newcastle, Stratford and Honiton, the common councils of every ward in London and many patriotic clubs."

The decision to release the Lord Mayor was popular and the decision to incarcerate the Lord Mayor for defending the freedom of publication of the proceedings of the House was very unpopular.

He remained in prison until the prorogation of Parliament. When the Lord Mayor left the Tower there was a 21-gun salute from the members of the Honourable Artillery Company and 53 carriages followed him in his train to celebrate, and there were loud huzzas. It continued:

"The feeling of the nation was unequivocally shown on the occasion; and the fact that, since that period, the proceedings and debates in Parliament have been regularly printed and published, which before they were not, is sufficient to secure . . . the gratitude of prosperity as well as the plaudits of his contemporaries."

I do not apologise for reporting that with some degree of pride. The person responsible for all that was Brass Crosby, Lord Mayor of London, Alderman and Member of Parliament for Honiton but born and bred of parents in Stockton-on-Tees of a mother born and bred in Blackhall, county Durham.

In the spirit of that time and of some efforts since, and in the spirit that is true of the north-east and other areas of the country, that freedom of access to information and freedom of comment that is supposed to be an inalienable right within this country, we should resist the ill-timed and misplaced efforts of the Government to seek to defend in a poor and frail fashion the mistakes they have made in the past two years. I, together with many of my hon. Friends, will gladly be supporting the private proposals of the hon. Member for Aldridge-Brownhills by going through the Lobby with him.

1.10 pm

Mr. Michael Heseltine (Henley): The first point that seems evident from the comments of right hon. and hon. Members on both sides of the Chamber is the near-universal praise for my hon. Friend the Member for Aldridge-Brownhills (Mr. Shepherd) for his introduction of the Bill, the way in which he did that and the thoroughness with which he addressed the entire exercise. Nobody has sought to question that, and I should like to add my words of admiration for all that is involved therein.

I take a slightly different view from some hon. Members who have spoken about the scale of the achievement of my hon. Friend. He can argue that he faces a three-line Whip from the Government and that in the way of things the chances have to be that the Government will secure their will. However, I do not see that as a defeat for my hon. Friend, but a remarkable personal victory. I take the view that, however the coincidences may have worked out, the initiative of my hon. Friend and the fact that he pursued his determination to the point at which he introduced his Bill cannot be dissociated from the assurances that the Home Secretary has given that the Government intend to introduce their own legislation.

During the course of the morning, we have ranged over fundamental constitutional issues as to whether this is a matter that should have been raised by a Back Bencher at all. I want to make my view absolutely clear. I have no doubt that my hon. Friend is fully entitled, as a Member of this House, to raise this matter. He has done excellent job and it would be a constitutionally impossi approach to suggest that he did not have the right to r such an issue.

The second issue that flows from this is whether hon. Friend was right to want the reform in the first pl That is no longer controversial. The Government h conceded that that is so. They began to consider refo in 1979, and in earlier reincarnations they set up inqui to precipitate such action. Therefore, my hon. Frien right to want reform, as he is right to take the initiativ secure that reform. I believe that he has achieved substantial personal victory, and I want to congratul him on it.

It has emerged over the past few months that my h Friend was not alone. Indeed, the Government h already begun the process of reform before my hon. Fri began his endeavours. While most of us were preoccup with preparation for the general election campaign 1979, the Government were preoccupied with preparin new Official Secrets Act. If that was an official secret was one of the most effectively kept official secrets tha remember.

Mr. Jonathan Aitken (Thanet, South) *rose*——

Mr. Heseltine: This official secret emerged from shroud in one of those constitutional coincidences th charm the sceptic some months later, and after my he Friend the Member for Aldridge-Brownhills had ma known his intention to proceed in this way.

What cannot be ignored is that, however we interp the history, my hon. Friend has secured a very f commitment from the Government. To him the credit; him the victory. I very much hope that, whatever m happen in the Lobbies this afternoon, he will remember t scale of what he has achieved.

My hon. Friend knows my views. In all t circumstances and for all the reasons that I shall try explain, I hope that he will content himself with th achievement for the time being. In practical terms, it apparent that the Government cannot stand back fro this legislation. Those who have listened to the debate w have realised that the journey of this legislation, wheth this Bill or the Government's Bill, will be no easier th time than it was in 1979.

It is obvious what reforms the right hon. Member f Chesterfield (Mr. Benn) wants. He wants a regime where civil servants see it as a reasonable part of their approa to leak, sometimes publicly and sometimes covertly. H sees as a virtue the behaviour of Sarah Tisdall. He se Clive Ponting as an example of a legitimate way in whi civil servants should behave.

I was close to the events which surrounded those tw prosecutions. Everyone knows that Ministers are n themselves responsible for initiating those prosecution That is done by the Law Officers. If there is one memo which I shall always hold of those times, it is that th people who felt most strongly that they had been betraye were not the Ministers, but the civil servants.

If the views of the right hon. Member for Chesterfie ever gain sway, the standards of the British Civil Servic who I happen to think are world leaders, will be destroye because they will become politicised. Of course, we kno that many people in the Labour party have already begu the process in local government of recruiting people fo their political views.

Mr. Buchan *rose*——

Mr. Heseltine: That is the logical step, if it is believed that what is today perceived as secret may be merely a stepping stone to public disclosure of ministerial dialogue. I have the highest regard for the British Civil Service and treasure the fact that a Minister could say more or less whatever he liked to civil servants. He could even make stupid mistakes in front of them and they would remain confident to him and would not abuse that trust.

Mr. Dalyell *rose*——

Mr. Heseltine: The day that one feels that, every time one is indiscreet or one makes an error of judgment or is plain wrong, it will be in the public domain, that day we shall recruit people who are politically loyal to us and we shall not have the wider discussion on which the proper government of the country depends.

The idea that these issues will be easy to deal with or that, even with the eloquence of my hon. Friend, he would find it easy to steer private Member's legislation through the House on so complex a matter, does not stand up. It is the right of the House to insist, in the extreme, that it should be done. The most effective way, although not the only way, of doing so, is for the Government to proceed with the legislation because their rules, secrets, relationship to their civil servants and decisions about censorship are at the heart of the debate.

The better way is for my right hon. Friends to conclude their deliberations, produce a White Paper, and then, in the light of the dialogue that will ensue, introduce a Bill for proper parliamentary consideration. It will have to proceed within the traditions of Government legislation, which means that the Government will use the whipping procedure to ensure progress. There will be no progress with the legislation unless there is access to the whipping mechanism. There are too many people whose views are irreconcilable. There are those who want to toughen the legislation to make more things open and available, and there are those who want to change the legislation to preserve greater secrecy. Such an irreconcilable position will be resolved only by the Government using their majority.

Mr. Dalyell: That is all very well, on the assumption that Ministers are telling the truth. Moving on from the Ponting matter, what would the right hon. Gentleman say about the selectively leaked Law Officers' letter on Westland, of which he was the victim? Is not the central issue that Sir Brian Hayes, Sir Robert Armstrong—this is according to Sir Kenneth Clucas, not just to me—were put in an impossible position and therefore were forced to behave unethically?

Mr. Heseltine: The answer to the hon. Gentleman's question is simple. I shall say not a word more and withdraw not a word from what I have already said.

The issue is whether the Home Secretary's offer should now be accepted. I do not think that I flatter my right hon. Friend when I say that if he, of all members of the Government, tells the House that there will be a White Paper that will lead to a Bill at an early date, that will be the case. I have not the slightest doubt that that is his intention. My hon. Friend the Member for Aldridge-Brownhills may say that it will not be the Bill that he has introduced. That will be the case. The Bill will be based upon the Government's assessment of how we should introduce reform. It will not change the ou the Government seek to amend my legislation, as opposed to introducing thei legislation, the end result will be that the G allow the passage only of legislation with wh

Although there is a time loss for my h what probably amounts to 12 months, that that he is being asked to incur. There is a course. It has been referred to by many right Members. It is the loss that is involved in the line Whip to deny a private Member access House. That is a disgraceful decision. It sho been taken.

Mr. Tom Clarke (Monklands, West) recognises that the right hon. Gentlem considerable experience in government. I whether he has ever introduced a private I In my limited experience, Government assu matters have been worthless. In that case, if Gentleman considers that there is little diffe the positions taken by the hon. Member Brownhills (Mr. Shepherd) and the Gover he not urge the Government to withdraw Whip and table amendments as the Bill r through both Houses?

Mr. Heseltine: I accept the Hom assurances that he intends to deal with th deliberations are under way, and that the G not yet ready to conduct a proper debate. I best interests of my hon. Friend the Member Brownhills for there to be a procedure Government are not able to answer the que members of the Committee will rightly p clause, about the Government's views. Tha a nonsense of an orderly Committee proce

The use of a three-line Whip was a misjudgment by the Government. It can de excite the arguments of those who regard the as authoritarian or stretch the loyalty of number of supporters of the Government, in be an easy parliamentary session. The war House has given the Government on the issu line Whip is clear, and I hope that it will be

The next step is a dilemma for all th supporters of the Government, and there i issue for Conservative Members. The G rightly and, in almost every case, unavoi pursued, through courts in Britain and over of issues arising out of the existing Official Looking at the options that faced Law Ministers, I do not see any easy alternative that the Government took. If they had n decisions to prosecute, which were often unattractive decisions, in virtually every case options would have flowed from their doing Government were fully entitled, in the exe legal judgment, to pursue the issues of the O Act through the courts.

The Government are still deeply imme process. The issue for Conservative Member the mistake of a three-line Whip, is whether w against the Government — in theory, ov Government—in a context of which the c could be that we are anxious, dismayed or,

opposed to the steps that the Government have taken in upholding the existing Official Secrets Act. That message will flow directly if Back Benchers behind the Government overwhelm the Government's three-line Whip on this issue. That is the interpretation that would be placed on it.

With the most profound admiration of my hon. Friend the Member for Aldridge-Brownhills, and with the clear view that the victory of today's deliberations is his and that of his colleagues—he is entitled to the credit—I hope that he will not proceed with the Bill. If he does, with the greatest reluctance, I shall support the Government in the Lobby this afternoon.

1.27 pm

Mr. Peter Archer (Warley, West): The right hon. Member for Henley (Mr. Heseltine) has expressed, with great eloquence, a point of view which he is entitled to hold. He has advanced a number of propositions that I would have been interested to hear debated in Standing Committee. But the right hon. Gentleman said that he does not want that debate to take place; he wants the matter to proceed in the Government's good time and on the Government's agenda. He does not want to see his hon. Friend the Member for Aldridge-Brownhills (Mr. Shepherd) as an honest broker, he wants the Government to have control. I suspect that that is one of the matters of principle which are in dispute today.

Yet the right hon. Gentleman's speech confirmed what was already apparent from the debate—the Bill gives expression to a real concern which transcends not only party divisions in the House, but the distinction between those who have held high office and those who glory in being professional Back Benchers.

I should add my congratulations for the fair and balanced way in which the hon. Member for Aldridge-Brownhills introduced the Bill. He introduced a new expression into the political dictionary, which will be with us for many years. I hope that he will also introduce a new addition to the statute book.

The debate has been a fair and balanced one. It is not always true that, outside the House, the debate between those who see the free flow of information as a vital part of democracy and those who prefer to see the truth dispensed economically has always been conducted in quite such moderate terms.

The Government must have perceived this as a disastrous and damaging debate. There have been times when I have felt sorry for the Government. Today, my heart did not bleed for them because their difficulties are entirely of their own making. They must have known that no one believes that any Government are motivated purely by a concern for security. They are not necessarily as coldly rational as my right hon. Friend the Member for Chesterfield (Mr. Benn) said. Any Government know that the more the public learn about their activities, the more likely the Government are to be criticised. Anyway, if the public learn the facts, they might misunderstand them. The Government say, "It would all create alarm and despondency, so is it not better to keep it discreet?".

It is not always a matter of the Government deliberately setting out to conceal what is discreditable. Among any elite, not least among Ministers and governmental officials, part of the tradition and culture that holds them together, part of what they have in common, is knowing what other people do not know. Letting in the uninitiated is breaking the code in more senses than one. I r as will my right hon. Friend the Member for M Leeds, South (Mr. Rees), that one of the witnes Franks committee quoted the words of a p secretary in 1873 who said:

"The unauthorised use of official information is fault a civil servant can commit. It is on the same cowardice by a soldier."

That is the very nature of Government. Th Secretary's valiant attempt to persuade the lambs the convenience of the lion was impressive. But did not believe that we could have confide Government with a record such as the one c today. Even the right hon. Gentleman must recog in deciding how far we trust the Government entitled to take account of their relationship with their attitudes towards the BBC's property and of injunctions to ensure that the people of this and only the people of this country, are kept from what is available to every foreign secret service a is on the bookstalls everywhere else in the world

Part of the picture is the way in which the Gov have dealt with this debate. One can almost in Government committee saying, "How will we d this? Let us have a three-line Whip. It will be un people will be horrified and it will break all the pre but we will ride it. Tell them that we will do so about it, only be careful not to tell them what we That is the picture against which the House is decide whether to await the Government's con and time before proceeding.

Of course, there is another side to the pictu picture is wholly one-sided. Not all of those who ca for freedom of information are motivated solely by for truth. A good scandal sells more newspapers t dissertation on political principle. Of course the right to know is sometimes invoked in aid of a bombard the public with trivialities. As we all kno is no better incentive to report and to seek info than the knowledge that someone finds it embar William Randolph Hearst used to tell his reporte

"News is what someone, somewhere, doesn reported: all the rest is advertisement."

Two hundred years ago, Sheridan put words to th into the mouth of Mr. Puff, "If you really want book, you must get home two things about it: th that everybody is reading it; the second is that ought to read it." The Government have learned t way in the case of "Spycatcher". As we have all are all on the list, we hope, for the next injunctio

The Government do not learn from history. I enough to remember when people who had never h D. H. Lawrence were queuing up at bookstalls "Lady Chatterley's Lover". I suspect that many never read it.

Mr. Doug Hoyle (Warrington, North): My rig and learned Friend bought one.

Mr. Archer: I was given one.

Mr. Buchan: Such is the effect of these actions friend of mine discovered that his son had hidden top shelf of the wardrobe an expurgated version of Chatterley's Lover."

Mr. Archer: Presumably, he had arrived by it which is even stranger.

[Mr. Archer]

The Bill must compromise, as any Bill must, between the secretive and the plain nosey. It also has to maintain a balance between the views of those who insist on dealing tidily with a group of related subjects in a package and those who would be happy for all the talk about the whole matter to run into the sand.

There has been much common ground in this debate. It is common ground, for example, that some restrictions on free speech are inevitable, as the right of one individual to speak freely may conflict with the rights of other individuals. We need laws governing defamation, obscenity, contempt of court, breach of copyright and invasion of privacy and we need to safeguard the prevention and detection of crime. The present limits on any of those matters would be a suitable subject for debate. I can name about a dozen reports of commissions and committees that must be propping up rickety tables in Government Departments at this moment and which may never see the light of day again. It is easy to show that almost any of those topics has implications for all the others, including the subject that we are debating today.

I remember when some of us thought that the best way to treat the reform of what was then called media law was to try to agree a package after a series of trade-offs. We now know better. We know that it would be an achievement to secure the most limited of reforms and that to wait for a comprehensive review would be to petrify matters as they stand for our lifetime.

In any event, I am not sure that we ought to think of this as media law. The right that we are discussing is not primarily the right of the media. It is not even primarily the right of anyone else to disclose information. It is the right of the public to be informed. The right of the press to sell newspapers seems to me less important than the right of the electors to have before them the material on which they can make informed judgments. Indeed, what we seek to do may actually diminish the number of scandals on which the media can thrive. The knowledge that the public may discover what is happening as a matter of course may ensure that discreditable things do not happen. It was Mr. Justice Brandeis of the United States Supreme Court who said that sunshine was the best disinfectant.

This is understandably and properly a modest Bill concentrating on a single topic—the freedom of official information—and its objectives are modest even within that topic. The Bill might have set about seeking to repeal the 61 other statutory provisions identified by the Franks committee which help to conceal official information. I was grateful to Penguin Books for directing me to an article in *New Scientist* by Jon Tinker in 1972. Jon Tinker analysed the veil of secrecy over the control of pollution. It transpired that the owners of a factory emptying cyanide into a river would face a maximum fine of £100 but that if the river inspector mentioned the results of his analysis —not to members of the press but to any member of the public—he would face up to three months' imprisonment. That is all of a pattern with the information—if we are to believe all that we hear—that an inquiry is proceeding into a leak of the report on foam-filled furniture. That report was not even classified at the time because everyone thought that it was a sensible plain warning about the danger to life. The United States has its Freedom of Information Act, its Privacy Act, its "Government in the Sunshine Act" and blowers (Civil Service Reform) Act". Freedom of the Press Act. Most countries some attempt to solve the problem. The U has section 26 of the Clean Air Act and s Offices, Shops and Railway Premises Act, a criminal offence to disclose the fact t offence has been committed. We are stil Ibsen's play "An Enemy of the People" enemy was the man who was trying to wa the danger.

The Bill maintains a balance between th who want no reform and those who wil anything short of complete reform.

The hon. Member for Aldridge-Brownh properly, that the best must not be allowed enemy of the good. We should not rej because it is not a feast. Section 2 was th place to begin because it is indefensible. unjust; it is so unjust that juries will not prosecuted under it. Juries have a strong i is fair and sensible — a proposition Opposition Members will put to the Go different context, on Monday.

The draftsmanship of the section is sentence, it contains so many alternatives a that the Franks committee calculated that than 2,000 separate offences. I have tried t of the offences, leaving out the words relevant to that offence, and I wonder w would have included the section if these w been starkly in the original draft:

If any person having in his possession information . . . which he has obtained owin as a person who holds office . . . under His

that would mean a lift attendant in a block offices who has discovered the colour of th the canteen—

"communicates the . . . information to an than a person to whom he is authorised to . . . that person shall be guilty of a misdeme

It is clear that we are not discussing secur irrelevant to the section.

There are two genuine problems about the Government invoke security as a reas how is the public to know that that is Governments have earned the unquestioni public, and if the Government say, "Not o tell you the information, but we cannot eve we cannot tell you, because that involves sec have a problem. We could have an infini Government cannot tell us why they cann they cannot tell us, and so on ad infinitum are to have confidence that secrecy is direct security problem, we need someone who ca adjudicate on whether the alleged security n

The second problem is that our security the reliability of the security services whic hon. Member for Old Bexley and Sidcup reminded us, do not even exist according book. We do not know whether the allega "Spycatcher" and the other publications guess is that the problem lies less with c security services than with their contr members. I get the impression that every security services has a little policy of his own the Napoleonic wars have the security ser

subject of so much public disquiet, yet the Prime Minister loftily brushes aside the allegations about which we heard today and the calls, from many responsible quarters, for an investigation. After all, it is none of the public's business and she knows best.

But none of that concerns section 2, because it is not about security. It was not even designed to protect security. The first draft of the Official Secrets Act 1889, on which section 2 was based, was headed the "Breach of Official Trust Bill". It said nothing about security. The Government of the day were compelled to include a public interest defence. During the spy scare of 1911, the House was very much involved in discussing the Parliament Bill and could give only half an hour to the entire Official Secrets Bill. They introduced a section that went much wider than the 1889 Act and which eliminated the public interest defence.

Section 2 does not discriminate about the sort of information which it seeks to protect. It creates offences irrespective of whether the public would benefit from disclosure. It punishes someone for disclosing or possessing information, irrespective of whether the information is already publicly available, and it makes guilt or innocence dependent upon authorisation without specifying who can authorise what and how many people can authorise themselves.

The Bill addresses itself specifically to those problems, and I hope that the House will give it a Second Reading.

1.44 pm

Mr. Jonathan Aitken (Thanet, South): Let me begin, in common with many other hon. Members who have spoken on this important parliamentary occasion, with a genuinely warm tribute to my hon. Friend the Member for Aldridge-Brownhills (Mr. Shepherd). His speech amounted to a proposal for—in the words of my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary—an effective, enforceable and reasonable Bill. Admittedly, my right hon. Friend claimed those words for his own, as yet non-existent, Bill, but, in my judgment, they apply admirably to the Bill presented today.

My hon. Friend made a first-class speech. At least one part of it, as the right hon. and learned Member for Warley, West (Mr. Archer) suggested, might well pass into the lexicon of political terminology. He referred to the Hallelujah Chorus. It must be said, however, that the Hallelujah Chorus can sometimes be conducted in such a way as to produce music that is a long way from the dulcet tunes of George Frideric Handel. My hon. Friend is to be congratulated on standing firm against some of the pressures imposed by the conductors of this Hallelujah Chorus.

An insight into those pressures was revealed in a long article about my hon. Friend in *The Independent* on Saturday, 9 January, which contained the following remarkable paragraph:

> "Some of those involved in the current and unsuccessful attempts to persuade him to drop his latest crusade claim that they are beginning to doubt his personal balance and stability."

Those of us who heard my hon. Friend put forward his lucid view of the Bill will feel that perhaps the most appropriate answer is to quote the remark of George II about General Wolfe:

> "Mad, is he? Then I hope he will bite some of my other generals."

Mr. Hoyle: The hon. Gentleman quoted wh in *The Independent*. Does he know whether it as usual, from the Prime Minister's press offic

Mr. Aitken: With unattributable brie authorship is always invisible. But what it me seriousness — and this is why it was a comment—is that the Torquemadas and the of the administrative information spreaders around saying that my hon. Friend is g Although a joke can be made of that, it was a s disreputable piece of briefing.

The debate has two major themes: the cont Bill, and the issue of principle about the freedoms of Parliament and Back Benchers. I su in times to come, today's debate and the e preceded it will be viewed as something of a wa the history of contemporary relationships Parliament and the Executive.

The lessons of history tell us that Governments from time to time get too big for t They trample too hard on the rights of indivi parliamentarians, and must be halted in their t hon. Member who does the halting—in this my hon. Friend the Member for Aldridge-Bro honours a long parliamentary tradition that st the way back to John Hampden, and I congra hon. Friend on what he has done this afternoo

I hoped that I would be called late, so tha answer the criticisms made of the Bill. I have h which I was ready to fill up with answers to t criticisms made of the various clauses and the po in them. My page is completely blank. The element of today's debate is that there has been n serious criticism of the Bill's contents. My r Friend the Home Secretary spoke so emolliently Dispatch Box that I suspect that, if someone m dead of night and said, "Psst! Are you really in this Bill?" his answer would be yes. He could n single objection to put forward.

The absence of any criticism of the Bill from Member who has spoken in the debate is, per most telling measure of support. I suspect that, i to have a free vote, at least two thirds of the Hou be willing to vote for the Bill. I therefore feel hardly necessary to say anything about its cont I shall make only two brief points.

First, as everyone has agreed, the Bill is ser responsible. It narrows down the categories of inf that need to be protected by the criminal law. incidentally, probably make it easier for the C obtain convictions against disloyal civil or Crown who breach their trust in matters of sensitive info That is something that the prosecutors need.

I am not a paid-up member of the Royal Socie Protection of Attorney-Generals, but I someti that, under the Official Secrets Act, they have impossible job because of the uncertainty. The Bi give prosecutors, or those thinking of breaching much more certainty.

I should like to put down a marker for th Secretary's invisible, non-existent Bill of the fi concerns reviewing a ministerial certificate, Minister's fear that an offence has been commit cannot have absolute offences. We cannot hav committed just because a Minister says so. On

[Mr. Aitken]

things which worried me about the 1979 legislation was the fact that a Minister could just certify that a serious breach of secrecy had occurred. There was no way in which to challenge it.

One of my hon. Friend's most important proposals is the introduction of a review by the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council. This is not a brilliant innovation, although I commend it. It has its genesis in what Lord Havers committed the Opposition, as we then were, to on 15 June 1978. I hope that Home Office Ministers will look up what was said then. Many good reasons were given, but basically they amounted to a proposition with which few would disagree. It was that a Minister should not be judge and jury in his own court and that there therefore had to be some form of independent review. My hon. Friend suggests the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council. Lord Havers suggested a Law Lord accompanied by two Privy Councillors. A mechanism for review is vital.

I should like to give a personal example of how necessary it is to have an independent check on Ministers' assertions that a secret has been breached. Seventeen years ago this month, I was sitting not on these comfortable green baize Benches, but rather uncomfortably in the dock of the Old Bailey with the editor of the *Sunday Telegraph*, being tried for an offence which was alleged to have been committed under section 2. The Crown opened its case in dramatic tones saying that "major military secrets" had been revealed. That statement was made by the prosecutors on, of course, the submission by Ministers.

Two days later, after some cross-examination, of the chief prosecution witnesses, it was revealed that every military fact in the document concerned had already been published and that the British defence attaché, whose document had been leaked, had himself read out the document to a press conference of journalists on an unattributable basis. Halfway through the trial, therefore, the Crown had to go into reverse and say, "Very sorry. There are actually no secrets here." If Ministers' decisions cannot be reviewed, a future defendent might be unable to argue about the assertion that secrets had been revealed.

I must consider the case, if one can call it that, which has been deployed by the Government. They have asked us to respond to their three-line Whip and vote down my hon. Friend's admirable Bill. The message from the Treasury Bench was that, until the Government have made up their mind, Parliament should not get a look in. It is the Alice in Wonderland "sentence first, verdict afterwards" approach. The only sop that we are thrown in the face of that unacceptable doctrine is the Home Secretary saying, "Trust me and trust my future Bill."

There is nothing intrinsically wrong with trusting as fine a Minister as the Home Secretary. It is the kind of request which, in commercial life, one gets all the time. There is a problem, the company or organisation needs some time to sort it out, so we are told, "Trust us, trust the management, we will draw up a plan and issue a prospectus in a few months' time. Just give us a bit of time to get the small print right." It all sounds very reasonable like that but, in commercial life, when shareholders or voters agree to such a request, they do so after hearing at least some bare bones of an outline of what the plan might be. They do not sign blank cheques for plans or prospectuses which are still too secret even to be described.

The notion that plans to reform th
are themselves still an official secret
as parliamentarians, we cannot swall
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must reject the extraordinary idea tha
in a poke. In fact, if one pokes the p
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two key issues that the House should

There are two other good reason
Government a blank cheque on
reform. First, the Government's h
secrecy and confidentiality matters in
not inspire universal confidence. Inju
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Government's extraordinary beha
Cavendish's Christmas card. The no
privileged magic circle of 500 chums
who can receive such documents with
Treasury Solicitor saying, "That's all r
satisfactory assurances from Mr. Ca
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and hit with injunctions, is a double sta
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official secrecy matters. Why sh
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and strange way?

One can also consider the Governm
the BBC as to whether matters in wh
with the Government are secret or co
After all, the programme, "My Co
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formerly been on its staff had co
programme. I can reveal that the Direct
sent a memorandum to MI5 staff saying
the BBC's programme, "My Cou
Wrong?" was coming out and that the s
to fear from it. The fact that the Gover
injunctions in the light of that, shows
does not know what the right hand is

In that context, I refer to the speech
Member for Plymouth, Devonport (Dr.
the deeply serious issue of Sir Robert
recent evidence to the court and its in
Security Service. I do not want to go int
depth now, but from some backgrou
Chapman Pincher's book "Their Trad
understand only too well that it is absolu
book could have been produced onl
knowing connivance or with the full
certain key MI5 officials. That that in
have been withheld from the Prime Mini
to the Cabinet and other key personnel is
a national scandal. I wholeheartedly
understood to be the call from the right
Devonport that there should be some kin
into that because it is a worrying a featur
come out of the strange shenanigans and
recent months.

Mr. Dalyell: I support the hon. Gentleman. Sidgwick and Jackson, in the form of William Armstrong, asks, "Is it not true that 'Their Trade is Treachery' could have been stopped by one telephone call?" Why was that call not made?

"If the Prime Minister says that she did not know, why and how did the chain of communication fail?"

Who was responsible? Was it the rivalry between MI5 and MI6? Why were neither Pincher nor Rothschild called to give evidence? That failure cost the British taxpayer £2 million.

All the major points in Chapman Pincher's "Web of Deception" were confirmed in the High Court in November by Sir Robert Armstrong. That means that he was kept in ignorance of the fact that "Their Trade is Treachery" could have been suppressed by one telephone call; that Pincher received no first-hand information from MI6, but was briefed only by MI5 officers, who kept information from Armstrong and who were not fully briefed themselves; and that he was told nothing about the role of the arbiter.

Mr. Aitken: I hope that the hon. Gentleman is not expecting me to be a spokesman on security matters on behalf of the Government. Therefore, I am unable to deal with his fascinating intervention, but it is well to have it recorded that across the Floor of the House there is concern on that particular issue, which is of considerable importance.

Although the debate is about the Bill, it has raised the deeper issue of Parliament's rights. One of the most attractive features of the Bill was that its careful construction could attract a broad consensus of parliamentary support. An official secrets reform Bill needs a broad consensus of support. It needs to have the support of people such as the right hon. Members for Devonport and for Morley and Leeds, South (Mr. Rees) —people of all parties—because only then will it stand the test of time and not be regarded as partisan and devisive Government-introduced legislation, which will be immediately challenged by an incoming Administration of a different political colour.

Therefore, I was glad that my hon. Friend the Member for Aldridge-Brownhills was able to construct such a consensus. One of the saddest aspects of the Government's approach is that they have destroyed that consensus. They have made the task of future official secrets reforms infinitely more difficult because it will now be seen to be hijacked into the area of party politics, which is a great pity considering that the Bill needs the bipartisan consensus to which I referred.

The widest issue of all is whether parliamentarians, particularly private Members, have the right to introduce such Bills and submit them to the judgment of the House of Commons. Speech after speech, particularly that of my right hon. Friend the Member for Old Bexley and Sidcup (Mr. Heath), has highlighted the sinister and authoritarian development of an attitude emanating from the Treasury Bench, which comes down to the words, "Back Benchers shut up and know your place." That is unacceptable. I was glad that even those who will support the Government in the Lobby, such as my right hon. Friend the Member for Henley (Mr. Heseltine), were strongly critical of that aspect of the Government's handling.

I recall that when the Conservative Government came to power in 1979 after the winter of discontent, they were rightly proud to portray themselves as the individual and his freedoms and the op mighty subjects. Times seem to have cha are seeing an over-mighty subject, Executive, determined to reject a goo explanation, without an alternative and tuous disregard for the rights of private

My hon. Friend the Member for Aldr has been right to fight his corner and Government's tactics as bearing an uncan to the stories of the dog in the manger a who has no clothes. Let us remember Edmund Burke:

"One man with conviction makes a majo

Let those who care about Parliament f Friend into the Lobby and give him a majority that they deserve.

2.2 pm

Mr. Archy Kirkwood (Roxburgh and B am proud to follow the hon. Member for (Mr. Aitken) who made a courageous speech. His reputation and track record on well known and much appreciated in the H congratulations with those that have been shoulders of the promoter of the Bill, the ho Aldridge-Brownhills (Mr. Shepherd) by all spoken. I had great pleasure working sponsor of the Bill. He has done himself g he has done the House a service by in subject.

The Home Secretary said that he though Gentleman had had his success, but it w accurate to say that the Home Secretary that the hon. Gentleman had had his chips taken by the Government has been disgr with the hon. Member for Thanet, South th of the most surprising turns of events dur has been the absence of any effective an criticism of the detailed proposals in the B marginal qualifications in some other h speeches, the only two that fell into the cat critical were those of the right hon. Memb (Mr. Heseltine) and the hon. Member for H Highgate (Sir G. Finsberg). I hope that th will take that to heart when they are formula Paper that they intend to bring forward in

It is clear that there is a sense of urgen the ranks of all parties that something must Home Secretary's speech was complacent, was 16 years ago that the Frank's committ "the only satisfactory treatment for a law suf many defects is to sweep it away entirely." Sixteen years is a long time to leave on the something that Lord Franks said in 19 unsatisfactory.

Section 2 catches all information, regardl matter, importance or whether it is genuinel is most disturbing. The scope of section 2 properly addressed today. The House sho that it is not only journalists and civil serv caught by it but, technically, anyone given i confidence who then repeats it without permi receiving information—unless so authoris one can prove that it was forced upon one to section 2. Persuading an official to divulg

[Mr. Archy Kirkwood]

is, technically, subject to section 2. Under section 7, it is an offence even to allow on to one's premises someone whom one has grounds to believe has disclosed information without authority.

To leave such a piece of legislation on the statute book for 16 years, especially against the background of Lord Franks' report and subsequent criticisms, is quite ridiculous.

Mr. Allason: I listened with great interest to the hon. Gentleman's clarification of the scope of section 2, but I believe that it goes beyond that. It covers those who might be guilty of offences overseas and who could be prosecuted in this country. Furthermore, it is not limited to those who have signed the Official Secrets Act. My hon. Friend the Member for Hampstead and Highgate (Sir G. Finsberg) seemed to imply that it was so limited, but that is not the case.

Mr. Kirkwood: I can confirm that that is not the case, and I am grateful to the hon. Gentleman for his intervention. There is a widespread potential for abuse, and the House should bear that heavily in mind — especially as the Government are asking us for further time so that they can bring forward their own measure. My former colleague Sir Clement Freud said:

"Section 2 gives the Attorney-General more power than a bad man should have or a good man should need."

We have properly spent time today debating lofty ideals, issues and profound matters such as the duties of the House and the Government. I want to bring the debate to more mundane but very important issues that affect our citizens daily. The right hon. and learned Member for Warley, West (Mr. Archer) said that, within the past 24 hours, the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry — Lord Young — had ordered a fire report leak inquiry within the Department of the Environment.

We are told that yesterday, a team of investigators visited the Crown Suppliers. The leaked memorandum was highly critical of the Government's stance on foam-filled furniture, and warned that the proposed code of practice would be retrograde and only window dressing. It accused the Department of Trade and Industry of creating a code based on what the furniture industry thinks that it can afford and what it believes that the customer will expect. The Minister appears to have ignored that advice, as well as that of many others because it was secret. The publication of the advice has helped to persuade him to do what he should have done in the first place and he has now banned dangerous foam.

A leak inquiry would be a disgrace. The House should be calling for an inquiry into why the Minister ignored the safety advice that he received in the first place. However, as the inquiring is taking place, what are the consequences? The person who leaked the document may have committed an offence under the Official Secrets Act 1911. If so, *The Guardian* which first published the extracts will also have committed an offence. In theory, although I hope that this will not happen, both parties could be prosecuted. That could not happen if the Bill that we are debating became law. Categories of protected information are defined in clause 1 and could not conceivably apply to information of that kind. Even if by some chance the information were covered, the person responsible might be able to plead justification in the public interest under clause 7.

I believe that in cases where there is a substantial risk to people's lives, it is right that such a defence should be available. We must bear that issue in mind as well as the more arcane, but perhaps intriguing, issues of spies, national security and secrecy that are covered by section 2 of the Official Secrets Act.

Ministers claim that they tried to reform the Official Secrets Act in 1979. The Government's view is that they failed to get a consensus on an alternative. The reverse is true. The 1979 Bill failed because everyone agreed that it was a draconian and oppressive measure which would have given Ministers even more unacceptable powers than those contained in section 2. I remind the House of some of the quotes that appeared in the newspapers at that time in response to that measure. The *Daily Telegraph* called it:

"in many respects truly appallingly."

The *Spectator* called it:

"A deplorable Bill, so bad that it is impossible to study it without a sense of shock."

The *Sunday Express* called it "disastrous". The *Daily Mail* called it:

"A Bill devised by the establishment for the establishment to save its own face as much as to defend the country."

The Times called the measure:

"a grave threat to the freedom of the press."

It is wrong of the Government to say that they tried in 1979 to reform the Official secrets Act with good faith and with their best endeavours, but could not get a consensus. The truth is that the 1979 Bill was completely unacceptable across a broad spectrum.

The Government's position that we should trust the Home Secretary and allow him to bring forward his measure via a White Paper in June is incredible, as the right hon. Member for Birmingham, Sparkbrook (Mr. Hattersley) said. The way in which the Government are having recourse to injunctions and interdicts and using the law of confidence and circumventing the jury system is disgraceful. That gives us no confidence at all. Indeed, the recent quote from the High Court judge considering the most recent interdict suggested that the Government were moving towards imposing a doctrine of absolute confidentiality which he believed was unobtainable this side of the iron curtain.

For the Government to ask for the trust of the House in this matter is ironic to say the least. The Home Secretary's failure to give us even a hint of what his White Paper might contain — the hon. Member for Thanet, South referred to this — leaves the House very little alternative but to support the hon. Member for Aldridge-Brownhills.

What is the case now for the Government refusing to confirm at least the notion and assurance that they will bring forward a public interest defence? The Bill is a measured alternative. It contains extremely necessary safeguards. I would go further and reverse the onus by requiring all official information to be made public through a freedom of official information Act and reserve only certain categories that relate to safety. I believe that, in the fullness of time, we should move in that direction. It has been proved to work in other countries.

On the balance of the argument, I believe that the House should accept the proposals that the hon. Member for Aldridge-Brownhills put forward so ably, and I shall support him in the Lobby.

2.15 pm

Mr. Julian Amery (Brighton, Pavilion): My right hon. Friend the Home Secretary has asked us to wait until the summer. He has asked us not to support the Bill today and to vote it down. I would have been more inclined to listen to his advice if he had told us more about how his mind was moving, and if the handling of official secrets cases during the past few months had been better.

The Government's attitude in the cases of Mr. Wright, Mr. Cavendish and the BBC programme has been to rely on a doctrine and a principle of total, life-long confidentiality. This is a rather new approach in regard to books and programmes. The old convention was that an author would show his text to the authorities, and if the authorities wanted any change, they negotiated with the author and changes were or were not made. If changes were not made, the author concerned could have been liable under the provisions of the Official Secrets Act.

Mr. Wright's lawyer claimed that Mr. Wright was prepared to reveal his text. Mr. Cavendish and his publishers did reveal their text. The Government's decision was not to try to preserve secrets, but to lay down a principle that, if it was applied to secret agents, officers or Ministers, would kill for good the publication of memoirs which are a great help in the education of all of us. When I was involved in covert operations, the memoirs of Sir Paul Dukes, Sir Robert Bruce-Lockhart and Sir Compton MacKenzie taught me a great deal. The doctrine of total, life-long confidentiality is unreasonable, undesirable and unenforceable. That it is unenforceable has been demonstrated in the exchanges of Mr. Wright and Chapman Pincher showing that it is quite easy to give information to somebody else, and that somebody else does not appear to be liable to prosecution.

I do not understand the distinction. The Government claim that the experience of a former official is their property. If that property is purloined by someone else, it would come close to purveying stolen goods, but that is not the Government's view.

My hon. Friends on the Treasury Bench have shown a singular lack of sense of humour in their handling of these matters. It was devastatingly humourless that they sent Sir Robert Armstrong to Australia. Anyone but another lawyer could have told them that the judge in Australia, a good, solid, Australian a well-balanced man with a chip on each shoulder, would not accept the idea that something that was generally known all over the world could remain an official secret. It was singularly humourless when the Government tried to gag the press at home while the printing presses were rolling as fast as they could on the other side of the Atlantic. It has been humourless for the Government to try to force the House by a three-line Whip to throw out the Bill today. There are better and more subtle ways of doing that just as there are subtler ways of killing a cat than drowning it in cream.

We have to recognise that that lack of sense of humour on the part of the Government is going a long way towards bringing about the result that they want to avoid. I have never been a crusader for open Government when matters of defence and foreign affairs are involved. However, there is a movement that would like to see the secret services brought under parliamentary control, and I understand that that is something the Government wish to avoid. However, if they continue to adopt such a rigid stance, over lifelong confidentiality I suspect that in the end that is what they will buy and I would regret it.

2.20 pm

Mr. Richard Shepherd: With the leave of the House, I shall reply to the debate.

We have had nearly five hours of debate in which we have ranged over many important issues in support of the Bill. However, the interesting thing that has arisen is that the Government have found only two Members to speak on behalf of their propositions. It is appropriate for me to refer to what I thought were the themes of those who did speak against my Bill.

My hon. Friend the Member for Hampstead and Highgate (Sir G. Finsberg) advanced a constitutional doctrine which I did not understand. However, he convinced me that I would not turn to him for constitutional advice. The other person who spoke in support of the Government, if my understanding is correct, was my right hon. Friend the Member for Henley (Mr. Heseltine). He was extraordinarily kind to me and for that I am grateful. I accept the kindness and return it in this way. My right hon. Friend was promoting an extraordinary proposition. First, he said that I had won, "Hallelujah, you have done well." Secondly, he said that the Government are right to say that this is not a matter which should be originated by the House and looked at in this way because the issue is too complex. Thirdly, he said that Back Benchers are right to be upset and agitated. On that basis we are all right. That is great. Let us face it, we have resolved all the difficulties.

On the matter of trusting the Government, after a conversation yesterday afternoon with the Head of that Government, I am anxious about that concept. My right hon. Friend the Member for Henley was a member of the Government. He has an understanding of the machinery of government. He advanced the proposition—he was in the most powerful position to do so—that there was a flawed rating system. I remember that very well. He looked at the issues involved and came to the conclusion that we could never consider a poll tax. He left the Cabinet, but we are still committed to the idea that something has to be done to reform the domestic rating system. We are all agreed about that principle. What happens? The Government come up with a poll tax and the most vehement opponent of that poll tax is my right hon. Friend the Member for Henley. I give him all my loyalty and support in terms of his right to express his opposition. That must be right. Yet, I am asked now, in a sense, to trust the Government in this matter.

All that my sponsors and I are trying to do is to say that great matters of principle are involved. There is the relationship of the citizen to the Government of the country and the relationship of the House of Commons to the Executive. Those matters go to the heart of our responsibility as Members of Parliament.

We cannot necessarily call upon the Press Gallery always to express our views. We do not control the resources of the nation, which are at the Government's disposal. We know that our job is to support and succour the Government. The Queen's business must go on and we all take that very seriously. We are negotiating and trying to identify matters of principle and trying to state them

[Mr. Richard Shepherd]

clearly. Will there be a review of a ministerial certificate? Can a Minister be judge and jury in his own case? We have wanted to know that all along the way.

The second principle that we have been enunciating and about which we have tried to elicit information from the Government — we are not being unreasonable — is whether we can have a public interest defence. We have gone over these issues again and again today. My feeling, and the sentiment of the House, as I understood it, was that these issues are appropriate for the House to discuss.

I am grateful to my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State because he has dealt with me courteously. Unfortunately, he has not always been authorised to tell me what he has been authorised to tell other people. I must pursue this because if I have any value in the House it is to state as clearly and as loudly as I can how I see government and to try to raise these issues as we have done today.

I knew officially that we were to have a White Paper only on the Tuesday before we went into recess, yet I heard from colleagues, including the executive of the Select Committee on Home Affairs — although I am not supposed to reveal that—that the Government intended to work on a White Paper. I could not be told that; my sponsors could not be told that; but other people could be told that. It is such a trivial matter. Of what importance can it be to the conduct of great public affairs? The House, and particularly Back Benchers, are entitled to assert that we sometimes want to affect important matters — the way in which the decision is taken—by identifying the principles on which we shall operate. That is all that I have asked by bringing this measure before the House for its full consideration.

Yesterday I asked the Prime Minister if she would withdraw the three-line Whip, but was told that that was not possible. I asked whether it was possible to identify these matters of principle and whether there was any response to them, but was told that that was not possible. I asked whether it was possible to refer them to a Select Committee, but that also was not possible. Nothing was possible, but the Executive holds unto itself what has been said repeatedly; that this goes to the heart of government. But it goes to the heart of the House of Commons, too.

It is impertinent for the Government to say, "We have to originate all these ideas on this matter and we have to present them fully formulated to the House." Why can we not have our say about the principles? The fact that the Government have all the instruments and power at their hands to try to dispose of private Members' business is another matter. However, surely we in the House have a right to ascertain the central issue. I hope that my colleagues will remember that right and that it is certainly not just a matter of reviewing what the Government present on a plate, a la carte.

I mentioned my experience on the Telecommunications Bill. Hon. Members will recall that the BT licence was a take-it-or-leave-it document. We could not alter a word. We had to say either yes or no. It was a desperately flawed document. No one who has had experience of the telecommunications business since we passed a badly thought out and constructed Bill would doubt the accuracy of my comments.

On the basis of the proposition that we are not allowed to consider this Bill, we must wait until the Government produce a Bill. It is not respectable. We are citizens public affairs. We ought to reject this nonsense, n because the Bill is of the most magnificent integrity, b because we want to discuss the issues involved.

Let the Government come back and say what is wro with our Bill, but the proposition that, "There ai nothing wrong with this Bill, but we shall produ something at some other time and our Bill will have great integrity than anything that you, from the House Commons of the United Kingdom of Great Britain, c raise" is a dangerous and silly concept which we shou throw out. It is important that we should consider that. ask the House to vote for the Bill.

Question put, That the Bill be now read a Secon time:—

The House divided: Ayes 234, Noes 271.

Division No. 140] [2.30 p

AYES

Abbott, Ms Diane	Cox, Tom
Adams, Allen *(Paisley N)*	Crowther, Stan
Aitken, Jonathan	Cryer, Bob
Allason, Rupert	Cummings, J.
Allen, Graham	Cunningham, Dr John
Alton, David	Dalyell, Tam
Anderson, Donald	Darling, Alastair
Archer, Rt Hon Peter	Davies, Ron *(Caerphilly)*
Armstrong, Ms Hilary	Davis, Terry *(B'ham Hodge H'*
Ashdown, Paddy	Devlin, Tim
Ashley, Rt Hon Jack	Dewar, Donald
Banks, Tony *(Newham NW)*	Dixon, Don
Barnes, Harry *(Derbyshire NE)*	Dobson, Frank
Barnes, Mrs Rosie *(Greenwich)*	Doran, Frank
Barron, Kevin	Dover, Den
Battle, John	Dunwoody, Hon Mrs Gwyneth
Beith, A. J.	Dykes, Hugh
Bell, Stuart	Eadie, Alexander
Benn, Rt Hon Tony	Eastham, Ken
Bermingham, Gerald	Evans, John *(St Helens N)*
Bidwell, Sydney	Ewing, Harry *(Falkirk E)*
Biffen, Rt Hon John	Ewing, Mrs Margaret *(Moray)*
Blair, Tony	Fatchett, Derek
Blunkett, David	Faulds, Andrew
Boateng, Paul	Field, Frank *(Birkenhead)*
Body, Sir Richard	Fields, Terry *(L'pool B G'n)*
Bonsor, Sir Nicholas	Fisher, Mark
Boyes, Roland	Flannery, Martin
Bradley, Keith	Flynn, Paul
Bray, Dr Jeremy	Foster, Derek
Brown, Gordon *(D'mline E)*	Foulkes, George
Brown, Nicholas *(Newcastle E)*	Fraser, John
Brown, Ron *(Edinburgh Leith)*	Fyfe, Mrs Maria
Bruce, Malcolm *(Gordon)*	Galbraith, Samuel
Buchan, Norman	Galloway, George
Buck, Sir Antony	Garrett, John *(Norwich South)*
Buckley, George	Garrett, Ted *(Wallsend)*
Budgen, Nicholas	George, Bruce
Caborn, Richard	Gilbert, Rt Hon Dr John
Callaghan, Jim	Gilmour, Rt Hon Sir Ian
Campbell, Menzies *(Fife NE)*	Godman, Dr Norman A.
Campbell, Ron *(Blyth Valley)*	Golding, Mrs Llin
Campbell-Savours, D. N.	Gordon, Ms Mildred
Canavan, Dennis	Gorst, John
Carlile, Alex *(Mont'g)*	Grant, Bernie *(Tottenham)*
Cartwright, John	Griffiths, Nigel *(Edinburgh S)*
Clarke, Tom *(Monklands W)*	Griffiths, Win *(Bridgend)*
Clay, Bob	Grocott, Bruce
Clelland, David	Hardy, Peter
Clwyd, Mrs Ann	Harman, Ms Harriet
Cohen, Harry	Hattersley, Rt Hon Roy
Coleman, Donald	Haynes, Frank
Cook, Frank *(Stockton N)*	Healey, Rt Hon Denis
Cook, Robin *(Livingston)*	Heath, Rt Hon Edward
Corbett, Robin	Heffer, Eric S.
Corbyn, Jeremy	Hinchliffe, David
Cousins, Jim	Holland, Stuart

Home Robertson, John
Howarth, George *(Knowsley N)*
Howells, Geraint
Hoyle, Doug
Hughes, Robert *(Aberdeen N)*
Hughes, Roy *(Newport E)*
Hughes, Sean *(Knowsley S)*
Hughes, Simon *(Southwark)*
Illsley, Eric
Ingram, Adam
Janner, Greville
Jones, Barry *(Alyn & Deeside)*
Jones, Ieuan *(Ynys Môn)*
Jones, Martyn *(Clwyd S W)*
Kaufman, Rt Hon Gerald
Kinnock, Rt Hon Neil
Kirkwood, Archy
Leighton, Ron
Lester, Jim *(Broxtowe)*
Lestor, Miss Joan *(Eccles)*
Litherland, Robert
Livingstone, Ken
Livsey, Richard
Lloyd, Tony *(Stretford)*
Lofthouse, Geoffrey
Loyden, Eddie
McAllion, John
McAvoy, Tom
McFall, John
McKay, Allen *(Penistone)*
McKelvey, William
McNamara, Kevin
McWilliam, John
Madden, Max
Mahon, Mrs Alice
Marek, Dr John
Marshall, Jim *(Leicester S)*
Martlew, Eric
Maxton, John
Meacher, Michael
Meale, Alan
Michael, Alun
Michie, Bill *(Sheffield Heeley)*
Michie, Mrs Ray *(Arg'l & Bute)*
Mitchell, Austin *(G't Grimsby)*
Moonie, Dr Lewis
Morgan, Rhodri
Morley, Elliott
Morris, Rt Hon A *(W'shawe)*
Morris, Rt Hon J *(Aberavon)*
Mowlam, Marjorie
Mullin, Chris
Murphy, Paul
Oakes, Rt Hon Gordon
O'Brien, William
O'Neill, Martin
Orme, Rt Hon Stanley
Owen, Rt Hon Dr David
Patchett, Terry
Pendry, Tom
Pike, Peter
Powell, Ray *(Ogmore)*
Prescott, John
Primarolo, Ms Dawn
Quin, Ms Joyce
Radice, Giles
Randall, Stuart
Rees, Rt Hon Merlyn
Reid, John
Rhodes James, Robert
Richardson, Ms Jo
Robertson, George
Robinson, Geoffrey
Rogers, Allan
Rooker, Jeff
Ross, Ernie *(Dundee W)*
Rost, Peter
Rowlands, Ted
Ruddock, Ms Joan
Salmond, Alex
Sedgemore, Brian
Sheerman, Barry
Sheldon, Rt Hon Robert
Shepherd, Richard *(Aldridge)*
Shore, Rt Hon Peter
Short, Clare
Skinner, Dennis
Smith, Andrew *(Oxford E)*
Smith, C. *(Isl'ton & F'bury)*
Smith, Rt Hon J. *(Monk'ds E)*
Snape, Peter
Soley, Clive
Spearing, Nigel
Squire, Robin
Steinberg, Gerald
Stott, Roger
Strang, Gavin
Straw, Jack
Taylor, Mrs Ann *(Dewsbury)*
Taylor, Rt Hon J. D. *(S'ford)*
Taylor, Matthew *(Truro)*
Taylor, Teddy *(S'end E)*
Thomas, Dafydd Elis
Thompson, Jack *(Wansbeck)*
Turner, Dennis
Wall, Pat
Wallace, James
Walley, Ms Joan
Wardell, Gareth *(Gower)*
Wareing, Robert N.
Welsh, Andrew *(Angus E)*
Wigley, Dafydd
Williams, Rt Hon A. J.
Williams, Alan W. *(Carm'then)*
Wilson, Brian
Winnick, David
Wise, Mrs Audrey
Worthington, Anthony
Wray, James
Young, David *(Bolton SE)*

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. Andrew F. Bennett and
Mr. Tony Marlow.

NOES

Alison, Rt Hon Michael
Amess, David
Amos, Alan
Arbuthnot, James
Arnold, Jacques *(Gravesham)*
Arnold, Tom *(Hazel Grove)*
Ashby, David
Baker, Rt Hon K. *(Mole Valley)*
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Baldry, Tony
Banks, Robert *(Harrogate)*
Batiste, Spencer
Bellingham, Henry
Bendall, Vivian
Bennett, Nicholas *(Pembroke)*
Bevan, David Gilroy
Blackburn, Dr John G.
Blaker, Rt Hon Sir Peter
Boswell, Tim
Bottomley, Peter
Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Bowden, Gerald *(Dulwich)*
Bowis, John
Boyson, Rt Hon Dr Sir Rhodes
Brandon-Bravo, Martin
Brazier, Julian
Bright, Graham
Brown, Michael *(Brigg & Cl't's)*
Browne, John *(Winchester)*
Bruce, Ian *(Dorset South)*
Burns, Simon
Burt, Alistair
Butcher, John
Butler, Chris
Butterfill, John
Carlisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Carrington, Matthew
Carttiss, Michael
Cash, William
Chalker, Rt Hon Mrs Lynda
Channon, Rt Hon Paul
Chope, Christopher
Churchill, Mr
Clark, Hon Alan *(Plym'th S'n)*
Clark, Dr Michael *(Rochford)*
Clark, Sir W. *(Croydon S)*
Clarke, Rt Hon K. *(Rushcliffe)*
Colvin, Michael
Conway, Derek
Coombs, Anthony *(Wyre F'rest)*
Coombs, Simon *(Swindon)*
Cope, John
Couchman, James
Cran, James
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Curry, David
Davies, Q. *(Stamf'd & Spald'g)*
Davis, David *(Boothferry)*
Day, Stephen
Dicks, Terry
Dorrell, Stephen
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James
Dunn, Bob
Durant, Tony
Eggar, Tim
Evans, David *(Welwyn Hatf'd)*
Evennett, David
Fallon, Michael
Favell, Tony
Fenner, Dame Peggy
Field, Barry *(Isle of Wight)*
Finsberg, Sir Geoffrey
Fookes, Miss Janet
Forman, Nigel
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Forth, Eric
Fowler, Rt Hon Norman
Fox, Sir Marcus
Franks, Cecil
Freeman, Roger
French, Douglas
Gale, Roger
Gardiner, George
Gill, Christopher
Glyn, Dr Alan
Goodlad, Alastair
Goodson-Wickes, Dr Charles
Gorman, Mrs Teresa
Gow, Ian
Greenway, Harry *(Ealing N)*
Greenway, John *(Rydale)*
Griffiths, Peter *(Portsmouth N)*
Grist, Ian
Ground, Patrick
Hamilton, Hon A. *(Epsom)*
Hamilton, Neil *(Tatton)*
Hanley, Jeremy
Hannam, John
Hargreaves, Ken *(Hyndburn)*
Harris, David
Hawkins, Christopher
Hayes, Jerry
Heathcoat-Amory, David
Heddle, John
Heseltine, Rt Hon Michael
Hicks, Mrs Maureen *(Wolv' NE)*
Hill, James
Hogg, Hon Douglas *(Gr'th'm)*
Holt, Richard
Hordern, Sir Peter
Howard, Michael
Howarth, Alan *(Strat'd-on-A)*
Howarth, G. *(Cannock & B'wd)*
Howe, Rt Hon Sir Geoffrey
Howell, Rt Hon David *(G'dford)*
Hughes, Robert G. *(Harrow W)*
Hunt, David *(Wirral W)*
Hunt, John *(Ravensbourne)*
Hurd, Rt Hon Douglas
Irvine, Michael
Jack, Michael
Jackson, Robert
Janman, Timothy
Jessel, Toby
Jones, Gwilym *(Cardiff N)*
Jones, Robert B *(Herts W)*
Kellett-Bowman, Mrs Elaine
Key, Robert
King, Roger *(B'ham N'thfield)*
King, Rt Hon Tom *(Bridgwater)*
Kirkhope, Timothy
Knapman, Roger
Knight, Greg *(Derby North)*
Knowles, Michael
Lamont, Rt Hon Norman
Lang, Ian
Lawrence, Ivan
Lawson, Rt Hon Nigel
Lee, John *(Pendle)*
Leigh, Edward *(Gainsbor'gh)*
Lennox-Boyd, Hon Mark
Lightbown, David
Lilley, Peter
Lloyd, Sir Ian *(Havant)*
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
Lord, Michael
Luce, Rt Hon Richard
Lyell, Sir Nicholas
Macfarlane, Sir Neil
MacGregor, John
MacKay, Andrew *(E Berkshire)*
Maclean, David
McLoughlin, Patrick
McNair-Wilson, P. *(New Forest)*
Madel, David
Major, Rt Hon John
Malins, Humfrey
Mans, Keith
Maples, John
Marland, Paul
Marshall, John *(Hendon S)*
Marshall, Michael *(Arundel)*
Martin, David *(Portsmouth S)*
Mates, Michael
Maude, Hon Francis
Mawhinney, Dr Brian
Maxwell-Hyslop, Robin
Mayhew, Rt Hon Sir Patrick
Mellor, David
Miller, Hal
Mills, Iain
Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)*
Mitchell, David *(Hants NW)*
Moate, Roger
Montgomery, Sir Fergus
Moore, Rt Hon John
Morrison, Sir Charles *(Devizes)*
Morrison, Hon P *(Chester)*
Moss, Malcolm
Moynihan, Hon C.
Neale, Gerrard
Needham, Richard
Nelson, Anthony
Neubert, Michael
Newton, Rt Hon Tony
Nicholls, Patrick
Nicholson, David *(Taunton)*
Nicholson, Miss E. *(Devon W)*
Onslow, Rt Hon Cranley
Oppenheim, Phillip
Page, Richard
Paice, James

Parkinson, Rt Hon Cecil
Patnick, Irvine
Patten, Chris *(Bath)*
Patten, John *(Oxford W)*
Pawsey, James
Porter, David *(Waveney)*
Portillo, Michael
Powell, William *(Corby)*
Price, Sir David
Raffan, Keith
Raison, Rt Hon Timothy
Renton, Tim
Riddick, Graham
Ridley, Rt Hon Nicholas
Rifkind, Rt Hon Malcolm
Roberts, Wyn *(Conwy)*
Rowe, Andrew
Rumbold, Mrs Angela
Ryder, Richard
Sackville, Hon Tom
Sainsbury, Hon Tim
Sayeed, Jonathan
Scott, Nicholas
Shaw, David *(Dover)*
Shaw, Sir Giles *(Pudsey)*
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Shelton, William *(Streatham)*
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Shersby, Michael
Skeet, Sir Trevor
Smith, Sir Dudley *(Warwick)*
Smith, Tim *(Beaconsfield)*
Soames, Hon Nicholas
Speed, Keith
Spicer, Sir Jim *(Dorset W)*
Spicer, Michael *(S Worcs)*
Steen, Anthony
Stern, Michael
Stevens, Lewis
Stewart, Allan *(Eastwood)*
Stewart, Andrew *(Sherwood)*
Sumberg, David
Summerson, Hugo
Tapsell, Sir Peter
Taylor, Ian *(Esher)*
Taylor, John M *(Solihull)*
Tebbit, Rt Hon Norman
Thatcher, Rt Hon Margaret
Thompson, D. *(Calder Valley)*
Thompson, Patrick *(Norwich N)*
Thorne, Neil
Thurnham, Peter
Tracey, Richard
Tredinnick, David
Trippier, David
Trotter, Neville
Twinn, Dr Ian
Vaughan, Sir Gerard
Viggers, Peter
Waddington, Rt Hon David
Wakeham, Rt Hon John
Waldegrave, Hon William
Walker, Bill *(T'side North)*
Waller, Gary
Ward, John
Wardle, C. *(Bexhill)*
Watts, John
Wells, Bowen
Wheeler, John
Whitney, Ray
Widdecombe, Miss Ann
Wiggin, Jerry
Wilshire, David
Wolfson, Mark
Wood, Timothy
Woodcock, Mike
Yeo, Tim
Young, Sir George *(Acton)*
Younger, Rt Hon George

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. Robert Boscawen and
Mr. Tristan Garel-Jones.

Question accordingly negatived.

Private Members' Bills

COMMUNITY HEALTH COUNCILS (ACCE TO INFORMATION) BILL

Order for Second Reading read.

Hon. Members: Object.

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Mr. Harold Walker): Sec Reading what day? No day named. *[Interruption.]* Or Hon. Members who are leaving the Chamber should so quickly and quietly, because there is still busines discuss.

Mr. Andrew Faulds (Warley, East): On a point of or Mr. Deputy Speaker. Because of the noise, I did not h you read the title of my Bill. Is it possible to repeat i

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The hon. Member did not h me read the title of the Bill, no doubt for two reasons, first being that I did not read it; the Clerk did. In any c objection was taken. Does the hon. Member wish to a date for Second Reading?

Mr. Faulds: I should like to give a date, if that can chosen. If the Bill has been objected to, what is procedure?

Mr. Tony Banks (Newham, North-West): You another date, you fool.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. The hon. Member gi another date. If he wishes to do that, will he kindly do now, so that we can proceed? Second reading what da

Mr. Banks: Tomorrow, Sir.

Mr. Faulds: Tomorrow, Sir.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Did I hear the hon. Member Friday next?

Mr. Faulds: On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speak It is difficult to proceed with the proper business when my right I have a young colleague who has diarrho loquaciousness on every occasion and when there is su a hubbub in the rest of the House that I cannot hear wh is happening. I should like to pursue the Bill on the fi convenient date available.

Second Reading deferred till Friday next.

DISQUALIFICATION FROM OWNERSHIP O ANIMALS BILL

Order for Second Reading read.

Hon. Members: Object. *[Interruption.]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. Hon. Members who a leaving the Chamber should do so quickly and quie because there is still business to discuss.

Although the Clerk read the title of Bill No. 3, t Disqualification from Ownership of Animals Bill, I mu tell the House, that, because the Bill has the same effe as clause 1 of the Protection of Animals (Amendment) Bi which received its Second Reading on 11 December, cannot propose the Question on Second Reading.

Mr. Harry Greenway (Ealing, North): On a point order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I should like to make it cle that, having had the contents of my Bill — t Disqualification from Ownership of Animals Bill—safe

subsumed into the Protection of Animals (Amendment) Bill, I do not propose to move the Second Reading of the Bill today. I shall strongly support the Protection of Animals (Amendment) Bill.

DATA PROTECTION ACT 1984 (AMENDMENT) BILL

Order for Second Reading read.

Hon. Members: Object.

To be read a Second Time upon Friday next.

CONCESSIONARY TELEVISION LICENCES FOR STATE RETIREMENT PENSIONERS BILL

Order for Second Reading read.

Hon. Members: Object.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Not printed.

Miss Marjorie Mowlam (Redcar): On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Is it in order for anonymous Conservative Members to shout "Object" and deny the pensioners of this country the right proposed in the Bill?

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. The point of order does not arise because——

Mr. Dennis Skinner (Bolsover): On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker——

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. The hon. Gentleman knows that, when I am on my feet, he must keep his seat. Points of order do not arise, because, as the Bill has not been printed, the Question cannot be proposed.

Miss Mowlam: On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. You did not offer me a date for the Second Reading of my Bill. You did not give me the chance to give one.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I apologise to the hon. Lady. I thought that she had to have the Bill printed first. I am in error. Would the hon. Lady please name a day for Second Reading?

Miss Mowlam: Friday next.

Second Reading deferred till Friday next.

SLAUGHTER OF DEER BILL

Order Read for resuming adjourned debate on Second Reading [11 December].

Motion made, and Question proposed, That the Bill be now read a Second time.

Hon. Members: Object.

Second Reading deferred till Friday 22 January.

NATIONAL HEALTH SERVICE (IMPROVED PROVISION OF SERVICES) BILL

Hon. Members: Object.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Objection taken; Second Reading what day?

Mrs. Alice Mahon (Halifax): On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I think that it is cowardly of Conservative Members to hide behind anonymity on a matter as crucial as the National Health Service and I wish that Conservative Members shouting, "Object", could be named. I would like to name the next available date for Second Reading—Friday next.

Second Reading deferred till Friday next.

Mr. Jeremy Corbyn (Islington, North): On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. In the last Parliament, many disagreements arose on Friday afternoons about the blocking of private Members' Bills by hirelings of the Government who hide behind the Dispatch Box and the Front Bench and refuse to stand up and say on what basis they object and who they are.

The Chair has been approached on this subject on many occasions and many hon. Members have expressed concern that it is an abuse of the procedures of the House that the blocking mechanism is used behind the cloak of anonymity — in this case blocking a very effective measure to improve the Health Service. Would you, Sir, be prepared to rule that, for the duration of this Parliament, you will always insist that the hon. Member blocking a Bill stands up and records his or her objection to it?

Mr. Deputy Speaker: This matter has been dealt with on several occasions on Friday afternoons. The position has been made quite clear. What has happened this afternoon is not unusual. It happens frequently on Friday afternoons, especially when private Members' Bills are before the House.

Mr. Greville Janner (Leicester, West) *rose*——

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. Secondly, I remind the House that the shout of "Object," is no different from the collection of voices when a motion is put to the House. Under those circumstances, it is quite impossible for the Chair to ask or insist that hon. Members expressing their view through their voice be identified by being asked to stand, or in any other way. The matter has been dealt with on previous occasions. I have it in mind that I must follow the practices and conventions of the House, and if hon. Members feel sufficiently strongly about the matter, any changes should be pursued through the appropriate Committee of the House.

Mr. Skinner: Further to that point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. There is a way out of this problem, as you are probably aware. From time to time, there are deliberations, in what is known as a Speaker's Conference, on all sorts of matters appertaining to the business of the House and to electoral considerations. In view of the abuse that is taking place, with people refusing to stand up and be named, it is high time that the matter was put before that Conference. For instance, in relation to the Concessionary Television Licences for State Retirement Pensioners Bill——

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. I am not taking any "for instances"—not at 2.50 pm on a Friday.

Mr. Max Madden (Bradford, West): On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Janner: On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. Let me deal with one at a time, please. The hon. Member for Bolsover (Mr. Skinner) is very familiar with our proceedings and knows that the right place to discuss this matter—if there is substance in it — is the Procedure Committee. If the hon. Gentleman believes that there is substance in his

[Mr. Deputy Speaker]

complaint, no doubt he will consider referring the matter, through the appropriate channels, to the Procedure Committee.

Mr. Madden: On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Are we not in a new position with regard to this procedure? The voices of Conservative Members that were raised in objection to the National Health Service (Improved Provision of Services) Bill, which was presented by my hon. Friend the Member for Halifax (Mrs. Mahon), of which I am a sponsor, and which seeks to improve health care services for every person in the United Kingdom——

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. The hon. Gentleman must make a point of order.

Mr. Madden: How can we know whether those who objected to this important measure have interests in privatising the NHS——

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. We are going over well-trodden ground. It has been made clear many times that it is not the responsibility of the Chair to try to identify those who may have expressed an objection, or to question their motives. It is not a matter for the Chair.

Mr. Patrick McLoughlin (Derbyshire, West): Further to that point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Since some hon. Members have been named, it is important to put on record the fact that one may object to a Bill, not because of its contents but because——

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. I do not think we can start having a discussion about reasons——

Mr. Corbyn: Further to that point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Janner: Further to that point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. The House is becoming increasingly discourteous. Hon. Members know that they should not rise when the occupant of the Chair is on his feet dealing with a matter which has been raised. I should tell the hon. Member for Derbyshire, West (Mr. McLoughlin) that this afternoon is not the time to discuss the reasons why hon. Members may have expressed objections.

Mr. Janner: I raised this matter last Session because it was extremely important to know whether an hon. Member was entitled to address the House unless he or she was standing. Mr. Speaker ruled that the matter should be considered by the Procedure Committee. The vast majority of Back-Bench Members believe that it is wrong for an anonymous person to be able to object to a Bill. In view of the strong views of hon. Members on both sides of the House—we accept your statement that the matter should go to the Procedure Committee—will you be good enough to say that the Chair will seek guidance from the Procedure Committee about a procedure which is wholly unsatisfactory and extremely wicked?

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I remember that point being the subject of discussion last Session. The hon. and learned Gentleman will recall that it was pointed out then that expressing an objection from a sedentary position is no different from occasions when the Chair puts a Question to the House and collects the voices. If it was thought necessary for those registering an objection to be ic or to stand when they made that objection, we wo to follow a similar practice when a Question was House should consider the difficulty that that wo posed to the Chair and the House this afterno more than 500 hon. Members were in the Cham

However, let me add that it is my recollection Chair did not rule that the matter be referred Procedure Committee. Indeed, it would not be app for the Chair to seek to do that. The Chair wo suggested on that occasion that, if the hon. Gentle it appropriate to do so, he or his hon. Friends co to have the matter discussed in the Procedure Co That was what I was suggesting this afternoon to Member for Bolsover (Mr. Skinner). I was not ex a view other than the one that I have expressed in with points of order.

Several hon. Members: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. We cannot indefinitely on a Friday afternoon listening to mu points of order.

Several hon. Members *rose*—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. I have to call Members, and an hon Member has the Adjou debate.

Mr. D. N. Campbell-Savours (Workington): On of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Perhaps I can help y matter has been referred to the Procedure Comm has been debated at length, and the Procedure Co has produced a report. The report has not been by Parliament, because the Leader of the House found time for it.

We want the matter debated. If it is the view House, or of Members of it, that we have not de it satisfactorily, hon. Members are free to am report and to move resolutions that may be carrie whole House.

Secondly, as we found in Committee, there are why Back Benchers might wish to intervene and the development of proceedings on the Second Rea a Bill. One reason is that they do not want the B be jumped, so that Bills that come after other Bills to secure positions in Committee——

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. The hon. Gentlen been helpful, until the point that he is now raising earlier that I did not consider it right or useful House to try to discuss the motives that lea Members to shout "Object" on the proposed Reading of a Bill.

Mr. Campbell-Savours *rose*——

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. I said that th Gentleman had been helpful, and I think th information that he has given us should be borne i by hon. Members. However, he must recognise t question of debating in time for the debate on a pa report from a Committee is a matter not for the Ch for the Leader of the House. If hon. Members feel s about the matter, no doubt they will pursue it wi Now, can we get on?

Mr. Graham Allen (Nottingham, North): On a p order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Would we not have

fewer points of order this afternoon if the hon. Member for Derbyshire, West (Mr. McLoughlin) had admitted that it was he who objected to the Concessionary Television Licences for State Retirement Pensioners Bill?

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. That matter has been dealt with in the course of earlier points of order.

Mr. Madden: On a separate point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. May I also ask for inquiries to be made into the denial of drafting assistance to my hon. Friend the Member for Halifax (Mrs. Mahon) in the preparation of her National Health Service (Improved Provisions of Services) Bill? I consider it disgraceful that she has been prevented from receiving such assistance in bringing forward that important Bill, and I think that insult has been added to injury by the fact that it has been blocked today by unnamed people. Because we do not yet have a Register of Members' Interests, we do not know who is speaking for whom——

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. The hon. Gentleman is now seeking to raise a whole string of matters, some of which are certainly not matters for me. Questions of drafting of Bills and drafting assistance are not a matter for the Chair, and will no doubt be pursued through the appropriate channels.

Ms. Clare Short (Birmingham, Ladywood): On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. There is serious concern about the issue of people who object to ten-minute Bills not having to identify themselves to the Chamber. The debate is not being prolonged simply to waste time; we are asking for your assistance to sort out a procedural issue that causes great disgruntlement in the House. As I understand it, that is part of your role, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

You argued earlier, Sir, that it was common practice to take the voices before deciding whether a vote should be taken. I put it to you that that is quite a different issue. If a vote is taken, everyone who votes has his vote recorded, and has to stand up for the position that he takes. In this case, the hon. Member who blocks a Bill is deliberately not identified. This is a serious procedural issue. We need your assistance to resolve it. It is not enough for you to say that we may refer the matter to a Committee. I should like to ask for your help to sort the matter out.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: No, it is the task of the Chair to ensure observance of the Standing Orders and the practices and conventions of the House. It is not my task to create procedure, merely to apply it. Its creation is a matter for others. The hon. Lady might reflect on the advice that I have already given and see whether it might not be the best advice to pursue.

Mr. Corbyn: Further to the point of order. Mr. Deputy Speaker. As you know, I took a close interest in this matter in the previous Parliament and I have suffered the same fate as my hon. Friend the Member for Halifax (Mrs. Mahon) seems to have suffered. When she rose to move that her Bill be read a Second time, there was a great d of noise on both sides of the Chamber. In some cases noise might have represented support for the Bill, and might have represented opposition in others. It was clear whether anyone was objecting. It was not clear w was objecting. Can you be certain, Mr. Deputy Speak who objected to the Bill? My hon. Friend the Member Nottingham, North (Mr. Allen)——

Mr. Deputy Speaker: No, no. Order. The ho Gentleman is going over ground that we have alrea covered. I have made it clear on several occasions that is not the responsibility of the Chair to ident individuals. It is sufficient that the voice be heard and t voice was clearly heard calling, "Object."

Mr. Faulds: On a point of order. I am in somewhat a sad quandary. When I introduced—when I attempt to get some progress on — my Community Heal Councils (Access to Information) Bill, which was g through the Chamber in the previous Parliament by admirable hon. Friend of mine and only fell because of t election intervening before it could go to the Lords a become law, I had understood from the Governme Whips, who were extremely helpful, may I say, that th Bill would go through on the nod. I am very, ve surprised to find that the discipline behind the Chief Whi on those Benches is so appalling that some uninforme unintelligent, unhelpful hon. Gentleman has wrecked wh was a quite valuable little Bill.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I can understand the ho Gentleman's resentment. Doubtless he will have anoth opportunity. I have to say again that it is not for the Cha to try to identify those who shout, "Object."

Mr. Frank Dobson (Holborn and St. Pancras): If would help, I could tell you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that th Opposition intend, through the usual channels, to pre the Leader of the House to bring to the House the repo of the Procedure Committee on this matter in an effort protect the rights of Back Benchers from Governme Whips getting people to object to Bills. We are not ver hopeful of the outcome, however, on the day of th unprecedented action of the Government in putting three-line Whip on a private Member's Bill.

Mr. Hal Miller (Bromsgrove): On a point of order, M Deputy Speaker. Can I declare an interest in taking pa in that debate, as I had a private Member's Bill which wa blocked by Labour's objections and which would greatl have facilitated the education of children in Britain?

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. The hon. Member fo Holborn and St. Pancras (Mr. Dobson) has been helpfu and showed how the House might make progress in thes matters. I hope that the House can feel content with th advice that he has offered, and that we can now mak progress.

Birmingham Children's Hospital

Motion made, and Question proposed, That this House do now adjourn.—*[Mr. Peter Lloyd.]*

3.3 pm

Mr. David Winnick (Walsall, North): The whole country is hoping and praying that my constituents' child, four-year-old Matthew Collier, will win his battle for survival after 10 hours' major heart surgery on Wednesday. All our hopes go out to Matthew and his parents.

My Adjournment debate is about the intensive care unit at the children's hospital, Birmingham. Everyone in the west midlands knows about the splendid job that the hospital does and the kind of work that the surgeons do, including the most complicated heart operations such as that performed on Matthew two days ago. The utmost praise should be given to the surgeons, consultants, nurses and the other medical and non-medical staff at the children's hospital.

The hospital faces financial problems, and as far as major heart surgery is concerned, there are nowhere near sufficient trained nurses for the intensive care unit. That is the part of the hospital to which the child goes after major surgery and where he or she may spend weeks being cared for, before being allowed home. It was the lack of bed availability in the intensive care unit that led to the position where my constituent's son, Matthew Collier, could not be admitted. Moreover, no date was given for admission.

Matthew had already had three operations. In September last year, his parents were told by the hospital that major heart surgery was urgently necessary. An appointment was given—I stress only an appointment—for 24 February. All that happened because beds were not available in the intensive care unit. Matthew's parents were told that he could be admitted only if he became an emergency case. In all the circumstances, what could the parents do except go public over their beloved son, especially since, although Matthew's health was deteriorating, he was not considered an emergency case? We are, of course, pleased that a bed became available this week and that Matthew has had his lengthy operation.

When I visited the hospital last week, I was shown round the intensive care unit. Although in total there were six beds, only five were in use. I stress to the Minister that only five beds are serving the entire west midlands region. It is reported that over 90 children are waiting for major heart surgery at the children's hospital in Birmingham.

One of those children is another Matthew—in this case Matthew Mulhall, who is eight months old. He has a serious heart condition and his parents have been told that major surgery is required. In a letter to her Member of Parliament, his mother wrote:

"I cannot sleep at nights worrying about the cutbacks and the effects it could have on our son".

It was that case in Coventry which led my hon. Friend the Member for Coventry, North-East (Mr. Hughes) to make his protest in the Chamber on Monday. I cannot and will not condemn a colleague who feels, as a religious person, so strongly about the position of his constituents and their child that he made the protest that he did. I am sure that my hon. Friend did not make his protest lightly.

I received a prompt reply from the Under-Secretary of State for Health and Social Security, the hon. Member for Derbyshire, South (Mrs. Currie) to the letter to the Minister for Health at the beginning o about Matthew Collier's case and the intens at the hospital. In her reply, the Under-Secre to an intensive care nursing course that is ap to commence next January. However, I shoul the Minister about the position in the meantim proposed course produces the further trained will be employed in the children's hospital i unit.

Moreover, as we know, the chairman of health authority responded to the spotlight on by suggesting six courses of possible action to position. Of course, any action that can be ta a temporary basis, which could assist the chil urgently in need of major heart surgery, is to b All hon. Members would welcome that. Howe heart consultants at the hospital were somew about some of the suggestions. The loc Birmingham reported that, in the consultants of the chairman's proposals demonstrate appreciation of the special needs of childre diseases. The four said, for example, impracticable and inappropriate to move ch region to region.

Ms. Clare Short (Birmingham, Ladywood Friend will be aware that that hospital constituency. There are grave shortages thr hospital, not just in the intensive care unit, result of the Government's underfunding of Service.

In the regional health authority's plan, t hon. Friend has just referred, one of the prop money should be given to private hospitals, hope that my hon. Friend shares my deep that. We want the children's hospital in B which is loved and respected throughout the r properly funded and to function properly. We money to be creamed off to build up a priva while we fail to resolve the problems in th hospital.

Mr. Winnick: The point made by my hon. F which all Labour Members share.

The position of the intensive care unit is current crisis in the NHS, no less in the west mi elsewhere. It is not acceptable to the large people, no matter how they vote, that childre major surgery on the NHS, such as the two chi I mentioned, should have to wait literally mo they can be admitted. That is unacceptab unacceptable to the large majority of people, no less acceptable to the Minister and his col

Neither should the parents have to undergo and stress of wondering whether a bed can b their child, in addition to all their constant fears over the child. Can one imagine what it for parents, knowing that their young child req heart surgery, and wondering whether that survive? They have all the constant worry and, at least in the west midlands and, no doubt, in of the country, there is the problem such as th by Mr. and Mrs. Collier and Mr. and Mrs. whether a bed will be found in time. That is w two cases, the parents decided to go public.

At the end of my brief speech, I should like to leave a few minutes for my hon. Friend the Member for Stoke-on-Trent, North (Ms. Walley) to speak. She will then have to leave for an urgent constituency engagement.

The Government must take urgent action now to try to resolve the crisis and the need for more nurses at the intensive care unit in the children's hospital, Birmingham. It is no good saying that next year there will be a course. It is no good for the Minister to say that suggestions have been made by the chairman of the regional health authority. Nothing less than urgent action will do. It should never again be necessary for parents such as my constituents or other parents to have to go public to draw attention to what is happening.

I quoted this on Monday, and I repeat, that the Prime Minister has said that she wanted to go to hospital "on the day, at the time and with the doctor that I choose." That is fine. That is the Prime Minister's wish. If it is fine for the Head of the Government to have that wish, should it be any less right for our constituents and their children to be able to have operations in the same way, without a lengthy delay, and to be able to have them on the NHS?

I plead with the Minister to understand what is happening, to understand the difficulties and the need for more funding and more nurses in the intensive care unit. Let us try to resolve the problem. Let us hope that never again parents have to contact the media and so on before there is an understanding of such cases by the Government. I hope that the Minister will respond accordingly.

3.13 pm

Ms. Joan Walley (Stoke-on-Trent, North) *rose*——

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Mr. Harold Walker): Order. Does the hon. Member for Stoke-on-Trent, North (Ms. Walley) have the consent of the Minister to speak?

The Minister for Health (Mr. Tony Newton): Yes.

Ms. Walley: I am grateful to my hon. Friend the Member for Walsall, North (Mr. Winnick) for allowing me a short time to put across these views, about which I feel strongly. I hope that hon. Members will forgive me if I have to leave before the end of the debate because of urgent constituency business.

I speak on behalf of families in North Staffordshire with children who need that treatment, especially the parents of Clare Wise, who lives in Kidsgrove. Clare needs her shunt operation urgently. She needs it now while she is still well. Will the Minister give me a date when she can be admitted for her operation?

On Tuesday this week we heard that Sir James Ackers made an announcement. He has at least and at last acknowledged that we have a problem in the west midlands. However, will the Minister take note that extra money is needed to provide the proper levels of intensive care, not just five beds? That extra money must be spent on the NHS so that everyone can benefit, not just the private sector. Clare's family do not want her to have a private operation, even though money has been raised locally to pay for it. Her parents want the consultant who has treated her throughout to do the operation. They want to know that there will be a bed available in the intensive care unit if it is needed.

I would be grateful if the Minister will say how he intends to make extra money available for this very important service in the west midlands, so that w "Young at Heart" lobby comes here on Monday, i assured that the intensive care unit will be fully st a matter of only days or weeks.

3.15 pm

The Minister for Health (Mr. Tony Newton): I as myself with the opening words of the hon. Mem Walsall, North (Mr. Winnick), who expressed hi wishes to Matthew Collier and his parents, and a hopes of us all that the operation yesterday will s

I wish to record the advice that I have been give the position of Matthew Mulhall, who was also me by the hon. Gentleman, and who was the sub comments in the House earlier this week. I understa his parents, with their Member of Parliament, n consultant — Eric Silove — yesterday. Matthew leaking heart valve and I understand that Dr. Silo advised Matthew's parents that it would be best t him to grow so that the largest possible replacemen valve can be used. It is envisaged that his operati take place in four to six months' time, althou condition will be kept under regular review meantime.

I thought it important to place that information record because, in the light of the apparent clinical it places the case in a rather different context than have been assumed from some of the remarks made Having said that, I stress that I fully accept tha remarks were made in good faith.

Ms. Short: It now appears that only if one goes media, or forces a child to be named in the House, c obtain attention. Delays for operations, even when had been set, have been occurring at the Birmi children's hospital for years. It is important that tha is made clear. If the Minister says that he cannot so problem this week, the question must be: why solution not sought when the problem first arose ago?

Mr. Newton: I acknowledge the hon. Lady's sin The point I made about Matthew Mulhall was int to help the House to understand the position in th of the advice given to me. It was not intended to mi the anxieties that we all feel when delays occur.

I well understand that the hon. Member for Sto Trent, North (Ms. Walley) has to leave the House sh I do not have sufficient information about the c Clare Wise to feel it right to make any com Obviously, I have noted the hon. Lady's remarks ar make inquiries. I am sure that she and other hon. Me will understand that I cannot dictate to clinicians the in which their patients should be treated.

I had intended to say a word or two about the fac obviously, I do not accept everything that the Member for Walsall, North said about the Na Health Service. However, rather than extend argument, I shall say something about the part problems of Birmingham children's hospital. I d intend to minimise the concerns that have been expr but I want to remind the House of the very achievements of that hospital in recent years.

The number of in-patients treated in the hospital past seven years for which I have figures has risen per cent. The number of out-patients has risen by

[Mr. Newton]

cent. and the number of day cases has more than doubled to 121 per cent. Since the cardiac unit, which is the focus of our debate, was designated by the Department in 1984 as a supra-regional centre, which protects its funding, as I am sure that hon. Members are aware, 569 open-heart operations have been performed by surgeons. I know that all hon. Members, whatever their current concerns, would want to join in acknowledging the achievement which that represents.

Many of the treatments that now take place at the hospital were not available a few years ago, and that is one of the causes of the hospital's current difficulties. More than a dozen highly specialised treatments are provided, and that has placed additional pressure — I clearly acknowledge this — on some key services and, in particular, on the hospital's intensive care unit. To put the matter clearly, the pace of medical advance has run ahead of the hospital's ability to recruit and retain enough trained nurses, and the intensive care unit has not been able to operate at full capacity. Even so, admissions to the paediatric intensive care unit have risen from 207 in 1977 to 470 in 1986. The figures have much more than doubled in just under 10 years. However, I recognise that, despite that very large increase in the amount of work, some operations have had to be postponed, as we are all aware.

As the hon. Member for Walsall, North is aware from the recent letter to which he referred from my hon. Friend the Under-Secretary of State, we have been taking a very close interest in the matter in response to the concern expressed inside and outside the House. The issues have been explored at a series of talks between officials and officers from the West Midlands regional health authority and the Central Birmingham health authority. The outcome of those talks and the work of our officials, as well as regional and district officials, enabled Sir James Ackers the chairman of the West Midlands regional health authority to make his statement earlier this week in which he outlined six areas of action intended to ease the position and ensure that in future children do not wait for cardiac surgery for long periods.

The first priority relates in some ways to the point made by the hon. Member for Stoke-on-Trent, North. The priority is to ensure that children currently awaiting an operation are treated as quickly as possible. The regional health authority is therefore considering urgently whether arrangements can be made with other regions or private hospitals to improve the immediate position. While I acknowledge what the hon. Member for Birmingham, Ladywood (Ms. Short) said about the use of the private sector, as a matter of practical concern for those who are awaiting operations if it is possible to obtain those operations within the capacity that currently exists in the private sector, it would be wrong to stand in the way of that, whatever long-term view the hon. Lady may take. At any rate that option, and the possibility of making arrangements with comparable centres in other regions, are among the ideas being considered urgently by the regional health authority.

I know that some doctors at the children's hospital have said that it would be impractical to send children out of the region for treatment. I want to make it clear that it is not the intention to impose a solution that is unacceptable to the children's doctors or their parents. If such a solution were acceptable to the clinicians and parents, I would fully support the regional health authority's objec that all the necessary arrangements for a po were in place. If that is the right practical particular practical problem, no one would in its way.

A number of other initiatives are under w the recruitment and retention of nurses who h of special skills needed by the children's hosp —the hon. Member for Walsall, North fair this — the establishment of a new traini Birmingham for paediatric intensive care. W for the course—the first of its kind outside start later this year. I have made very clear my every possible step should be taken to get tha place as early as possible.

Mr. Winnick: The second paragraph of a received from the Under-Secretary of Sta Member for Derbyshire, South (Mrs. Currie

"It is anticipated this course will commenc 1989."

Mr. Newton: That was the position wh Friend wrote that letter. Part of the pur exercise, and of the statement from the RH during the week was to show that further ste taken to accelerate that process. It is my dir as a Minister, to ensure that no step fails to accelerate the introduction of that course. A knows, the principal problem at the children's hospital intensive care unit is not a money but a shortage of intensive care nurses. focus on that problem beyond anything else There is no question of the introduction of being delayed due to lack of money. We woul that to happen.

Ms. Short: That is good news. Another su the hospital is that there should be a special returning nurses who are resident in Birmingha would not be attracted to other regions. enormous potential. I have written to the Mi it, but I have not yet received a reply. I ho Minister will comment on that suggestion, wh more fruitful than a fresh course for new you

Mr. Newton: I am sorry if the hon. La received a reply. The two courses are complem idea emerged from the work done joint Department and the region, and I very much l will prove possible to pursue that course as wel paediatric intensive care course. Both courses

In the short term and in the longer term efforts will be reinforced by what we are doing level in the profession with the nurses and negotiating council to advance a review of t grading structure which, to a significant exten at ensuring that the skills of nurses in key spe better reflected in their grading and, therefore, i As the House is aware, there has been agreem negotiating council about new grading Proposals are going to the review body for pr report that is due later this year.

The hospital building programme to which is currently under way in the west midlands. A the objective of providing a modern hospital ser parts of the region that historically have facilities — the constituency of the hon. Me

Walsall, North is among those benefiting from the building programme—another important feature is the replacement of the old single specialty hospitals in Birmingham, including the Birmingham children's hospital, by new facilities on district general hospital sites.

Despite its hugely increased capital programme, the region has had to make difficult decisions in recent months between competing priorities. Clearly such decisions have to be taken at regional level. At present, it is planned that the Birmingham children's hospital will be rebuilt on the site of the Queen Elizabeth hospital beginning in 1994-95. That will include an expanded intensive care unit.

As Sir James Ackers made clear in his statement, which I welcomed, he is considering whether there is a speedier alternative to that proposal. I should very much welcome it, and I should be anxious to support the region. be wrong of me and of hon. Members—who sought to do so—to pretend that a complex such as that at the Birmingham children's hospit resolved overnight, but I hope that I have given th and hon. Members a measure of assurance, an reassurance, that not only is no obstacle being p way of finding an early solution to that h difficulties but that we shall be doing everything — and have already taken action — to supp encourage the west midlands region to overcon difficulties.

Question put and agreed to.

Adjourned accordingly at twenty-nine minutes pa o'clock.

House of Commons

Monday 18 January 1988

The House met at half-past Two o'clock

PRAYERS

[MR. SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

Oral Answers to Questions

WALES

Advance Factories

1. **Mr. Morgan:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will provide the figures for each of the last eight years for *(a)* the average number of jobs per 10,000 sq ft of Welsh Development Agency advance factory space projected, at the time of letting, to be created within three years, and *(b)* the average number of jobs now actually in existence per 10,000 sq ft of Welsh Development Agency advance factory space.

The Secretary of State for Wales (Mr. Peter Walker): I have placed a copy of the detailed figures in the Library of the House. Since 1980 the annual average number of jobs projected is about 38 per 10,000 sq ft of advance factory space to be achieved when the lettings have reached their full potential, which really takes some years. The actual number of jobs created to date already exceeds 30 per 10,000 sq ft.

Mr. Morgan: Does the Secretary of State agree that one of the greatest problems in projecting the value for money to be obtained from expenditure on regional aid is the difference between performance and reality? Does he further agree that his extraordinary claim last week that he was increasing the allocation of regional aid, when in fact he was cutting it, was one of the worst frauds ever perpetrated on the people of Wales and that it combined the worst aspects of door-to-door salesmanship with the persistence of Jehovah Witnesses, although not many of those witnesses claim to be Jehovah?

Mr. Walker: I delight in the way in which the Labour party in Wales is distressed at every big piece of good news for the Principality. It is remarkable, in view of the biggest increase in regional aid in any single year in real terms and in cash, to find the hon. Gentleman so distressed. I am delighted to say that his constituents will not be.

Mr. Gwilym Jones: I congratulate my right hon. Friend on achieving a 40 per cent. increase in the amount of regional aid for Wales. As the Welsh Development Agency is having to deal with an apparently insatiable demand for new factory space, particularly in Cardiff and south Wales, this must be of tremendous assistance and will offer great opportunities to continue the economic regeneration that the Government have begun so well.

Mr. Walker: In fairness my hon. Friend should consider that on the Sunday before the announcement the Opposition spokesman spent the whole day announcing the impending reduction in regional aid. Ther it was increased by 40 per cent. the Oppositio distressed indeed.

Mr. Geraint Howells: If my memory serves Secretary of State said last week that an extra plus would be allocated to the Welsh D Agency. Can the Secretary of State say how m money will be allocated to Mid Wales Develo

Mr. Walker: Of course, the mid-Wales advantage from the activities of the Welsh D Agency as well as from Mid Wales Developm increased the Mid Wales Development alloc further £1·5 million, which is an increase of a cent.

Mr. Raffan: Is my right hon. Friend awa announcement that total Government provis WDA and WINvest is to be increased by 30 about one third—in the coming financial ye particularly welcomed in Clwyd where, d economic upturn, the vacancy rate on WDA fallen well below 10 per cent.—a level at ability to attract investment can be impaired?

Mr. Walker: The announcement has been not only in Clwyd but by trade union leader leaders and commercial leaders. The only peo not welcome it are those in the Labour party.

Mr. Roy Hughes: Will the Secretary of St that the number of people employed in WDA f gone down in recent years? Should not the Gov setting employment targets for companies t WDA factories? In view of the downward tr Secretary of State not positively alarmed by th the independent organisation Manpower, whic a survey that job prospects for Wales in 1988 than for any other region of Britain?

Mr. Walker: If the hon. Gentleman would a wager on the result in 1988 I shall willingly t him—perhaps for a mutually agreed charity. the worst of any region, perhaps he will give to that charity. I know that the hon. Gentlema usual happy outlook, will be delighted at the f biggest fall in unemployment in Wales since world war has taken place in the past 12 mon

Welsh Language

2. **Mr. Butler:** To ask the Secretary of State whether he intends to review his policies with re Welsh language.

The Minister of State, Welsh Office (Mr. Wy My right hon. Friend and I are presently engag ranging discussions about the Welsh language. of these we shall consider how the balance approach pursued by the Government since 197 further developed and the opportunity to language can be extended.

Mr. Butler: Will not parental choice b motivation for choosing the Welsh language, wins friends and influences people, rather tha people through vicious demonstration? How m Government spending on the Welsh language and nurture it?

Mr. Roberts: My hon. Friend is right. He will know that the fundamental principle underlying the Education Act 1944 is that children should be educated according to parental choice, and that is the line we are pursuing. With regard to support for the language, we are spending some £1,164,000 under section 26 of the Development of Rural Wales Act and £1,735,000 under section 21 of the Education Act 1980 this year, but that is not the limit of Government support. We support the Welsh language through the entire education system and through the television channel.

Sir Raymond Gower: Is my hon. Friend aware that the history of the past seven or eight years has demonstrated very clearly his marvellous exertions on behalf of the Welsh language? Does he appreciate that we recognise that fact and hold him in high esteem?

Mr. Roberts: I am most grateful to my hon. Friend for that unsolicited tribute. He is absolutely right in saying that our Welsh language policy has been very successful and is accepted and approved of by people of moderate and sensible opinion in Wales. I contrast that with the position of the Labour party, which does not appear to have a policy.

Mr. Wigley: Is the Minister aware that there is a genuine welcome for the Welsh language panel of eight people appointed before Christmas, albeit that there is neither a woman nor a teacher on the panel? Will he clarify the remarks that he made on a Radio Cymru broadcast before Christmas about the panel's work? Will he state categorically that, contrary to what he said, it will be part of the panel's remit to look at the Bills introduced by Lord Prys-Davies and myself, about which consultation has taken place?

Mr. Roberts: I am sorry if I gave that impression; it was certainly not my intention. The group will be considering the proposals that the hon. Gentleman and Lord Prys-Davies put forward. I am sure that the hon. Gentleman would be the first to recognise that things have moved on since that consultation, and we are legislating on educational aspects covered in his Bill.

Mr. Rogers: Does the Minister agree that, rather than dismiss the Labour party's efforts in support of the Welsh language, he ought to be congratulating us? It was one of his Labour predecessors, my right hon. and learned Friend the Member for Aberavon (Mr. Morris), who gave grants to local authorities to support and maintain the Welsh language, and it is the Labour-controlled local authorities in south Wales which have adopted and implemented the policies of developing the Welsh language. Does the Minister agree that, instead of criticising the Labour party for not having a policy, he should be generous enough to accept that the Labour party is fully committed to the Welsh language, and has been for many years?

Mr. Roberts: Of course I accept what the hon. Gentleman says, but I cannot but notice that that statement was made by him rather than by anybody from his Front Bench. If the Front-Bench Members have a policy, perhaps they would care to declare it.

Rating Reform

3. **Mr. Ron Davies:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many people will be liable to pay the proposed community charge in Wales in comparison with those presently liable for rates.

Mr. Peter Walker: The object of the community charge is to spread the responsibility for the 15 per cent. of local government spending that will come from the domestic contribution to all adults and not just to the householders, so 2·1 million adults will be liable compared with 1·1 million present ratepayers.

Mr. Davies: Will the Secretary of State acknowledge that in every district of Mid Glamorgan, which is the county with the worst social and economic deprivation in Wales, every household will be worse off? We noticed the Secretary of State's obvious displeasure and distaste when he commended the Second Reading to the House last December. When he went against his better judgment and voted for the Bill, did he do so to advance his personal ambition, or from fear of the Prime Minister?

Mr. Walker: Both, probably. As I was able to point out, the community charge will be a fairer, better system for Wales. The hon. Gentleman's allegation that every household in his constituency will be worse off is a load of nonsense. Many of his constituents, particularly one-parent families, widows and a load of people who had an unfair burden in the past, will greatly benefit from the changes. In addition, as I pointed out in my answer, as only 15 per cent. of local government expenditure in Wales will come from the community charge, we can organise the needs element in Wales to ensure perfect fairness. That is why I supported the Second Reading happily and I am glad to say that it was cheered loudly from these Benches.

Mr. Rowlands: Is the Secretary of State aware that in Aberfan, Treharris, Rhymney and Merthyr Vale more than three quarters of the householders are likely to be losers under the so-called poll tax? In the name of heaven, what is the case for increasing costs on some of the poorest householders? I thought that the right hon. Gentleman was supposed to be a "One Nation" Tory, but there is no evidence of it in this case.

Mr. Walker: On Second Reading I pointed out that this depends wholly on the needs element that operates when the community charge is introduced. In the past the hon. Gentleman has given me figures about the poverty of many of his constituents. The basis of the rebate scheme and the nationally spread rebate for those on low incomes may well substantially improve the lot of a number of his most poverty-stricken constituents.

Mr. Gwilym Jones: May I put it to my right hon. Friend that if we were not to move to the community charge, and were to persist with this manifestly unfair rating system, there would have to be a revaluation of all properties and that the greatest rate demands would be likely to fall on the lower-priced houses, particularly in the valleys of south Wales?

Mr. Walker: The manner and method of operating the community charge will be perfectly good and sensible for Wales. It will remove a great deal of the considerable hardship that one-parent families and others like them have suffered in the past.

Mr. Alan Williams: Does the Secretary of State realise that although it is bad enough that the poll tax will mean massive increases for the people in the valley communities, it also has an industrial context? The Secretary of State will recollect that last week he produced his future strategy for employment in the valley communities based purely on small firms, although he cut capital grants to one fifth of what they are now. In that context, will he confirm that the combined effect of the poll tax, the unified business rate and revaluation will be twice as great on small firms as on medium-sized and large firms? How, therefore, does he reconcile his employment aims, as stated last week, with the lower capital incentives of the regional policy and the higher costs implicit in his changes in the rating system?

Mr. Walker: That is a load of nonsense. I now have more money with more flexibility than ever before to encourage small and large firms. Before the right hon. Gentleman makes these pronouncements he should study the facts. Small firms in the valleys will benefit from many of last week's announcements. They will also have available through the WDA and selective assistance every possible inducement and incentive available to larger firms. The combination of our policies is undoubtedly good for the valleys. On the rating system—I should have thought that this was to the hon. Gentleman's delight—I announced that if there was any shift of emphasis it would be to the benefit of Swansea as opposed to Cardiff.

Health Authorities

4. **Mr. Ray Powell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales when he last met the chairmen of health authorities in Wales; and what subjects were discussed.

Mr. Peter Walker: I met the Welsh health auhorities chairmen's committee on 23 November 1987. The main subjects discussed were cash management, locum agencies, medical staff matters, competitive tendering, waiting lists and community health councils.

Mr. Powell: Having had that meeting, the Secretary of State will be as well aware as we are that the problem in the Health Service in Wales is underfunding by the Government. Is he prepared to tell us today that he will provide the funding required by the area health authorities? Is he aware that Mid Glamorgan alone is looking for at least £4·6 million to prevent beds being closed? Alternatively, will the Secretary of State have a word with the Chancellor of the Exchequer to ensure that money is invested in the Health Service rather than given away in tax benefits? Does he agree that it is no use taxpayers having tax benefits today if they are going to be dead tomorrow because they do not have the service that should be provided by the NHS?

Mr. Walker *rose*——

Mr. Powell: I have not finished yet.

Mr. Speaker: Briefly.

Mr. Powell: I shall be brief, Mr. Speaker. My hon. Friend the Member for Newport, East (Mr. Hughes) last week accused the Prime Minister of having blood on her hands with regard to the Health Service. I hope that it is not rubbing off on the Secretary of State.

Mr. Walker: We had a good and constructive meeting with the chairmen of the area health authorities, as I believe they will confirm. The figures that I have announced for the Helth Service in the coming year show quite a substantial increase. When considering these factors and claiming that the Health Service is underfunded, I hope that the hon. Gentleman will bear in mind that Health Service expenditure in Wales next year will be £1,238 per household compared with £418 in 1978-79.

Mr. Ray Powell: What is the increase in real terms?

Mr. Walker: In real terms it is an increase of 39 per cent., so it ill becomes the Opposition to condemn what has been done.

Mr. Livsey: What formula is being applied to the closure of NHS beds and wards in relation to the increasing number of private beds, which seems to militate against NHS provision very seriously indeed?

Mr. Walker: With regard to the availability of beds, the most important measure is the number of patients treated, which this year is at an all-time record level and massively greater than a few years ago. I believe that that trend will continue. That is the important judgment.

There are, of course, increasing demands on the Health Service as new breakthroughs in medicine take place. That will always be so, whichever Government are in power. We have substantially increased expenditure in Wales and are continuing to do so. The hon. Gentleman referred to Mid Glamorgan. Capital allowance to the district authority next year will show an increase of 21 per cent. in one year, so a great deal is being done.

Mr. Forth: Did my right hon. Friend discuss with the chairmen of the health authorities the number of new hospitals built in Wales in the past few years and the increased number of patients being treated? Did he reassure the chairmen that his priorities include, not just the number of beds at any given time, but the number of people receiving quality treatment from the Health Service? Did he receive positive answers from the chairmen, and was he able to reassure them on all those points?

Mr. Walker: Yes, Sir. In the past 10 years there has been considerable capital investment in new hospitals in Wales, but that does not remove the anxiety of a person who has to wait to see a consultant or to be admitted for an operation. Anyone who knows people with such problems will appreciate their anxiety. There is room for greater efficiency in the Health Service. There is also a need for increased capital and current expenditure. Both needs are being met.

Mr. Gareth Wardell: In view of that very encouraging reply, will the Secretary of State give a guarantee that no woman in the future will go through the experience of some women in south Wales who have had to wait up to 83 days from confirmation of cervical carcinoma to gain admission for treatment at Singleton hospital in Swansea and Felindre hospital in Cardiff?

Mr. Walker: I am sure that at any time after the last war, and since the creation of the National Health Service, one could indentify ghastly individual cases that have not received attention. However, that is not likely always to be the position. For example, there is a question on the Order Paper today to which I will make a written reply. That question asks me for the comparative figures for waiting

lists between 1978 and the present day. Significantly, the hon. Gentleman concerned asked for the figures from March 1978 and not March 1979. I will also provide the figures for March 1979, because they show the massive deterioration that took place in that 12 months.

Mr. Nicholas Bennett: Will my right hon. Friend bear in mind the considerable concern in Pembrokeshire where, according to the Welsh Office's figures, the authority is 5·2 per cent. below the Yates' formula? Will he also bear in mind that some health authorities are not only overfunded on the Yates' formula, but overspent? Pembrokeshire, which is a very good and most efficient authority, is converned that it is losing out.

Mr. Walker: All the area chairmen whom I met, without exception, wanted to improve financial control and managerial competence. We must give careful consideration to the quality of staff that the chairmen need to recruit for those purposes.

Mr. Ieuan Wyn Jones: Will the Secretary of State ask the chairman of Gwynedd health authority to conduct an inquiry into reports that, following the closure of a maternity ward at St. David's hospital, Bangor on Wednesday of last week, expectant mothers were unable to gain admission to that hospital and mothers who had given birth were unable to return to wards? Will he bear in mind that a happy and fulfilling time for many families was turned into a distressing experience for them and for the staff who had to care for them? When he next meets the chairman of the health authority, will he discuss with her the level of funding needed for the authority to ensure that such a distressing experience does not happen again?

Mr. Walker: As we know, further allocations for the last months of this year have been given to all authorities, including Gwynedd. I shall certainly put to the authority chairman the points that the hon. Gentleman has made.

Sir Raymond Gower: Is my right hon. Friend aware that there is much evidence of increased longevity throughout the free world and that, however the systems of health and hospitals are funded, the new and expensive treatments are creating strains for health services?

Mr. Walker: Yes, Sir. That is bound to happen because of the major breakthroughs. For example, the figures for hip operations have been transformed over the years because of the changes in the medical profession. The number of elderly people is increasing. However, we must all understand that the need to have proper treatment, if it is available, is a natural aspiration of every family. I shall repeat the figures and state that when we came to office £8 a week was spent per household in Wales, and the figure is now £24. That is a substantial improvement.

Mr. Alan Williams: Despite what the Secretary of State says, will he confirm that the rate of increase in expenditure on the National Health Service in Wales under this Administration is little more than a half of what it was under the Labour Administration? As the Chancellor of the Exchequer gave £6,000 million in tax cuts last year and is apparently going to give at least the same figure this year in his next Budget, is the right hon. Gentleman not ashamed that all that he could offer the Health Service in Wales and the beleaguered health authorities was £3·8 million extra this year and a standstill on finances for next year? Will he bear in mind that because of the cash crisis in our chest, kidney dialysis and acute services, with up to four-year waiting lists, we want the Chancellor to use all the resources not further to enrich the already wealthy, but to save the Health Service for our people?

Mr. Walker: I find that a bit thick coming from the right hon. Gentleman. He sat silently as a Minister in the Government who made the biggest cuts in the capital investment programme in the Health Service of any post-war Government. He sat there without a whimper, complaint or a single word. If he is proud of the fact that when the Labour Government left office they were spending £8 per week per household in comparison to our £24 a week, I find that very surprising.

Welsh Language

5. **Mr. Win Griffiths:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many pupils in Wales do not receive instruction in Welsh as a first or second language at the ages of *(a)* seven, *(b)* 12 and *(c)* 15 years.

Mr. Wyn Roberts: The latest available figures, for September 1986, show that 74 per cent. of 12-year-olds and 27 per cent. of 15-year-olds were receiving instruction in Welsh either as a first or as a second language. Comparable figures are not available for children aged seven, but for primary children as a group, that is aged five to 11, 66 per cent. were receiving instruction in Welsh.

Mr. Griffiths: Does the Minister intend to carry out a crash programme to ensure that there are more teachers of the Welsh language, so that all children in Wales will have the opportunity to learn Welsh?

Mr. Roberts: The hon. Gentleman will know that we have some 2,500 teachers in Wales who can speak Welsh, but do not teach through the medium of Welsh. We have been encouraging them with in-service training to enable them to use Welsh as their medium of instruction.

Dr. Thomas: Does the Minister accept that the key time for instruction in Welsh and in other European languages is at nursery and primary level? Will he tackle seriously the issue of linguistic skills in Wales, by ensuring that the skills that have been developed in bilingual teaching at primary level are extended and other European languages are added to them, to ensure that children in Wales have the same linguistic skills as those in any other part of the European Community?

Mr. Roberts: That is my desire, too, but let us not underestimate the point made in my answer to the question, that 66 per cent. of our primary school children receive instruction in Welsh. I think that the hon. Gentleman will be fair enough to admit that, although we should not be complacent about that figure, it is certainly very encouraging. I agree with what he said about children at nursery school age. We owe a considerable debt to Mudiad Ysgolion Meithrin, which has prospered and extended its activities under this Government.

Schools (Community Relations)

6. **Mr. Michael:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what proposals he has for maintaining a close relationship between individual schools in Wales and their local community, and to ensure full community use of school buildings in holiday periods, at weekends and in the evenings.

Mr. Wyn Roberts: Our policy remains that while the use of school buildings for community use is desirable, the extent to which it takes place must be a matter for local education authorities and school governors.

Mr. Michael: Does the Minister agree that the best of local authorities in Wales have sought to maximise the community use of buildings and to maintain a proper balance between community needs and the direct educational needs of the schools? Does he agree that that careful balance is under threat with the Government's impending education legislation? Will he give an assurance that safeguards will be built in to ensure that that balance is maintained in future?

Mr. Roberts: I do not agree with the hon. Gentleman that the balance is under threat. I assure him that the position is as follows. Under the Education (No. 2) Act 1986, school governing bodies are required to have regard to the desirability of school premises being available for community use, but there is no duty imposed on them to provide for such cases. That is the position now. Of course, under the current Education Reform Bill, there is the possibility of community use of school buildings, but their primary purpose is as school buildings, and we have no intention whatsoever of interfering with the duties of the governing bodies of such schools. It is up to them to maximise the use that they make of their school buildings for community purposes.

Mr. Coleman: As playing fields and recreational facilities have been paid for out of the public purse, will the Minister undertake to ensure that those facilities are withheld from public use by opted out schools?

Mr. Roberts: I have made the position clear. We are currently discussing the issue, which features in the Education Reform Bill. As the hon. Member for Bridgend (Mr. Griffiths) knows only too well, we are coming up to those clauses which deal with financial delegation to schools. I am sure that the fundamental principle—that the buildings were built primarily for school use—will remain effective, but it will be up to governing bodies to maximise their community use.

Mr. Alex Carlile: Does the Minister agree, first, that the most community-orientated schools in Wales are the small village schools and, secondly, that, in general, the best primary education in Wales is provided by small village schools?

Mr. Roberts: I have no great difficulty in agreeing with either of those propositions.

Young Children (Heart Disease)

7. **Mr. Alan W. Williams:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will give the most recent annual number of babies or young children diagnosed as suffering from congenital heart defects or heart disease *(a)* in East Dyfed and *(b)* in Wales.

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Wales (Mr. Ian Grist): The most recent information available in relation to the notification of congenital malformation indicates that, in 1986, five children in East Dyfed and 57 children in Wales were notified as having been born with heart or circulatory system malformation.

Mr. Williams: I find those figures quite incredible. I am sure that the true figures are far higher. The Minister is aware that there are no facilities in Wales to treat children with congenital heart defects and that, whenever they require surgery, they are flown to Bristol, Southampton, or London. Since 1981 the Government have accepted that a paediatric cardiology unit should be set up in Cardiff at the Heath hospital. However, year after year, we have had only promises that it will be set up. May we have an assurance that that unit will be set up during 1988?

Mr. Speaker: Briefly, please.

Mr. Williams: During the Christmas recess I met the parents of Stefan Jones from Napier, who, at eight months, was diagnosed as having a hole in the heart. Now, at five years of age——

Mr. Speaker: Briefly, please.

Mr. Williams: What does the Secretary of State have to say to Stefan Jones?

Mr. Grist: There is no doubt that babies and their parents in such circumstances are in a most distressing position. It is also fair to observe that the operations about which we are talking are, on the whole, extremely expensive, extremely skilled and relatively new, so I could not honestly accuse Labour of not having provided these facilities. I hope, however, that the hon. Gentleman accepts that we are doing our best to bring such facilities to Cardiff. The Royal College of Physicians is to carry out a suvey of cardiac facilities in south Wales, and the South Glamorgan health authority is advertising for a consultant in this area.

As for those aged under one, on the advice of the royal colleges they will still go to Bristol, but, after the establishment of the cardiac centre in Cardiff, that could be reviewed.

Mrs. Clwyd: Does the Minister agree that it is lack of quality nursing care that results in delays in operations for hole-in-the-heart patients such as my constituent, Mrs. Keenan, who wrote to me this week saying that twice she had been prepared for surgery at the University hospital of Wales, Cardiff and twice she had been told that the operation was off because of a lack of nursing staff and beds? Do the Government realise what anxiety and stress this causes already very sick patients? Surely there is no sense in the Government's reducing spending on nurses' training, as they have in each year since 1979.

Mr. Grist: I am sure the hon. Lady will also accept that the number of nurses in Wales has increased under this Government by about 3,000. She might, therefore, see the sense of trying to re-order the pay structure so that people are prepared to take on the special skills required in areas such as those about which she has spoken.

Mr. Roy Hughes: Does the Minister appreciate that people expect something more than crocodile tears from him? There is now serious concern about the lack of urgency associated with providing these badly needed facilities for young children. Can he imagine the expense and inconvenience of taking a young child to Southampton or to London? When will we have such facilities in Wales? Is this not yet another example of underfunding the NHS?

Mr. Grist: Not at all. I think that the hon. Gentleman does a disservice to the medical profession that provides such skills. As I said in my answer, 57 children fell into this

category at the last count in South Wales. That is a small but desperately important number, which helps to explain some of the problems that are faced.

Public Library Service (Funding)

8. **Mr. Raffan:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales whether there will be an incentive funding scheme for the public library service in Wales to match the £750,000 scheme announced by the Office of Arts and Libraries for England; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Wyn Roberts: I intend to observe the progress of this innovatory scheme in England and in the light of that consider whether a similar scheme might be appropriate for Wales.

Mr. Raffan: Will my hon. Friend tell the House for how long he intends to observe the progress of the scheme in England? Does he agree that it could be of particular benefit to the two joint authority schemes currently under consideration in Wales: the future development of the Welsh regional library service, and the development of a regional business information scheme based on the National Library of Wales?

Mr. Roberts: The current scheme involves an expenditure of some £250,000, as opposed to the £750,000 mentioned in my hon. Friend's question, and it is over a period of three years. We shall very soon see whether a similar scheme would be appropriate for Wales. Meanwhile, we expect the library authorities in Wales to be alive to the need to promote co-operation and collaboration, as the scheme will, we hope, do in England. We are currently considering the business information service to be provided by the National Library on a regional basis, and my right hon. Friend is giving it very active consideration.

CHURCH COMMISSIONERS

"Crockford's Clerical Directory"

24. **Mr. Harry Greenway:** To ask the right hon. Member for Selby, as representing the Church Commissioners, what is the commissioners' policy towards the commissioning of anonymous prefaces to *Crockford's Clerical Directory*, and if he will make a statement.

25. **Mr. Adley:** To ask the right hon. Member for Selby, as representing the Church Commissioners, what is the policy of the commissioners towards the commissioning of anonymous prefaces to *Crockford's Clerical Directory*, and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Michael Alison (Second Church Estates Commissioner, Representing Church Commissioners): The Church Commissioners and the Central Board of Finance took over the publication of *Crockford's* from the Oxford University Press in 1984. It had been a long-standing position to include in each edition an anonymous preface in which the author was given complete freedom to express his personal views. Although some earlier prefaces had proved controversial, the extent of the controversy over the current edition is clearly quite exceptional, and, in the circumstances, the commissioners and the Central Board of Finance will be reviewing the arrangements to be made for future editions.

Mr. Greenway: May I pay tribute to the late Dr. G Bennett, whom I knew for over 20 years, for his ma of theology, his erudition and his warm and passionate personality? May I ask my right hon. F whether *Crockford's* prefaces, which have been so val over the years, will continue, and whether the Ch Commissioners will consider giving their authors option to be open or anonymous? If anonymity is ch will it be respected in all circumstances?

Mr. Alison: I am grateful for my hon. Friend's kind well-judged words about the late Dr. Gareth Bennett, I am sure that what he has said will be widely appreci at least in Church of England circles.

The question of anonymity is to be reviewed. My Friend's idea of an option of identification or anony will certainly be considered by the commissioners.

Mr. Adley: As a background to the affair, does my hon. Friend agree that, up and down the cou thousands of parish priests are selflessly giving dedic service to their parishioners, but that many feel that work is being undermined by a handful of politi motivated bishops?

Mr. Alison: My hon. Friend has switched the ta slightly from the anonymous author of the *Crockfo* preface, now known to be Dr. Bennett, to the bishop the Church of England. I entirely endorse his view that heart and soul of the Church of England are the milli of parishioners who get on with the daily work Christian living and worshipping in their parish churc As for my hon. Friend's more controversial point ab the bishops, I am only too glad when conservative bish speak out in a Conservative frame. However, controv has always been a feature of the Christian religion.

Mr. Frank Field: Will the right hon. Gentleman al me to say that the preface was a serious piece of w which the Church would do well to consider carefully its next meeting of Synod and beyond? Does he agree t having a preface that is unsigned can led to unfortun consequences when the person has to lie about whether is the author? Should the Church not take that i account when it considers the next edition?

Mr. Alison: I am grateful to the hon. Member for contribution to this point. As he knows, he featu personally in the preface. In weighing the points that has made, I should point out that Dr. Bennett was at pa in the preface to praise and laud the standard and traditi of anonymity, which he said he found useful and helpf At the same time, if it leads to anonymous authors havi to repudiate their authorship by lying, the Chu Commissioners will obviously have to consider that po in the future.

Mr. Stokes: Does my right hon. Friend agree that t importance here is the substance of the preface, n whether it was anonymous, which is no concern of t House? In view of the present difficulties of the Churc does my right hon. Friend also agree that, although so of us may criticise the hierarchy from time to time, it sure behoves us to do all that we can to back up the good a godly men who deal with Church of England affairs?

Mr. Alison: I agree wholeheartedly with my ho Friend's comments. In this case, the preface to *Crockfor* was an exceptionally vigorous and stimulating analysis

a wide range of issues, including the wider implications for the Anglican communion and certain practices in Anglican churches overseas. It was well worth reading and writing.

Mr. Cormack: Is it not a great pity that more people did not behave with the dignified restraint that the Archbishop of Canterbury showed when the preface was published? Would it not also be a good thing if more of those who talked about it read it?

Mr. Alison: I agree with my hon. Friend on both points.

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Staff (Wages and Conditions of Service)

26. **Mr. Skinner:** To ask the hon. Member for Berwick-upon-Tweed, as representing the House of Commons Commission, whether there are any plans to review the wages and conditions of those staff working in the House; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Beith (on behalf of the House of Commons Commission): Under the requirements of the House of Commons (Administration) Act 1978, the grading and pay of staff of the House are kept broadly in line with those in the home Civil Service and are linked appropriately. Pay of staff of the House is reviewed at the same time as, and in line with, that in the Civil Service.

Under similar provisions, the other conditions of staff of the House are kept broadly in line with those in the Home Civil Service. These are reviewed from time to time and changes may be applied after management has taken account of the circumstances of the House, in consultation, as appropriate, with the trade unions.

Mr. Skinner: Will the deputy leader of the official wing of the Liberal party, if he can wrest himself away from all these merger talks——

Mr. Speaker: Order. The hon. Member is answering for the Commission.

Mr. Skinner: That is his title. Will the hon. Gentleman bear in mind that some of the wages and conditions of staff who work in the House—those who clock on and off, unlike hon. Members—are paltry by standards outside? Will he also bear in mind that recently there have been several instances of staff being treated, particularly by Tory Members, as if it was "Upstairs Downstairs"? They are being treated like servants. Will he draw the attention of his colleagues to that fact and stop this nonsense?

Mr. Beith: I knew that I can rely on the hon. Gentleman to offer me a friendly and encouraging word on matters outside the terms of reference of the Commission.

The day-to-day working of the Refreshment Department, as with that of other Departments of the House, is a matter for the head of that Department, but, in my view, the pay and conditions of staff compare favourably with those elsewhere in the public sector and outside. If the hon. Gentleman has particular cases to pursue, he ought to pursue them with the head of the Refreshment Department—as I know that he has in an individual case—or with the Chairman of the Catering Sub-Committee.

Mr. Boyes: Will the hon. Member accept that, particularly at Christmas time, the Members' kiosk has very long queues and that the staff work exceptionally hard for what is not satisfactory, but highly unsatisfactory, pay? Will he consider whether, at times such as Christmas, those members of staff ought to go on to a commission basis, as well as receiving their wages?

Mr. Beith: I agree with the hon. Gentleman that the staff in the kiosk worked extremely hard for hon. Members during that busy period before Christmas. The provision of the kiosk is a matter for the Services Committee. I shall see that all concerned are aware of the hon. Gentleman's representations.

Scottish Affairs Committee

27. **Mr. Allen:** To ask the hon. Member for Berwick-upon-Tweed, as representing the House of Commons Commission, what is the most up-to-date figure available to him for the total expenditure on staffing, pensions and related matters incurred since the beginning of the current Session in connection with the Scottish Affairs Committee.

Mr. Beith: No expenditure has been incurred since the beginning of this Session specifically in connection with the Scottish Affairs Committee. Staff in the Department of the Clerk of the House are available for a wide range of duties, not just the service of particular Committees.

Mr. Allen: The staffing arrangements have continued despite the fact that the Select Committee system has not been set up for six months, and the Select Committee on Scottish Affairs has still not been set up. Costs must be incurred for those people, not just for the six months, but for the remaining five years of this Parliament. Leaving aside the obscenity of the fact that Scottish colleagues do not have a Select Committee of their own, which they should, will the hon. Gentleman take away the consideration that he has the right to report to the House and make representations to the Leader of the House on the fact that more than £1 million has been wasted on the Select Committee system? Will the hon. Gentleman bring back a report from the House of Commons Commission as soon as possible?

Mr. Beith: The hon. Gentleman asked about the Scottish Affairs Committee. The two members of staff who were provisionally allocated to work for it are now working for other Committees. Should the Committee subsequently be set up, it will be the responsibility of the head of the Department concerned to ensure that staff are made available for its work.

Mr. Heffer: Is there likely to be consideration of a reversal of the position whereby subcontractors are brought in for cleaning the House, and so on, when those who used to work for the House——

Mr. Speaker: Order. That subject would have come more happily under the first question. This question is about the Scottish Affairs Committee.

Mr. Heffer: I did try.

Souvenir Kiosk

28. **Mr. Harry Greenway:** To ask the Lord President of the Council what were the takings of the House of Commons kiosk in *(a)* the four weeks to Christmas 1987 and *(b)* for the latest year for which figures are available; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Charles Irving (The Chairman of the Catering Sub-Committee): I have been asked to reply.

The takings of the House of Commons kiosk in the four weeks to Christmas 1987 were £183,620; the equivalent figure for takings in the calendar year to Christmas 1987 was £525,796. The kiosk did not, of course, operate during the period when the House was dissolved for the general election. Both figures include VAT at 15 per cent. We hope that we will have another record year at the end of this financial year.

Mr. Greenway: May I congratulate my hon. Friend and all those concerned upon those excellent and amazing figures and ask whether the staff will get bonus payments? May I also thank him and his Committee for introducing fudge to the House of Commons during the past year, but may I ask why it costs £2·50 a tin, whereas down the road one can buy the same quantity for only £1? Why is House of Commons fudge so expensive?

Mr. Irving: My hon. Friend, who is an expert at fudge, will realise that there is a vast difference between quality and quantity.

Mr. Dalyell: Would it be a good idea to put *The House Magazine* on sale at the kiosk? What is the position of *The House Magazine*, which carries the imprimatur of the coat of arms of Parliament? Is it purely a private enterprise venture? May we know who financed the pulping of a whole issue of the magazine and why a whole issue——

Mr. Speaker: Order. I do not think that that is the responsibility of the Chairman of the Catering Sub-Committee, although it was in order to ask him whether the magazine should be put on sale in the kiosk.

Ten-Minute Bills

29. **Mr. Hanley:** To ask the Lord President of the Council if he will table a motion for the appointment of a Procedure Committee to consider moving the allotted time for the introduction of ten-minute rule Bills to the end of a day's business; and if he will make a statement.

The Lord President of the Council and Leader of the House of Commons (Mr. John Wakeham): No, Sir, but consideration of any such specific proposal would be within the remit of a Procedure Committee with general terms of reference.

The ten-minute rule Bill procedure is an important way whereby a Back Bencher can draw the attention of the House to a matter to which he attaches particular importance. From this point of view, transferring the procedure to the end of business would rob it of some of its value.

Mr. Hanley: Does my right hon. Friend agree that public business at the start of our proceedings is too often delayed by the over-indulgence of hon. Member's raising bogus points of order? Would it not be more appropriate to have it just before the Adjournment debate, as was done during the Session of 1966-67?

Mr. Wakeham: The question of points of order is a slightly different matter, and it is not one for me. I am not aware of any general dissatisfaction with the present timing of ten-minute Bills. However, it is something that the Procedure Committee could look at.

Mr. Campbell-Savours: Will the Leader of the House confirm that the Procedure Committee, of which I am a member, produced a report before the summer recess that dealt with all these issues in detail and made a recommendations? Is it not true that the reasc report was not brought before the House w Leader of the House was worried that if the P Official Information Bill that we debated last gone through, the proposals in our report, if ca House, would have meant that the House woul more time on Report to deal with amendment and that that would have secured its passage that Bill is out of the way, why does the Gentleman not bring that report forward this

Mr. Speaker: Order. Does this question hav to do with ten-minute Bills?

Mr. Tony Banks: My hon. Friend took 10 ask it.

Mr. Wakeham: The hon. Gentleman is chas —this matter has little to do with ten-minute regard to Procedure Committee reports, I hav to the House that I have proposals as to how b with these matters. I am having discussions with channels and I hope to make progress soon.

Dr. Glyn: When the Procedure Committee si right hon. Friend ask it to consider recomme reintroduction of the 10-minute limit on speech knows, in 1979 and 1984 the House agreed speeches to 10 minutes——

Mr. Speaker: Order. The subject is ten-mi rather than speeches. However, I agree with Gentleman about 10-minute speeches.

Mr. Wakeham: This is certainly a matter to attach importance, and we want to get on with as possible.

Select Committees

30. **Mr. Allen:** To ask the Lord Presiden Council if he will make it his policy to review the of Select Committees at the end of the current Ses if he will make a statement.

Mr. Wakeham: Since the establishment of th Select Committee system in 1979, the Liaison Co has made periodic reports to the House on the o of Select Committees. In so far as they are Hous this would seem to be the appropriate form of r

Mr. Allen: Does the Leader of the House h further comment to make, given that on Friday his colleagues were drawing attention to the ever-p Executive versus Parliament? Is he aware that monons delay in setting up Select Committees ai abetted his colleagues on Friday in arguing for a Parliament? Will he bring forward a report to ens the teeth of the Select Committees are sharpened we can hold the Government to account?

Mr. Wakeham: No, Sir. I have no proposals forward a report. It is a matter that the Liaison Co could consider, and we shall be interested in anyth it says.

Mr. Gow: Has my right hon. Friend conside relationship between members of Select Committ those of Standing Committees? Is my right hon.

aware that many hon. Members are members of Select Committees and of the two Standing Committees, which are all meeting at the same time?

Mr. Wakeham: I recognise that, from time to time, this causes considerable difficulties, and my admiration goes to those hon. Members who manage to do a great deal of work. This is more a matter for the Committee of Selection than for me.

Mr. Wigley: The difficulties that have been experienced in the past six months could have been avoided if the Select Committees on Scottish Affairs in particular, and that on Welsh Affairs, had reflected a balance of membership from Scotland and Wales, and not from the balance of the House. As reports must eventually come to the Floor of the House, cannot the House be flexible enough to adopt that approach?

Mr. Wakeham: I am all for flexibility in these matters, but unless Select Committees reflect the broad balance of opinion within the House they will not be acceptable to it. I believe that that is the right principle for all Select Committees.

All-Party Groups

31. **Mr. Adley:** To ask the Lord President of the Council if he will propose to the House rules to require that the membership of all-party groups conforms to that nomenclature; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Wakeham: Towards the end of the previous Parliament the Services Committee instructed the Accommodation and Administration Sub-Committee to investigate and report on the desirability of introducing new rules to regulate the formation, constitution and proceedings of all-party groups. This investigation was cut short by the general election, but I understand that the new Sub-Committee intends to re-examine the matter shortly.

Mr. Adley: Will my right hon. Friend accept that I am talking about groups of parliamentarians and not outside groups? Does he agree that a group of parliamentarians that includes no Members of the Labour party, the Liberal party, the Social Democratic party, the Scottish National party and Plaid Cymru cannot call itself an all-party group, and that were it to do so it would be likely to be in breach of the Trade Descriptions Act 1968?

Mr. Wakeham: I agree with my hon. Friend that an all-party group should be what it claims to be. That was the only stipulation made by the Services Committee in its 1984 report. These are exactly the matters which the Sub-Committee will be considering.

Mr. Dobson: May I express the hope that the Leader of the House will ensure that a number of purportedly all-party groups that apply themselves to South africa and Namibia are genuinely all-party? When I last examined their composition it seemed that all the parties that they claim to represent are the parties to which Mr. Botha belongs.

Mr. Wakeham: I am not sure whether that is a correct analysis. I hope that the hon. Gentleman will have some constructive part to play in the discussions that will take place with a view to ensuring that all-party groups command the general respect of the House.

Points of Order

3.32 pm

Mrs. Llin Golding (Newcastle-under-Lyme): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. May I ask you to use your influence with the Prime Minister and ask her to change her mind and to meet the parents and children——

Mr. Speaker: Order. That is not a matter for me. If the hon. Lady is called tomorrow during Prime Minister's Question Time, she can put the question directly to the Prime Minister.

Mr. David Winnick (Walsall, North): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. Can you give advice, Mr. Speaker, about the way in which constituents can redress their grievances? A large group of parents, with their children, are proceeding to 10 Downing street to present a petition. They are concerned over the delay in their children being admitted to the Birmingham children's hospital——

Mr. Speaker: Order. What possible point of order arises from what the hon. Gentleman has said? The issue to which he is referring is not a matter of order. There are other opportunities to raise such matters, opportunities that do not involve me.

Mr. Tam Dalyell: (Linlithgow): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. The matter that I wish to raise arises from Question 28. You, Mr. Speaker, are involved indirectly through the learned Clerk of the House, who is a member of the advisory board of *The House Magazine*. I ask you, Mr. Speaker, to clarify the status of *The House Magazine*. It carries the imprimatur of Parliament yet we are told that it is a private venture. If private ventures carry the arms of the Houses of Parliament, the Houses of Parliament, directly or indirectly, are involved. Indeed, another member of the advisory board is the Librarian. There is some relationship between the House and *The House Magazine*.

I am concerned about the finances and other matters arising from a decision of the editor of *The House Magazine*, the hon. Member for Staffordshire, South (Mr. Cormack), whom I am glad to see in his place, to pulp the pre-Christmas edition of *The House Magazine*. The decision was taken off his own bat for the ostensible reason that a review sought from a professor of journalism who is a regular contributor to *The Times*, contained references to certain assertions that appear on page 196 of a book written by Peter Jenkins. It is on that page that Mr. Jenkins asserts that a telephone conversation took place between two——

Mr. Speaker: Order. Is this a point of order for me?

Mr. Dalyell: How can it be that reference to a telephone conversation between Sir Brian Hayes, Grand Companion of the Bath——

Mr. Speaker: Order. The hon. Gentleman is going into too much detail. Unlike some of the hon. Gentleman's colleagues on both sides of the House, I am not on the editorial board of *The House Magazine*. If the hon. Gentleman wants an answer to his questions, he should table a question to the Leader of the House, who doubtless will be briefed to answer it. I cannot answer the hon. Gentleman's questions.

Mr. Patrick Cormack (Staffordshire, South): Further to the point of order, Mr. Speaker. The hon. Member for Linlithgow (Mr. Dalyell) has sought to purs
in several ways. He has had the full facts exp
It is a well-known fact that *The House M*
founded some 10 years ago. I understand
associated with *The House Magazine* at th
permission for the magazine to bear the p
given properly by the Services Committee an
your predecessor, Mr. Speaker. Its editorial
is strictly non-party political, is supervised by
all parties in both Houses, and by senior O
House. The magazine seeks to give info
provide a little entertainment, not to indu
political polemics.

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: Order. I do not think that th
be taken any further.

Mr. Graham Allen (Nottingham, North): F
point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Order. I have already said t
think that we can take the matter any furthe
is not a matter of order for me. The hon.
heard what has been said.

Mr. Dennis Skinner (Bolsover): On a poi
Mr. Speaker. If there is a publication in the
bears the portcullis——

Mr. Speaker: Order. I said that we could
matter any further. It is not a matter of orde
matter for me.

Mr. Skinner *rose*——

Mr. Dalyell *rose*——

STATUTORY INSTRUMENTS

Mr. Speaker: With the leave of the House
together the five motions relating to statutory i

Ordered,

That the draft Caribbean Development Ba
Payments) Order 1987, be referred to a Standing
on Statutory Instruments, &c.

That the draft United Kingdom Central
Nursing, Midwifery and Health Visiting (Electo
(Variation) Order 1988, be referred to a Standing
on Statutory Instruments, &c.

That the draft Unfair Dismissal (Increase o
Basic and Special Awards) Order 1987, be re
Standing Committee on Statutory Instruments,

That the draft Employment Protection (V
Limits) Order 1987, be referred to a Standing Co
Statutory Instruments, &c.

That the draft Ports (Finance) Act 1985 (
Grants Limit) Order 1988, be referred to
Committee on Statutory Instruments, &c.—[*Mr.*

Mr. Skinner: It is a cover-up.

Mr. Dalyell *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: Order. Hon. Members canno
matter that has nothing to do with me and not
with a point of order.

Mr. Skinner: It is a cover-up. Who did the

Mr. Speaker: Order. The hon. Member mus
when I am on my feet. The hon. Member must
matter in a proper parliamentary way, by
definitive question to the Leader of the Hous
some other method.

Mr. Winnick: On a point of order, Mr. Spe

Mr. Speaker: Provided it has nothing to do with this matter.

Mr. Winnick: You have said that there will be a debate tomorrow on the National Health Service. The people who are here now, and there has been a lot——

Mr. Speaker: Order. I cannot add any more to what I have said. This is not a matter of order. The hon. Member must seek to take part in tomorrow's debate. I hope that he will be fortunate.

Mr. Skinner: Further to the point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Australia (Bicentennial Gift)

3.36 pm

The Lord Privy Seal and Leader of the Ho Commons (Mr. John Wakeham): I beg to move,

That an humble Address be presented to Her M praying that Her Majesty will give directions that, to m Bicentenary in 1988 of the first European settlem Australia and the opening of the new Parliament Ho Canberra, a gift of a Vice-Regal Chair be made, on be both Houses of Parliament, to the Parliament Commonwealth of Australia.

Mr. Dennis Skinner (Bolsover): Who will ta chair?

Mr. Speaker: Order. The hon. Member must not across the Chamber. If he is called, he can ma comments, but he should not do so from a sed position.

Mr. Wakeham: To mark the bicentennial of th European settlement in Australia, I am happy to mo motion to seek the House's authorisation for a joi from this House and another place of a vice-regal ch the Australian Parliament. The chair will stand Senate Chamber of the new Parliament in Canberra, will be opened this year as one of the major na projects commemorating the bicentenary.

The chair will be a fitting symbol of the comm between Australia and this country. These links hav lasted 200 years, and I am sure the House will join sending the heartiest congratulations to the Parli and people of Australia on this occasion. We hope th close relationship will last for many years to come.

3.38 pm

Mr. Frank Dobson (Holborn and St. Pancras): I jo Lord Privy Seal and Leader of the House of Comm supporting this proposal to mark what is described motion as the 200th anniversary of

"the first European settlement of Australia."

It is an event that scarcely resounds to the credit House, involving as it did the House 200 year sanctioning the carrying away of British citizens most degrading circumstances and dumping th Australia. It led to the destruction of the way of li many of the lives of the original inhabitants.

Having observed these occasions previously, I m that there is always a touch of the patronising abo relationships with Commonwealth Parliament particular, hon. Members frequently misquote a ref to this place being the mother of parliaments. Wha actually said was "England — mother of Parliam and I am glad to say that we all salute Australia mother of the Australian Parliament. In many Australia's democratic development ran ahead of ou in terms of the people who were allowed to vote, a always welcomed the support that the Australian l movement gave to the development of democracy country.

In any case, what we are doing today is o reciprocal gesture to the Commonwealth of Aus because you, Mr. Speaker, are today sitting in a which was the gift of the Commonwealth of Au when this Chamber was rebuilt at the end of the s world war. So I am sure that all my hon. Friends jo in wishing Australia well.

[Mr. Frank Dobson]

For people of my generation there is always a sort of ambivalence towards Australia. My first thought of Australia was of men dressed in peculiar green caps, led by a man called Bradman, who let loose two men called Lindwall and Miller on the England cricket team. Since then most of us have come to recognise that Australia has made a substantial contribution not only to sport but to art and literature—and, more latterly, to the task of making people the world over laugh at themselves and others.

We wish the people of Australia well. We hope that all the people of Australia will benefit from the renewal of the Australian Commonwealth, including the aboriginal people who have not done well. On a personal note, may I add that my best wishes to all the people of Australia will be made that much more sincere by the knowledge that Mr. Rupert Murdoch is now an American citizen.

3.43 pm

Mr. Eric S. Heffer (Liverpool, Walton): While endorsing part of what my hon. Friend the Member for Holborn and St. Pancras (Mr. Dobson) has said, I do not think we should allow this occasion to pass, or this gift go to Australia, without concerning ourselves with the rights of the aboriginal people. Recently, a Minister quite rightly made public representations about the position of the Palestinian people, pointing out their plight in Israel—or Palestine. We have a responsibility on this occasion to concern ourselves with the rights of the aboriginal people.

After all, it was the British who entered Botany bay and established the penal servitude colonies, and it is the British who have a responsibility for this issue. Before the House agrees to a bicentennial gift of a vice-regal chair for the Australian Commonwealth, we should agree that the humble Address to Her Majesty should include a reference to the position of the Australian aborigine people, and that that message should be conveyed to them from this House.

The House must be aware of the tensions that have been created among the aboriginal people by the bicentennial celebrations. Some of them believe they should be granted the right of self-determination. That is a demand that cannot and should not be ignored. Professor Reynolds, a professor of history at the university of Townsville, Queensland, has written several books on the position of the aborigines. In his third book, "The Law of the Land", he describes how, when South Australia was settled in the 1830s, the Colonial Office instructed that the aborigines should be compensated for the loss of land that had been taken from them and occupied. That has never happened. The present Government of Australia — *[Interruption.]* What I am saying is important to a group of people in the world who are fighting for their rights, and we have a responsibility because we are about to send a gift. If hon. Members show lack of interest, that will be conveyed to the people of Australia.

Although the Government of Australia announced in December that they would provide the first legal acknowledgement of aborigine prior land ownership and disfranchisement, it will be only a preamble to the Bill and not the treaty for which the aborigines have asked. Professor Reynolds quotes a Western Australian pioneer of the 1880s who warned his fellow colonialists:

"Think not that the Aboriginal inhabitants of Australia"—and as a Christian he made this point—

"offspring of the same parent with yourselv
of all the kindred feelings of a common
resign the mountains and the seas, the rivers
plains and the wilds of their uncradled i
habitation of their fathers for generations
foreign foe, without the bitterness of grief."

The House should be aware of the
aboriginal people. That feeling was
graphically when the Pope visited Al
December 1986. After meeting the aborigi
Pope said that it was "legal fiction" by the
to say that the land occupied was nobod
quoted an Australian clergyman who plea
for the rights of the aboriginal inhabitant
"to keep the traditional lands on which the
depended."
The Pope said,

"The Church still supports you today."

This House, which has as much re
anybody for what happened in Australia,
to the aboriginal people, "Yes, we suppor
your rights and in the rights for which
about your land." Our people colonised A
hon. Friend the Member for Holborn and S
it was our convicts who were sent there.
penal colonies.

It should be remembered that the abo
have been living in Australia for at least
Archaeological evidence now suggests that
100,000 years. Before we went to Australia
Australian nations, all with languages of t
with approximately 300,000 to 400,000 pe
loss of the British colonies in north America
1788 to Australia.

I urge the House to write in a message
these people. In the past the Colonial O
Perhaps it was only for a short period, but
anticipated that on 26 January, Australi
aboriginal people will converge on Sydney.
that it will be the biggest aboriginal dem
Australia's history. I ask the House to send a
to those people because, to a large extent,
responsible for their plight. Unless I can ge
from the Government that they will do that
is sent from the House, I shall ask the Hous
to send the gift.

3.50 pm

Mr. Richard Holt (Langbaurgh): When
Friend the Leader of the House rose to spe
intended to intervene, but as the Memb
constituency Captain Cook was born, school
I draw attention to the fact that the 200th
intended as a joyous occasion. Until the last
it has been, with parties in Australia and arou
Any Australian who wants to come to the co
Captain Cook's birth this year will be made
by my constituents. They send their good wi
chair to the people of Australia. We look fo
300th, 400th and 500th anniversaries. They s
remember, "Come back to Langbaurgh in be

3.51 pm

Mr. Tony Banks (Newham, North-West)
the sending of a gift to Australia to mar
anniversary. I suppose that whoever is chos
House to deliver the chair will not be travellin

class, in the same way that the convicts and people who were sent to Australia, did. Many were not, according to our interpretation today, convicts; they were just victims of that nasty class system that prevailed in the 18th and 19th centuries and still exists today. Following what the hon. Member for Langbaurgh (Mr. Holt) said, I make the point that there is a certain arrogance in us acting as if Captain Cook discovered Australia. He went there 200 years ago and found a country that aborigines had been living in, as my right hon. Friend the Member for Liverpool, Walton (Mr. Heffer) said, for 40,000 years.

If the humble Address is also to be sent, I hope that it will include a protest on behalf of many animal lovers at the cruel slaughter of kangaroos and horses. *[Interruption.]* Hon. Members might sneer, but many people are concerned about the inhumane treatment of kangaroos and elephants in Australia, shot by people leaning out of helicopters. If we are to send any form of humble Address with the chair, we should send, on behalf of all animal lovers, a protest and hope that the Australians will take a more civilised attitude to the wildlife they are fortunate to have in that great country.

3.53 pm

Mr. Tam Dalyell (Linlithgow): The House of Commons should be discriminating about exactly what we celebrate. I declare something of a personal interest, in that there are many more people of my name in the Sydney and Melbourne telephone books than in the telephone books of Edinburgh and Glasgow. That is because many Scots, including some of my family, were despatched to Australia for dissent. My hon. Friend the Member for Liverpool, Walton (Mr. Heffer) has put a serious case about the treatment of aborigines. Many people were sent to Australia against their will from these islands, and they would find it odd that 200 years later the democratically elected House of Commons is sending the gift and address.

At the end of the first world war, a distinguished Australian, Dr. Elsie Dalywell, was the greatest expert on rickets. She came here with the ANZAC forces and told my parents about the history of our family who arrived in Australia. It was not only uncomfortable but there was a good deal of oppression. Anybody who has followed the writings of Professor Kenneth Cable and others will know that what I am saying is historically correct. There is a serious question about whether the House of Commons should be celebrating the 200th anniversary, because of what happened to our people who were sent to Australia and what happened to the aborigines. Let us celebrate those things that ought to be celebrated and be a bit careful about what we are doing.

3.54 pm

Mr. Dennis Skinner (Bolsover): I want to know who will take the gift. Will you, Mr. Speaker, be selecting the people who take the humble Address and the chair? Will it be the usual channels? Will any of those 20 rebels who voted against the Tory establishment on Friday be selected, or have they lost their opportunity? Has the Chief Whip already decided that they have no chance? Will the humble Address be taken when there is a test m If there is to be a Liberal or somebody from the who will pick that person? Will that person come provisional wing, from the official wing or merged party, if they achieve a merged party? selection be delayed until the Liberals and S sorted themselves out?

May I make one last plea? Do not put me o — and, for God's sake, do not send Sir Armstrong.

Mr. Speaker: The Question is——

Mr. Heffer: What about a reply to the debat

Mr. Speaker: I am putting the Question.

The House proceeded to a Division—

Mr. Tony Banks: On a point of order, Mr. S when I manage to get this wretched hat on; I have to many operas recently. During the debate I inad said that Australians were guilty of shooting ele hasten to add that, as far as I am aware, ther elephants in Australia. I promise that I have drinking large quantities of Foster's lager and t elephants are neither pink, black, nor grey. The wish to have the record duly corrected.

Mr. Speaker: I shall see that it is. Did the hon. for Liverpool, Walton (Mr. Heffer) wish to rais of order? I may have been somewhat hasty in pu Question, and that may have bothered him.

Mr. Heffer: On a point of order, Mr. Speake to ask whether we could have a reply to some of t that I raised with the Government. If——

Mr. Speaker: Order. I say again that I was s hasty in putting the Question. I think that the ri to do is to call the Division off and I call the Lead House to respond.

Mr. Wakeham: First I shall reply to the hon. for Bolsover (Mr. Skinner). I understand that intended that the gift should be presented for representatives of both Houses. Instead, it will place in the Parliament House along with comparable gifts from other Commonwealth cou time for the formal opening ceremony.

On the wider questions, hon. Gentlemen ha their points and I am sure that they will be read a by those concerned in the matter, but I cannot c in substance on any of them.

Question put and agreed to.

Resolved,

That an humble Address be presented to Her praying that Her Majesty will give directions that, to Bicentenary in 1988 of the first European settle Australia and the opening of the new Parliament Canberra, a gift of a Vice-Regal Chair be made, on both Houses of Parliament, to the Parliament Commonwealth of Australia.

To be presented by Privy Councillors or Membe Majesty's Household.

St. Christopher and Nevis (Gift of Speaker's Chair and Desk)

3.58 pm

The Lord President of the Council and Leader of the House of Commons (Mr. John Wakeham): I beg to move,

That an humble Address be presented to Her Majesty, praying that Her Majesty will give directions that there be presented on behalf of this House a gift of a Speaker's Chair and Desk to the National Assembly of St. Christopher and Nevis, and assuring Her Majesty that this House will make good the expenses attending the same.

It is a tradition that this House offers a present, suitable for use in a legislative assembly, to the Parliaments of Commonwealth countries to mark their independence. I am happy to move this motion to give formal authorisation for such a gift. The present of a Speaker's chair and desk to the National Assembly of St. Christopher and Nevis was agreed after consultation with the authorities there, and will soon be ready for presentation. It is hoped that, subject to the completion of the work, it will be on display to hon. Members in the Upper Waiting Hall early in March.

I commend this motion as an expression of the friendship and good will of this House to the National Assembly of St. Christopher and Nevis. I am sure that I speak for the whole House in expressing the warmest good wishes for the future of the Parliament and people of those islands.

4 pm

Mr. Frank Dobson (Holborn and St. Pancras): Again, I join the Lord President in the wish to send a Speaker's chair and desk to the National Assembly of St. Kitts and Nevis. Again, too, it must be said that the first allegedly civilising effect of European involvement was the extermination of the original population who, for the sake of profit, were replaced by human slaves from Africa, a proposition endorsed time and again by the then undemocratic House of Commons.

As with the gift to Australia, there is also an element of reciprocation. When this House was rebuilt after its destruction during the second world war, we received from the Leeward Islands, of which St Kitts and Nevis formed part, a gift of oak lamp standards now to be seen in the two Lobbies.

St Kitts and Nevis is very smal
population—smaller than the Isle o
population of 43,000—but is is n
sovereign state and a member of the
the United Nations. It was Britain's
Caribbean, when the sugar islands w
crown of every competing European c
merchant. In 1667, St Kitts was descri
best earth ever to be inhabited by
Americas, and that attraction may
future, which will depend increasingly

I am sure that the whole House w
Assembly and people of St Kitts and N
them independence and prosperity, an
tempests that occasionally afflict the L
also hope that their future independen
from interventions by the US marines

4.2 pm

Mr. Toby Jessel (Twickenham): motion, I ask that full account be take
the people of Nevis. As the population
than 10,000, it cannot easily be
independent state and has therefore b
Christopher, which has a larger po
30,000. Nevertheless, Nevis has its
building, recognised by the Commonwe
Association, and the Nevisians have a v
identity. They do not like to be too m
St Kitts. The main political party in Ne
enhance Nevisian autonomy.

I hope that those important points
in mind in this important matter and t
the Nevisians will be taken fully into a

Mr. Speaker: Does the Leader of t
comment upon that? If not, I will put t

Question put and agreed to.

Resolved,

That an humble Address be presente
praying that Her Majesty will give direct
presented on behalf of this House a gift of
and Desk to the National Assembly of S
Nevis, and assuring Her Majesty that thi
good the expenses attending the same.

*To be presented by Privy Councillors o
Majesty's Household.*

Orders of the Day

Criminal Justice Bill [Lords]

Order for Second Reading read.

4.3 pm

The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Douglas Hurd): I beg to move, That the Bill be now read a Second time.

Mr. Speaker: I have selected the amendment in the name of the leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Hurd: This is the second time that much of the Bill before us has been debated by the House. With agreement on all sides, it proved possible, before the general election intervened, to enact the important provisions in the earlier Bill on serious fraud, and that was welcomed. After the election, we took two decisions—first, to reintroduce the rest of the Bill as soon as possible, and, secondly, to use the inevitable short delay to strengthen the Bill substantially. The new proposals in it illustrate the reinforcement since the general election of the priority that we give to action against crime.

I should like to concentrate today on the additions and improvements. The earlier Bill had completed its passage through this House after what the right hon. Member for Manchester, Gorton (Mr. Kaufman), who is not easily given to compliments, was moved to describe as a "model Committee stage", so it is perhaps natural that we should pay the closest attention today to the new material which has not been before the House before.

First, however, I should mention one thread which runs through both this Bill and its predecessor — the international dimension of crime. Improved travel links and communications have created dramatic opportunities for large-scale international crime, and we are still only at the start of coping with this. The criminal leaps across countries and continents while his pursuer still stumbles, argues and delays as he reaches a frontier or a different legal system. I was forcefully reminded of this during a recent visit to north Africa. Drug trafficking, fraud and terrorism are no longer local problems, if they ever were. They have to be tackled across frontiers.

The Bill responds to this reality in several ways. It reforms our antiquated laws on extradition. Among our friends, many regard Britain as a haven for criminals and that is a reputation that we must shake off. The single most significant impediment to extradition from this country is the requirement that the foreign state should provide in our courts evidence which would amount to a prima facie case for committal for trial, had the case been prosecuted here.

Mr. John Wheeler (Westminster, North): I apologise for intervening at such an early stage, but my right hon. Friend has touched on the subject of extradition. I ask him to make some reference in his statement to the concern on both sides of the House that there are persons residing in the United Kingdom against whom grave allegations have been made in connection with war crimes. I hope that my right hon. Friend will be able to give us some idea how those cases will be dealt with.

Mr. Hurd: My hon. Friend has intervened a little early. We have sought to see whether extradition could be part of the answer to the problem that he has desc far we have concluded that it is not. Neverthe Friend touches on a matter that I have discus right hon. Member for Morley and Leeds, Rees), chairman of the war crimes grou colleagues. It is a matter that the Government and are still studying very carefully. It is t matter for it to be allowed to drop, but I belie work is needed before we can decide whethe in what way the law needs to be changed. I not propose to bring forward a Government to this Bill to deal with that matter. As the m be allowed to drop, I propose to let the House Report exactly how we intend to pursue the m that my hon. Friend will be content with that being.

Other countries, particularly, perhaps, European partners, with different legal traditi standards of justice which are not inferior to o the requirements of our extradition rule difficult to meet. Therefore, the Bill contain dispense selectively with the prima facie requ have responded to proper concerns that that s done haphazardly and that there should safeguards for the fugitive.

During the passage of the earlier Bill, we extradition arrangements which dispense wit facie requirement should be subject to p approval. When the present Bill was in anoth matter was raised quite strongly and furthe were added for the fugitive. He is now to hav right to see the papers on which the extraditi There will be a statutory right to make repres the Secretary of State and a guaranteed per days in which to seek judicial review of the State's order for his surrender.

Mr. James Molyneaux (Lagan Valley): T of State will be aware that there has been m of the legislation that has finally been passed Dublin Parliament on this score. Can he exp way the prima facie requirement that he has in this Bill differs from that which is now in Irish Republic?

Mr. Hurd: Yes. We are proposing to remo legislation the prima facie agreement selective I have described. When I saw the right hon. Lagan Valley (Mr. Molyneaux) in the Chamb it possible that he would intervene on this p be aware, from what my right hon. Friend Minister and, I think, my right hon. and lea the Attorney-General have said, of the misgiv had about the form in which the Dail eventua legislation. We are in the process of seeing h in practice. However, I do not believe that th Gentleman will expect me at this stage to comments that have already been made.

Mr. Alex Carlile (Montgomery): The Hon will be aware that no British subject, or any that matter, can be committed for trial by a country unless the prosecution has establish facie case against him. Will he explain why he a lower standard should be applied to British foreign nationals committed for trial abro

[Mr. Alex Carlile]

words, will he explain why it will no longer be necessary for a prima facie case to be proved against them? I believe that that is inequitable.

Mr. Hurd: The hon. and learned Gentleman has made that point before. He is really assuming that the procedures and standards of justice in other countries with which we might make agreements which must be discussed in this House are in some way inferior to the procedures in this country; otherwise, his question would not arise.

Mr. Carlile: Not at all.

Mr. Hurd: The hon. and learned Gentleman had better pursue his point later.

I believe that, when the House agrees that standards of justice are of equal validity, it is reasonable to make arrangements to dispense with the prima facie rules. I am frankly not happy with the situation in which we give haven in this country to a number of people who are, to put it mildly, in serious trouble in countries with highly respected judicial systems simply because those countries are unable to frame their requests in language and terms that meet our present law. The hon. and learned Gentleman may be aware of the particular cases that I had in mind. The response to the case for safeguards which both he and his hon. Friends argued for, in this House when the earlier Bill was discussed, and in another place more recently, meets his concerns.

Mr. Ivor Stanbrook (Orpington): I apologise for interrupting my right hon. Friend, but we have not disposed of the matter concerning the recent legislation introduced in the Republic of Ireland. Some of that legislation depends upon reciprocal action by the British Government. May we accept that no proposals will be made to alter our extradition arrangements with the Republic of Ireland at least in the foreseeable future and within this Bill?

Mr. Hurd: I believe that my right hon. and learned Friend the Attorney-General has made clear the difficulty that he sees in playing the part envisaged for him in the Dail's arrangements because, in his view, they do not meet our requirements satisfactorily. The question is how that legislation works in practice. My hon. Friend the Member for Orpington (Mr. Stanbrook) would not dissent from the fact that it is very important that the back-to-back arrangements with the Republic of Ireland should work as smoothly as possible. That is in the interests of both Governments. We must see how that can be achieved now that the Irish Government have taken their line.

The impact of the Bill on international crime does not begin and end with extradition. Part VI provides for reciprocal arrangements to be made for the international enforcement of confiscation orders, thus ensuring that crime will not pay wherever the proceeds may be secreted or invested. Part III establishes new procedures for taking and receiving evidence from abroad.

Mr. John Gorst (Hendon, North): Before my right hon. Friend leaves the issue of extradition, may I state that his reply to my hon. Friend the Member for Orpington (Mr. Stanbrook) a moment ago did not go far enough in one respect because, as the Lord Chancellor said in another place, before the prima facie requirement is dispensed with

> "there must be a mutual recognition . . . that the system of justice in the foreign state is sufficiently acceptable to enable this requirement . . . to be dispensed with." — [*Official Report, House of Lords*, 17 November 1987; Vol. 490, c. 114.]

That begs the question of how it is decided that a foreign state has a system that is acceptable.

I draw my right hon. Friend's attention to the fact that I have found—and other hon. Members have found—the system of justice in Sweden to be totally unacceptable in the way in which it has handled not only a British national but, from the volume of correspondence, Swedish nationals. How will the process be arrived at when extradition matters are considered in future?

Mr. Hurd: My hon. Friend has kept me in touch with his views about the Swedish system arising from a particular case in which he has legitimately taken a strong interest. Obviously, any Home Secretary and his colleagues would form a view of that matter. However, during the passage of the earlier Bill, we agreed that extradition arrangements that dispensed with the prima facie agreement would be subject to parliamentary approval. That means that my hon. Friend and his colleagues in this and in another place would have to approve specific agreements and therefore the kind of misgivings——

Mr. Alex Carlile: Once?

Mr. Hurd: Yes, indeed, that is right — once an agreement is made.

That opportunity is a reasonable way in which to allow parliamentary scrutiny of the proposal. I hope that the hon. and learned Member for Montgomery (Mr. Carlile) will not be too chauvinistic about this. This is very important. Possibly the hon. and learned Gentleman underestimates the sense of affront felt by some of our friends when they are told that only by surmounting a hurdle defined purely in English terms which they find remarkably difficult, even though their systems are not inferior to ours, will they receive into their jurisdiction people that they believe have committed serious crimes. They find that very patronising. It also works the other way. It makes it difficult for us to negotiate agreements with them to allow us to bring back into our jurisdiction people we want because they have committed serious crimes. I am not sure whether the hon. and learned Gentleman has addressed himself to the serious background to the problem.

I want this country to set the pace in international agreements and action to grip international crime. I believe that this is an area in which strides have had to be made and are being made, partly because we have shown ourselves to be a Government enthusiastic for more effective co-operation in this area in the European Community and beyond. The Bill makes its own contribution in the ways that I have described.

Nearer to home, we have been increasingly anxious about the habitual carrying of knives in public. There has been a disastrous change in the street culture of our cities, which we simply have to reverse. In London, in the first half of 1987, robberies and street robberies involving sharp instruments increased by about 30 per cent. It is intolerable that, among an increasing proportion of our young people, the carrying of a knife should be regarded as normal. The police have represented to me forcefully that the present law on offensive weapons is too narrowly drawn. I am genuinely glad that the right hon. Member for

Birmingham, Sparkbrook (Mr. Hattersley) and his colleagues have shared our desire to respond to that concern. This is not a party matter.

As a result of amendments made in another place, the Bill contains in clause 128 a new offence of possessing a bladed or sharply pointed article in a public place without good reason, together with the necessary associated police powers to stop and search. That is a substantially more wide-ranging offence than the law contains at present. It is in my view no more and no less than the circumstances demand. The old, the vulnerable, the whole of the law-abiding community must feel confident that it is safe to go out on the streets without being stabbed. It follows that we must use this Bill to restrict the carrying of knives.

Yes, we are reversing the onus of proof. Yes, I understand that this a serious step to take. My colleagues and I searched in vain for an answer that would cause less offence to legal opinion but still prove strong enough. I firmly commend this clause to the House.

Mr. Robert Hayward (Kingswood): My right hon. Friend will be aware that I wrote to him and to the Lord Chancellor a few weeks ago about the carrying of knives and sentencing policy. Sentencing policy is covered in clauses 33, 34 and 35. Is it not the case that those powers will be substantially undermined unless strong powers of sentencing are provided and used? Otherwise, the public will feel that the powers provided in the Bill are not worth the paper on which they are written.

Mr. Hurd: The police have raised that aspect of their powers to stop and search. I shall ask my hon. Friend the Minister of State to deal with both those points, which deserve explanation. Having looked at both those powers — that of the police to stop and search, and the sentences available for the new offence of carrying a knife, but not the criminal use of it, which is a much more serious matter—one has to think carefully about the right level of penalty. My hon. Friend will explain the circumstances that were in our mind.

Mr. John Fraser (Norwood): Has the Home Secretary considered putting a ban on the sale of lethal weapons through mail order in circumstances in which no one could contemplate those weapons used for anything other than aggressive purposes? I have taken soundings from the members of the Advertising Standards Authority, and if Parliament gives a lead on the matter the ASA will not have the slightest difficulty in banning advertisements for brutal and lethal weapons which anyone can obtain through the post.

Mr. Hurd: The hon. Member wrestles with serious incidents of that kind far too often in his constituency.

In the Bill, we are taking power to prohibit, not only through mail order but absolutely, the manufacture, importation and sale of certain other types of offensive weapons. Knives have many legitimate uses, and I cannot see the logic of forbidding the sale through mail order of knives which have legitimate uses. As for other weapons, such as knuckledusters, death stars and handclaws, which have no conceivable legitimate use, we intend to block their supply at all points, whether through manufacture, sale or advertisement.

Mr. John Morris (Aberavon): Leaving aside the sale of knives by mail order, or weapons such as knuckledusters, is the Minister aware that there is a general concern that, apart from pocket knives, any child, however immature, can buy a large knife with impunity? How does he propose to use the regulations in clause 130 to limit at source the sale of such knives?

Mr. Hurd: We have thought hard about that. Many Governments have thought hard about it, and it is not easy. Many objects, including knives, have a perfectly legitimate use. In those circumstances, it is difficult to forbid their sale to particular categories of people, or through media such as mail order.

The Bill attempts to deal with the actual mischief, which is the carrying of such knives in a public place. For other offensive weapons for which there is no legitimate use, we propose to extend the list of those weapons and to clamp down on them in all their mainifestations. That is better than trying to establish, in every small corner shop, a system of licensing and control under which customers can buy a knife. There would be difficulties about the administrative complications of such a system. However, that point will rightly be argued in Committee and I have set out the conclusions that we believe are sensible.

At the heart of the Bill is a set of proposals for strengthening the procedures of justice. I would include in that category the abolition of peremptory challenge, a modest but important move to make people between the ages of 65 and 70 eligible for jury service, and the extension to other profitable offences of the scheme for confiscation of the proceeds of crime, which is already making its mark in drug trafficking cases. I shall forbear to rehearse my strong views on peremptory challenge, which certainly would bring the hon. and learned Member for Montgomery to his feet again. I expect that we shall hear from him on that point. I am encouraged by the readiness of their Lordships in another place to accept the reasonable proposition that we put to the House in the former Bill, which is repeated in this Bill.

Mr. Toby Jessel (Twickenham): Will my right hon. Friend confirm that that opinion was expressed not only in the other place but in the House on 31 March 1987? On Report, the House carried by 176 votes to 69 — a majority of more than two and a half to one — the abolition of peremptory challenge, an end desired by all sensible people except criminals, some lawyers and those on the extreme Left who have a temperamental liking for guilty people to be acquitted.

Mr. Hurd: My hon. Friend is leading with his chin. I acknowledge that he has been a robust pioneer of that argument. I agree with his conclusions.

I shall concentrate on two aspects in which the Bill has been significantly strengthened. During the past few years, we have had many debates on how to deal with the occasional sentence that is too lenient. That is not a problem which has been raised by the Government for their own purposes. Unduly lenient sentences are few and far between. In the vast majority of cases — far more cases than the casual reader of newspapers would suppose —judges impose sentences which are in tune with what the public expect. In cases of serious crime, they have been steadily increasing the severity of their sentences. That is right and natural.

However, when a manifestly over-lenient sentence is passed, the damage to public confidence in the system is out of all proportion to the significance of the case. That is why the problem, though small in scale, is of great

[Mr. Hurd]

importance, and that is why we have been grappling with it so vigorously during the past three years. Both Houses of Parliament have had difficulties with that problem.

In the earlier Bill, we proposed that in such cases the Attorney-General should be able to refer the sentence to the Court of Appeal for its opinion, but without the offender being at risk of being dealt with more severely. The Minister of State, my hon. and learned Friend the Member for Putney (Mr. Mellor), defended that proposal brilliantly in the House, and there was much more to be said for it than has generally been supposed. However, as compromises often are, it was poorly received.

Clause 34 contains a similar proposal, but with the vital difference that the Court of Appeal should be able to increase the sentence, if it thought it right to do so. That is a stronger proposal, both in effect and in logic. If a mistake has been made, it is clearly sensible that there should be a way in which it can be put right, not if the newspaper or if the Attorney-General want to do so, but if the Court of Appeal decides that it is right to do so.

Dame Elaine Kellett-Bowman (Lancaster): Does my right hon. Friend accept that my constituents thought it quite inadequate that someone should not have his sentence increased if that was found to be desirable? They are grateful to him for changing the Bill so that that can now be done.

Mr. Hurd: My hon. Friend has followed this long and occasionally weary argument right through. I am glad that she is pleased with our conclusions.

The second procedural change to which I would draw the House's attention can be found in clause 41. At present the Court of Appeal can order that a case be tried again only in strictly limited circumstances, where new evidence has come to light. There is a strong case for a wider power to order a retrial — where, for example, a conviction would otherwise have to be quashed on a pure technicality, but the more just course would be for the matter to be tried again. The Bill therefore allows the court to order a retrial whenever it thinks it would be in the interests of justice to do so.

Perhaps at this point I should make a point about the right of silence.

Dr. Alan Glyn (Windsor and Maidenhead): There is a great deal of concern in the country that, when the driver of a motor vehicle kills somebody, there appears to be no machinery, even in this Bill, by which he can be charged with manslaughter if that is appropriate.

Mr. Hurd: It is for the prosecuting authorities, and particularly the Crown prosecution service, to decide on the appropriate charge. That is not always an easy task, especially in the circumstances that my hon. Friend has in mind. There is a wide choice available, and it must be for the independent prosecution service to decide what charges should be made. It will have regard to the evidence before it and what it thinks might succeed.

I deliberately provoked a discussion, beginning with a lecture to the Police Foundation in July, not on the right to silence, but on a recommendation made by the Criminal Law Revision Committee in 1972. The question in my mind is not whether a suspected or accused person should have a right to remain silent throughout investigation and trial—he has that right and should continue to have it—but whether, when an accused person ambushes the prosecution by producing at his trial a line of defence which he has not previously mentioned to the police, the court should be precluded from drawing reasonable inferences.

I have listened carefully to the lively discussion that has followed that lecture. I am not convinced by the argument in favour of continuing the right to ambush. The case for change is strong. I am also persuaded by some of the detailed points that have been made that more careful work must be done if there is to be change. This long and detailed Bill is not, I believe, the place for the provisions that would be needed.

I shall give the House particulars of the further work which I believe is necessary before the Bill leaves the House so that it has an opportunity to judge.

Mr. Roy Hattersley (Birmingham, Sparkbrook): I am interested in the Home Secretary's expression. He said that, before the Bill leaves the House, he will give it particulars of his work. Does he mean that he proposes an amendment on Report?

Mr. Hurd: No, I do not propose an amendment on Report. I do not believe that this or any other long and detailed Bill is the place for the provisions that would be needed. Further work is needed. I have given the House an idea of the direction in which my mind is moving. I believe that the case for the right to ambush as it stands at present is not made out, but I also believe, in view of some of the points that have been made to me by people of many different strands of opinion, that, before the Home Secretary can tell the House that a certain change is the right one, we need some further work. I shall let the House know before the Bill leaves the House how I believe that work should be set in hand.

Mr. Alex Carlile: Is the right hon. Gentleman saying that, before the Bill leaves the House, he will tell us what work is to be done and what measures he wishes to achieve, or will he take the more appropriate course and have a period of consultation during which formal representations can be made?

Mr. Hurd: In effect, there will be both. I have had a good many formal and informal expressions of opinion from the Law Society and other legal bodies. When the work that I have in mind proceeds, those representations will continue. I am saying that there will not be an amendment to the Bill on the subject. I have told the House the line along which my mind is moving and I shall give further details of the work that I intend to set in hand.

One of the Bill's main aims is to improve the circumstances of victims of crime. It contains measures to encourage the courts to use compensation orders in a wider range of cases. It creates, for the first time, a statutory right to compensation, under the criminal injuries compensation scheme, for the victims of violent crime.

The group of victims who command greatest sympathy are probably children who suffer physical or sexual assault. That has been imprinted on our minds recently by a string of cases. I do not think that any hon. Member can read accounts of those cases without horror. Revulsion at the victimisation of children leads to a determination to do whatever we can to tackle it. We all feel that. It is true that

legislation has only a limited part to play, but there are measures in the Bill which deal with this problem to which I should like to draw attention.

Clause 43 increases the maximum penalty for child cruelty or neglect from two years' imprisonment. When a child is assaulted, more serious charges will normally be brought, but we noticed fairly recently — perhaps it should have been noticed before — that cruelty and neglect can take many forms other than assault, such as starvation, and two years seems to us wholly inadequate in the worst cases. We therefore propose to substitute a maximum of 10 years.

Clause 30 would make it possible for a young child to give evidence by closed-circuit television in cases of violence or sexual assault. This was widely welcomed when the Bill came to the House before the election. For a young child to give evidence in a busy Crown court, perhaps in the presence of somebody who has cruelly assaulted him, must be a tremendous ordeal. The ability to give evidence from outside the court room should help to lessen the ordeal. It should be a humane step forward.

Clause 32 abolishes the strict requirement that the unsworn evidence of a child must invariably be corroborated. This is new. I made the proposal believing that it might be challenged but, on the whole, I have been reassured by the welcome that it has received. There is no evidence to suggest that children are inherently less reliable as witnesses than adults.

We intend to bring forward an amendment in Committee to make it an offence to possess indecent photographs of children. Child pornography victimises the children who are exploited by it, and I am afraid that it feeds the instincts which give rise to sexual abuse. It is already an offence to take, show or distribute indecent photographs. We are persuaded that it would be justified to criminalise simple possession in the hope of stamping out this degrading trade.

I should like to mention two other changes — one which we have already made, and one which we plan to make in Committee. Clause 118 creates a single custodial sentence for young offenders, to be known as detention in a young offender institution. It is strongly favoured by the Magistrates Association. It allows more effective use of the available accommodation, which is a crying need, and it is an idea whose time has come. We have made it clear that young offenders who have relatively short periods to serve after sentence will experience the brisk, structured regime which has been developed in detention centres.

I think that the Opposition know that we shall bring forward in Committee an amendment to provide a statutory right to compensation for those who have been wrongly convicted. We already comply with the spirit of our international obligations in non-statutory arrangements which have been outlined to the House previously. During debates in another place, we agreed to put those obligations on a statutory footing, and we intend to do so. As now, compensation will be payable when some new fact has emerged and when the normal working of the judicial system has not revealed the wrongful conviction.

Mr. Gerald Bermingham (St. Helens, South): I warmly welcome the single sentence, but am I to understand that it is to take the same form as that which we experienced heretofore in detention centres — a sentence which was used less and less by magistrates courts because of allegations about what happened in detention centres and the fact that it seemed to do the children involved little good?

Mr. Hurd: The proposal that we have made in the Bill has been warmly welcomed by the Magistrates Association. What I said was that, where a relatively short sentence is to be served, the regime will include the brisk, structured arrangements developed successfully in the detention centres.

Mr. Wheeler: I am grateful to my right hon. Friend for having given way to me twice. I, too, welcome the concept of the single sentence. However, may I take my right hon. Friend back to the penalty for possession of indecent photographs and other material concerning juveniles and children? Will he consider extending that penalty to make such possession an arrestable offence, which I believe would be particularly welcome?

Mr. Hurd: My hon. Friend the Minister of State may have something to say about that when he winds up the debate. In any event, I shall consider it and write to my hon. Friend the Member for Westminster, North (Mr. Wheeler).

I am grateful for the spirit of the interventions that have been made so far. On occasions such as this, the right hon. Member for Manchester, Gorton (Mr. Kaufman) used to cast around for reasons to justify the fact that his party would vote against reasonable proposals. It sometimes seemed a matter of mere chance whether he would have thought of our proposals first, whether they were the most tyrannical proposals that anyone had ever put forward, or whether they were completely irrelevant to the real needs of the situation. I could write a tasteful anthology of the orations that he produced, but I hope that the right hon. Member for Sparkbrook will show a little more imagination.

I would not dream of claiming that any single measure could be the answer to crime, but that is really not an argument against single measures that contribute to such an answer. We must act on a wide front. We have in hand a programme of crime prevention on an unprecedented scale, with several new initiatives which we are hatching this spring. We are engaged in a substantial expansion of police strength. We have carried out a series of legislative reforms, such as the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984, the Public Order Act 1986 and the Drug Trafficking Offences Act 1986. But changing the law is only part of the picture. No change in the law was required to establish 42,000 neighbourhood watch schemes, to create 8,500 places on crime prevention projects under the community programme or to expand the police by nearly 19,000 officers and civilians since 1979.

The Bill is not — and could not be — a cure-all. However, it fits firmly within our general strategy. We have used the time created by the election to fashion a stronger and more complete measure. Across the broad sweep that I have described this afternoon — international crime, safer streets, the procedures of justice, children as victims and several other matters — the Bill reforms and strengthens. I believe that it will buttress the ramparts of the criminal justice system, and reinforce the protection of the citizen and his family. I commend it to the House.

4.42 pm

Mr. Roy Hattersley (Birmingham, Sparkbrook): I beg to move, to leave out from "That" to the end of the Question and to add instead thereof:

"this House declines to give a Second Reading to a Bill which, by proposing changes in the law governing extradition, the selection of juries, remand and sentencing, would result in a substantial reduction in civil liberties, yet fails to address the fundamental question of equal rights under the law and equal access to the process of justice."

It is nearly two years since the Government published the principal White Paper on which the Bill is primarily based. Since then, the unremitting increase in crime has continued. On a year-by-year basis, the latest figures show that violence against the person has increased by 8·6 per cent., robbery by 7·2 per cent. and theft by 3·4 per cent. Over the same time, the proposals in the principal White Paper have been changed, revised, increased and reduced, and all sorts of other ideas have been canvassed.

Let me begin by asking the Home Secretary about the matters that we might have expected to appear in the Bill —because he initiated debates, because others made off-the-record briefings to newspapers or even as a result of reading the principal White Paper and the secondary White Paper concerning discipline in prisons.

I want first to press the Home Secretary on the half-answer that he gave on what, until today, was called the right of silence. The right hon. Gentleman has rechristened it the ambushing of the prosecution. I take it from what he has told the House that not only will he not introduce amendments on the subject at any stage, but that the Government would not support amendments of the cruder sort, which I have no doubt will be presented in Committee. If the Home Secretary will give me an assurance on that, I shall rest content.

I understand the right hon. Gentleman's difficulties. I realise why, having changed his mind on the subject, he must keep some of his Back Benchers optimistically believing that he will sooner or later change the law in this particular. However, I should like to ask about another subject, which has been canvassed not by the right hon. Gentleman introducing lectures, but by his Minister of State making a statement to yesterday's *The Mail on Sunday* at dictation speed, I assume that it came from the Minister of State—described in *The Mail on Sunday* as

"Law and Order Minister John Patten"—

who, it said rather revealingly, had spent the last year tackling the symptoms of crime. That is certainly true: it is one of our charges against the Government. I assume that the statement was given to the newspaper by the Minister, because it portrays him as a combination of Elliot Ness and Dixon of Dock Green. That is a view that he may have of himself, but it is not widely shared in the House.

What the piece says — on, I believe, the Minister's authority — is that the Government are soon to introduce the electronic tag. That proposition is wrong in principle, and, on the evidence of the United States, farcical in application. Were we to be presented with such a proposition, I am advised that a change in the law would be needed. No such suggestion, however, appeared in today's Bill. Can we be told that this little bit of self-publicity does not represent Government policy, and that we can forget about that as well?

As I have said, I understand the Home Secretary's difficulties. Junior Ministers on the make normally cause such difficulties. In my time, I had the leader of the S Democratic party as my junior Minister, and, before the previous leader, which was even worse. But, i Home Secretary will make the position clear, I do think that any of us will wish to pursue it as if the Mi were a serious figure.

Other omissions, however, need to be pursued in r more detail, particularly the omission of any of proposals that appear in the second White Paper prison discipline. It was, I think, reasonable to assume they would surface in the Bill. I doubt whether there be another large Bill of this sort in the immediate fu but some of the matters that appeared in that sec White Paper abut directly on the question of crim justice. The loss of remission in a prison sentence i effect, the commitment to a prison sentence as lon some of those awarded by the courts. This is a matte the administration of justice.

The White Paper on prison discipline recommen substantial changes in the way in which, for insta remission was removed, recommending that the board visitors should lose their disciplinary function and th new code of disciplinary offences should be created, should be administered by a prison discipline tribuna is much to my regret that those matters have not appea in the Bill, and I hope that the Home Secretary can tel what are the prospects of that White Paper eventu finding legislative form and coming to the House.

Comparing the Bill to the principal White Paper criminal justice, we see one of the reasons why Government's record on crime and conviction is deplorable. The Government vacillate over their policy. comparing the White Paper with the Bill, we see both nature of those vacillations and the cause of some of the The White Paper, for instance, promised measures enable less serious offenders to be dealt with effectively the community. Yet we read in clause 139 that juveni who have not carried out the specific activities provid under a supervision order may in future be committed prison. That does not seem to me to be an attempt to fu the provisions and promises in the White Paper.

Similarly, the White Paper promised an efficient a effective court system. The Bill provides for the end peremptory challenge for jurors, and for extraditi procedures which deny people the rights which they wou find available if they were tried in British courts. I wa to return to this subject because the Home Secreta wholly missed the point made in the intervention from t Liberal Benches. Most important, the Bill provides for t Attorney-General, with the leader of the Court of Appe to refer cases to that court when he considers that t sentences are unduly lenient.

I want to deal with the unduly lenient provision, wholly subjective matter upon which it is difficult for th Attorney-General or anyone else to make an objective an common judgment. I want to deal with the provision i some detail, for two reasons. I regard the proposal a wrong in principle. It seems to us wrong in principle tha a man or woman, when convicted, should, in effect, ris the jeopardy of being sentenced twice and then be force to serve whichever of the two sentences was the mor severe. It also seems to us wrong in principle that ther should be political influence and political pressure o sentencing. I know that the Home Secretary attempts t argue that the political influence will not be there, but I as him to consider the reality of the proposal.

A particularly lurid crime will be committed, a tabloid newspaper will announce that the sentence is insufficient and then a campaign will be built up. There will be questions from the hon. Members for Ealing, North (Mr. Greenway) and for Littleborough and Saddleworth (Mr. Dickens). We can be assured that that will happen every time a tabloid newspaper says that an individual has been sentenced unduly generously. The newspaper campaign and the House of Commons campaign will build up so that, in the judgment of reasonable people considering the Government's behaviour over the past two years, it appears that the Prime Minister will not allow the Attorney-General to do anything other than appeal for a longer sentence.

That is the case because so much of what the Government now do about law and order and crime and punishment is intended not to reduce the incidence of crime or to convict the guilty, but to produce the right sort of headlines.

Mr. Hayward: Will the right hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Hattersley: I shall give way in a moment.

If I had any doubts about that, they would have been removed when the Home Secretary stated that this was not got up by the Government for their own purposes. I have never heard a more obvious expression of a guilty conscience than that. Before we had accused the Home Secretary of that crime, he was denying that the crime existed.

Mr. Roger Gale (Thanet, North): I am sure that the right hon. Gentleman will know that this matter was discussed in great depth in Committee. Very strong arguments were given by lawyers on both sides for the right of the prosecution to challenge. Will the right hon. Gentleman explain why, if he supports the defence right of appeal against the sentence which is too harsh—as I assume he does — he does not also support the prosecution right of appeal against a sentence which some consider too lenient?

Mr. Hattersley: I shall repeat the two reasons that I have given. It is quite wrong that a man or woman should be required to serve the longer of two sentences imposed on them. It is wrong that the obviously political intrusion which this provides should be introduced into our legal system. It is wrong that the Attorney-General should be subject to the campaigns inside and outside this House. Those campaigns epitomise much of what is wrong with the Government's penal and judicial policy.

Mr. Tim Devlin (Stockton, South): Will the right hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Hattersley: I shall give way to the hon. Gentleman in a moment.

This item has been introduced into the Bill for blatantly political reasons. It is concerned not with reducing crime, but with creating headlines. The Home Secretary said today that the courts award sentences which he regards as appropriate far more often than newspapers claim. The Earl of Caithness, speaking for the Government in the other place, said that unduly lenient sentences were few and far between.

There is no reason, based on the deterrence of crime and the conviction of the guilty, for justifying this clause. The clause is intended to enable Conservative Members to go back to their constituents and claim that the Government are being tough on crime. That is wrong for several reasons, one of which I shall try to develop when I have given way.

Mr. Devlin: In spite of the right hon. Gentleman's reasoning, he has not answered the point about the equity of the situation. Is it not equitable that, if the defence can appeal, the prosecution should be able to appeal too? The right hon. Gentleman's arguments may be entirely reasonable, but I should be grateful if he would answer that point.

Mr. Hattersley: It is not double jeopardy for a defence to make a plea in mitigation and hope for a reduced sentence. The jeopardy is on the man or woman who is subject to what amounts to two sentences and must serve the longer of the two. The equity of that situation is obviously wrong.

Mr. Bermingham: Does my right hon. Friend agree that the difference between the prosecution and the defence and, indeed, between the judge and members of the public, is that the judge, unlike the prosecution, has often seen the contents of social inquiry and psychiatric reports and of other confidential documents? The contents of those documents may be reflected in the sentence, yet that information is not available to the prosecution or members of the press or the public.

Mr. Hattersley: I agree with my hon. Friend's point, and I go further. If we wish to change the system so that prosecution counsel become involved in suggestions about the length of sentence, we must go all the way and do what happens in other countries, where prosecution counsel have been known to suggest, after considering the reports to which my hon. Friend refers, that a long sentence would be inappropriate and a short sentence would be more correct. If we get that system, we shall get quite a different regime. The Government now have an opportunity to say that they are taking a tough line on specific crimes. That is deeply undesirable for several reasons.

Mr. Michael Irvine (Ipswich): Will the right hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Hattersley: Like the Home Secretary, I must go on, but I shall give way in a moment.

It is deeply desirable, for a number of reasons. By encouraging this idea that the fight against crime is conducted by headlines in newspapers, the Home Secretary is perpetuating the basic error which lies at the heart of the Government's failure to combat crime. That failure is in no small measure dependent on the atavistic belief that the best way, and perhaps the only way, to reduce crime is to increase the severity of the sentence.

The Home Secretary will have noticed that more than half the interventions from his hon. Friends on the Back Benches, or in the backwoods—whichever way he may like to describe them — concerned the severity of sentencing. By continually talking about the severity of sentences, as if it were the sovereign remedy for the increase in crime in this country, the real enemies are ignored, the causes are neglected and we simply attack the symptoms of the mounting crime wave. As a result of that, crime continues to increase.

Perhaps it is the necessity for the Home Secretary to introduce policies which have no merit other than to quieten the opinion on his Back Benches, which does an enormous amount of harm to the real drive against crime.

[Mr. Hattersley]

That weakness is inherent in all Conservative Home Secretaries. Lord Whitelaw thought it necessary to talk about the short, sharp shock before he introduced reforms. The right hon. and learned Member for Richmond, Yorks (Mr. Brittan) decided to change the parole system on the eve of the Tory party conference, before he said some progressive things about other parts of the penal system.

The present Home Secretary, who has some radical and reasonable instincts—I say that gladly and willingly—finds it necessary to look continually both ways to placate the opinion behind him. That opinion will prevent those improvements which, given a free hand, he would want to carry out.

Mr. Irvine *rose*——

Mr. Hattersley: The Home Secretary is trying to look both ways in a fashion which can only be described as assuming Heseltine proportions. Last Friday he told south-east London magistrates of his concern about the prison population, both sentenced prisoners and prisoners on remand.

The Home Secretary's concern, which I believe to be genuine, could have been reflected far more effectively in the Bill if he had chosen to reflect it in action. Let me give him some examples of what he could have done in the Bill to make his speech last Friday more of a reality. He could have speeded up the application of section 22 of the Prosecution of Offences Act 1985, which requires trials all over England and Wales to be completed in a statutory time. As the right hon. Gentleman knows, there are some pilot schemes, but he could have speeded up that process a great deal.

Mr. Hurd: The power is already there in the legislation, and I hope to make an announcement to that effect fairly soon.

Mr. Hattersley: I congratulate the right hon. Gentleman, and wish that he had been that forthcoming without my pressing him on the subject.

Let me ask the right hon. Gentleman another question. If, as he said on Friday to the south-east London magistrates, it is his wish that the remand population should be reduced, and if he is concerned, as he said he was, that the remand population has virtually doubled over the past eight years, how does he justify coming to the House three days later and introducing a Bill that allows defendants to be remanded in custody, not for eight days, but for 28 days at a spell? Those two things seem to be in conflict.

When the right hon. Gentleman was speaking to the magistrates last Friday he said that, as well as being concerned about remand, he was concerned about the use of custody in the sentencing of offenders. I have talked about juvenile sentencing, where the right hon. Gentleman is extending the possibility of custodial sentences. Before I talk about other areas where his proposals will have the same effects, in fairness, I should like to deal with the parts of the Bill that will reduce the prison population.

Clause 56 will reduce the length of prison sentences for unpaid fines. Clause 47 will limit the custodial sentences in police cells. Clause 126 will encourage the use of bail hostels. Clause 118 will create a new sentence of detention in a young offenders' institution. Those are four admirable proposals. I wish that the right hon. Gentleman c brought himself to mention more than one of th not doubt that he would have been criticise moderation by Conservative Back Benchers, but get this right, he should stand up against those wh that prison and prison sentences, especially long sentences, are the only answer to the crime wav

Let me remind the right hon. Gentleman that tries to stand up against unreason, he gets little th compromising with those who think that prison is answer to the problems. He made an equivocato on Friday and followed that with a Bill that support even the better parts of that speech. But read in *The Daily Telegraph* that Conservativ Benchers are angry at the complete reversal of the that the Government ought to be sending out to offenders.

The Home Secretary should stick to the princi he holds, rather than feel that he must co compromise between common sense and th Committee.

Mr. Hurd: The right hon. Gentleman is not a my speech properly, but, as he is doing so, he will r that its philosophy is clear. I welcome—to som the Bill buttresses it — the increasing seve sentences passed by the courts for serious and offences. I do not think that the right hon. Gentle dissent from that. If so, I should be grateful to h what particular. That is one thing. It is quite anoth one enters the boundary area, which we all k difficult, where the court—not the House—has to whether prison is the right penalty for less serious o I was addressing that particular area at Bromley. right hon. Gentleman said, it is addressed in part Bill. There is no contradiction in that approach.

Mr. Hattersley: That is why I shall try to explai right hon. Gentleman why that contradiction exi before I do so, having begun to congratulate him parts of the Bill that are welcome and that we con I should like to mention two other areas where th more than worthy of support. The change of the st the Criminal Injuries Compensation Board is ri general, the right hon. Gentleman's proposal on k right. My only regret is that it was not included in th legislation. If it had been, the provision would have more speedily through the House.

With regard to knives, I have two reservation right hon. Gentleman is right to say that we—cert do—look upon the change in the onus of proo great concern. I suspect that he shares my concern. that he will endorse the view that, while the change i is justified in this extraordinary circumstance and difficult conditions, nobody could think that that be a precedent for change in onus in other directio

The second area of concern is the stop-and- provision. I hope and believe that as the police app new law governing knives, they will apply it moderation that does not open up again all the old about sus and stop and search. I want tough p against knives, as anybody who represents an inn constituency must want. For that reason, I prop support the clause on that subject, allowing fo reservations on those two points. It is absolutely ess that in those two particulars the law is operated in

that does not stir up legitimate and widespread fears in the inner cities about its misuse rather than proper use and proper application.

Clause 118, which I also support and commend, aims at tightening the criteria against which courts measure their sentences, and thus attempts to encourage uniform sentencing. When he replies, will the Minister of State explain why that admirable provision applies to young offenders, and young offenders only?

Wide discrepancies in sentencing are wrong in every way—for example, in terms of natural justice. They make a considerable contribution to the overcrowding of prisons, which the Home Secretary rightly wants to bring to an end. Let me remind the House and the Minister of State of some of the figures. In Rotherham, 8·79 per cent. of defendants found guilty by magistrates courts are sent to prison. The figure is 34 per cent. in Plymouth, 32 per cent. in Blackpool and 28 per cent. in Brighton. Those discrepancies cannot be right. Therefore, I ask again why the Home Secretary does not use the Bill in an attempt to unify sentencing and reduce sentencing in general—not only for juveniles.

I believe—I suspect that the Home Secretary shares my view—that in the United Kingdom we send too many people to prison and we send many of them there for far too long. The Bill was an opportunity to rectify those mistakes. For example, it could have resuscitated the supervised release scheme of 1981, which the Opposition supported when the Home Secretary proposed it. It was lost during one of those conferences when law and order policy is made by delegates to the Conservatives' annual gathering. The Home Secretary missed the chance to re-introduce that provision and to introduce other provisions that could have reduced the prison population. I repeat that the right hon. Gentleman has done so without getting much credit for it from those whom he tried to placate.

The right hon. Gentleman will continue to be harried over the need for longer sentences. I fear that unless he stands up against that harrying he will continue to bow to that pressure and put into Bills such as this proposals which are wrong in every particular, but which are warmly welcomed in Tory party caucuses.

Let me give the right hon. Gentleman another example. The Bill provides a life sentence for carrying a firearm while committing a crime——

Mr. Kenneth Hind (Lancashire, West): Quite right.

Mr. Hattersley: As far as I can make out, nobody believes that it is "quite right" except a small proportion of Conservative Back Benchers.

Mr. Hind: Will the right hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Hattersley: I shall give way to a small proportion of Tory Back Benchers.

Mr. Hind: Does the right hon. Gentleman agree that a small proportion of Conservative Back Benchers have a large amount of support among the general public on this matter?

Mr. Hattersley: There is no support among the police force——

Mr. Hind: That is not true——

Mr. Hattersley: Certainly not among the Police Federation. The federation is seeing me tomorrow on this and other subjects. It is absolutely clear on this proposition, which is self-evident. If a man committing crime carries a weapon, and if he is about to be arrested by an unarmed policeman, under the new provision, the man will know that he faces no greater penalty for shooting the policeman than for throwing his gun away. *[Interruption.]* I hope that if the Home Secretary were on a rooftop facing a gunman and he realised that the new law meant that the gunman could shoot him and incur no greater penalty than if he threw the gun over the side of the building, he, translated into policeman, would rationally think, "What a pity he did not leave the gun behind."

The Police Federation says that this proposal will put the police in extra jeopardy. The proposal is in the Bill to make the Government appear to be tough on crime; it is for no greater reason than that, which is a squalid and disreputable one.

So, too, is the reappearance of the removal of the peremptory challenge to jurors. It is a requirement of a free and democratic society that the defence is able to protect its client from trial by a jury that it fears is prejudiced against its client. The inconvenience that it may cause the courts, the small delay that may result from peremptory challenge and the occasional miscarriage of justice that may result, do not do anything like the damage that is done to our democratic reputation by removing a provision that, in the United States, would be considered as an inherent part of a proper judicial system.

The same rule applies to the removal of the prima facie evidence that is required before extradition. The Home Secretary completely misunderstood the hon. and learned Member for Montgomery (Mr. Carlile), who was not saying, in any chauvinistic way, that we must protect offenders in Britain against trial by incompetent courts in western Europe. As I understand it, the hon. and learned Gentleman was saying—I am certainly saying—that the man or woman who is to be tried in a court outside the United Kingdom should receive about the same protection and should go through the same procedures as he or she would receive if he or she were to be tried in a court in the United Kingdom.

The truth of the matter is that if somebody commits a crime covered by this clause at Madrid airport, and the man commits the same crime at London airport, they will have to go through more complicated procedures before being tried in England than they would have to if they were tried in Spain. There will be no committal procedures as such because there will be no obligation to provide prima facie evidence.

Once more, this matter is being brought into the arena of political decision-making. I believed, perhaps naively, that the Conservative party had been spending a good deal of its time over the past five years saying that these great judicial questions should be kept out of the political arena as much as possible. Much of what the Home Secretary has done today brings these matters into the political arena. I regret that, not only because of its effect upon the Conservative party but because it is the wrong sort of constitutional progress.

Extradition without demonstration of a prima facie case is intolerable. It is generally irrelevant to the major fight against crime in this country. I do not diminish the importance of us taking part in the international drive against crime, and I know that the Home Secretary has made a point of doing that in Europe and elsewhere. However, what he should be concentrating his mind on at

[Mr. Hattersley]

crimes that particularly affect British people—muggings, crimes of violence, burglary and all the other categories of crime that have so increased over the past 10 years. By and large, the Bill hardly touches any of them. Nor does it touch adequately the growing size of the prison population.

It is an inadequate Bill and it contains many matters of which we disapprove. For that reason, we shall vote for our reasoned amendment and struggle to improve it in Committee.

5.14 pm

Mr. Greg Knight (Derby, North): I am grateful to have the opportunity to take part in the debate. This is a wide-ranging measure, and I particularly welcome the inclusion of clause 30, which relates to the video link.

I also welcome clause 34. I accept that it is controversial among lawyers, but I have no hesitation in saying that it has my full support. It seems odd that a defendant can appeal if the sentence passed on him is too severe, yet there is no corresponding right for the Court of Appeal to consider a sentence that is considered to be inadequate.

As long ago as 1972, Parliament accepted that it would be appropriate for the Attorney-General to refer points of law to the Court of Appeal when an acquittal had resulted from an alleged misdirection by the judge—for example, where he had accepted an application at half-time that there was no case to answer. I have long believed that a similar provision to allow reference of an allegedly lenient sentence to the Court of Appeal would fill a gap in our judicial system, and that it would greatly benefit the public.

I was a little surprised by the vivid picture painted by the right hon. Member for Birmingham, Sparkbrook (Mr. Hattersley). As I understood it, he gave the example of my hon. Friend the Member for Littleborough and Saddleworth (Mr. Dickens) going around the country whipping up public indignation at a perceived lenient sentence. He said that this might involve the Prime Minister, who would then nudge the Attorney-General to ensure that the matter went to the Court of Appeal.

Mr. Hattersley: Exactly.

Mr. Knight: The right hon. Gentleman should read the Bill. It is still for the Court of Appeal to decide whether it will accept a referral. I hope that the right hon. Gentleman is not suggesting that the Court of Appeal is likely to be influenced by my hon. Friend the Member for Littleborough and Saddleworth. The right hon. Gentleman left his argument halfway through, because the Court of Appeal is the final arbiter of whether it accepts a referral.

Mr. Hattersley: Of course I am not saying that the Court of Appeal will be affected. What I am saying is that when the hon. Member for Littleborough and Saddleworth comes to the House and says, "Is it not a tragedy that the sentence is so light?", the Prime Minister will say, "Do not blame me; we referred it to the Court of Appeal." The Government will be represented as being tough when the Court of Appeal will be represented as being weak.

Mr. Knight: The final safeguard is in the Bill. The Court of Appeal will be able to determine the sentence to be imposed. I regard the right hon. Gentleman being in the realms of fantasy, and I still safeguard is in the Bill and it is for the Cou to say whether it wishes to hear the applica

If the court decides that it wishes application, the matter should proceed not is at issue in the case but on what are then of public importance with regard to sentencin the future. I can find nothing objectionable

Mr. Hind: Does my hon. Friend agree suggested that in some way my hon. Friend for Littleborough and Saddleworth (Mr. D influence my right hon. Friend the Home S way to deal with the matter is to give the powe to decide whether the appeal should be sent of Appeal to the Crown prosecutor who w when the case was originally heard?

Mr. Knight: I am satisfied with the inte Attorney-General, which is why I opened my saying that I supported the provisions in the

Some of the other clauses have not been m far. Most solicitors will welcome clause 49, w the Crown court to deal with summary offe same time as it deals with offences on indicten the most unprofitable, annoying and unrewa that most solicitors have is to trot along to the court two or three months after one of their been dealt with by the Crown court—that i and no doubt sentenced to a period of cus listen to the prosecution open some mino matters, perhaps to do with motoring offence

The defendant must be produced from p taking up the time of the authorities, and invari not have the benefit of legal aid. The solicitor regards it as a duty to his client, be in attendan to mitigate. Having done so, the court says, " defendant £10 on each charge or seven days' im concurrent." That is a waste of time. I think members in my branch of the legal profession w welcome clauses 39 and 40.

All Members receive representations from I have received hundreds of letters about the bu Friday when the House is to consider the Bill Member for Liverpool, Mossley Hill (Mr. Alt received between 50 and 100 letters about business, the Firearms (Amendment) Bill. Bu past months and years I have received many tions — perhaps this is contrary to the exp other hon. Members—about some of the m which this Bill seeks to deal. These representa focused especially on increased sentences for cl the sale of offensive weapons and the use of f crime. I believe that there is warm public su clauses 42 to 44.

I am aware that clause 113 is undoubtedly controversial of all the clauses. The House kno deals with peremptory challenge. I hope that the Member for Sparkbrook will forgive me when his comments on this issue went over the top. It the right of peremptory challenge is no longer It is not something that has been an unchanging since time immemorial. The right of challenge reduced over a period, and I believe that in 1988 an unacceptable tilt in favour of the defendant

The reason for the existence of the right are historical. They may have been justified in the past but they are not now. A few hundred years ago, it is likely that the average defendant was poor and illiterate. He went to court to face a jury that had been chosen by the property qualification. I am sure that hon. Members will know that that qualification was removed only as recently as 1972. The defendant of a few hundred years ago could well have been on trial for his life. If that were not the position, he could well be facing a severe or savage sentence. Clearly, in those circumstances the defendant should be able to exercise the right of peremptory challenge.

However, the oppressiveness of our legal system against the defendant has diminshed over the years. Penalties have been reduced, the death sentence has been abolished and through the abolition of the property qualification for jurors, the justification of the peremptory challenge no longer applies. The corresponding tilt in the other direction has been adjusted and it is my view that the need for the peremptory challenge has disappeared.

Mr. Alex Carlile: Will the hon. Gentleman give us his comments on the announcement made by the Earl of Caithness, Minister of State, Home Office, in another place on 2 November 1987 on proposed restrictions on the prosecution's right of standby?

Mr. Knight: The hon. and learned Gentleman credits me with a position of importance that I do not hold. I am not privy to the thinking of Home Office Ministers. I am aware that in February 1987 the Home Office issued guidelines on the exercise by the Crown of peremptory challenge. I understand that those who prosecute have been advised to use the right sparingly and subject to the contents of the guidelines. If the hon. and learned Gentleman wants to know more, I am sure that he will address the point to my hon. Friend the Minister of State, Home Office, who is to reply.

In his report on the peremptory challenge, Lord Roskill stated that in his view the electoral roll for the catchment area around the relevant Crown court was likely to remain the only practical and acceptable basis on which jurors should be summoned for jury service. What is wrong with that? The issue that divides Members is the view that is held by some within the legal profession that we should allow an element of gerrymandering to secure a jury that will be more sympathetic to the defendant than the one originally empanelled. We are not divided on the way in which the random principle operates.

The element of gerrymandering to which I have referred runs against the random principle of our jury system. It allows attempts to be made to turn it into something else. That is why I have no difficulty in saying that the Government are right to pursue the issue of peremptory challenge in the Bill. It can be said that the random principle sometimes produces odd results, but I do not accept that that creates a case for continuing the right of peremptory challenge. Life itself often leads to odd results.

The defendant will still have the right of challenge for cause.

Mr. Peter Archer (Warley, West): The hon. Gentleman has referred to Lord Roskill in support of the proposition that we should maintain random selection of jurors. Is he aware that Lord Roskill has clearly expressed the view that some jurors are not appropriate for certain types of offence?

Mr. Knight: That may be, but that is a slightly dif argument. Lord Roskill has made it clear that in his the only acceptable way of continuing the random pr is to use the electoral roll. There is, however, a diver of opinion when it comes to the way in which fraud for example, should be tried. There has been a debate a number of years about whether certain cases of co fraud should go before a jury, but that is an en different matter. I was addressing myself to clause 11 not to that point. Our jury service generally has serv well and I believe that it will continue to do so witho tilt of the peremptory challenge.

The Bill is a comprehensive measure and in many It is far-reaching. Its proposals are to be welcomed commend it to the House.

5.27 pm

Mr. Peter Archer (Warley, West): As the H Secretary reminded us, it is 13 months since Government introduced the earlier edition of the Bill is now before us. I imagine that for some right hon. hon. Members this will be an experience of déjà vu.

I come to the House for this debate with a sens adventure.

Mr. Alex Carlile: The right hon. and lea Gentleman will get over it.

Mr. Archer: Of that I have no doubt.

When the Bill was discussed earlier my mind wa other matters. It is only now that I am returning to for most of my life has been my spiritual home.

The Bill has been improved since it was first introdu and I believe that it could be made substantially better We live in the hope that there can be a meeting of m in the subsequent stages of the Bill's consideration. hon. Member for Derby, North (Mr. Knight) will not himself alone throughout his support of all propositions in the Bill, because there are some matter which we can agree. Equally, I suspect that there wil fundamental disagreements on some issues. Perhaps should be looking for the reasons for those disagreeme

This is a Second Reading debate, and before we fo on detail we should take a synoptic view of the Bill. is an occasion for considering the Bill in its context, what we regard as relevant to that context may be on the principal issues which divide us. We should be aski "What is the philosophy behind the Bill? How far doe fit into considered policies? What are its objectives? H far is it calculated to achieve them?" I doubt whether is an accurate description of how a Criminal Justice sees the light of day. I imagine that when someone r into the Home Office and says, "Hooray, we hav Criminal Justice Bill coming into the new legisla programme," there is great rejoicing and those concer say, "This is great. We can now decant our files on j challenges and on the various other things."

As a result, a Criminal Justice Bill is a nightmare for practising profession. It is a terror for students, who h to try to remember which Criminal Justice Act conta which provisions. If I may echo the cri de coeur in anot place by the noble and learned Lord Simon, I hope t those responsible for the Statutes in Force will incorpor the amendments as quickly as possible before we all h a nervous breakdown.

If Criminal Justice Bills usually have a bewilderi assortment of provisions, some give more evidence th

[Mr. Archer]

others of coherent thought about legal and penal policy. I confess that I had hoped to hear from the Home Secretary of some of the principles alleged to connect the Bill's provisions. The Bill purports, as we have been reminded, to implement the proposals of the White Paper, so we need to go back to the White Paper to see how far it achieves those objectives. But if the legislation falls short of those objectives, that is not the full measure of our criticism, because we are entitled to ask whether those objectives measure up to the nation's needs. Before we ask whether the Bill hits the target, we are entitled to ask whether we approve of the target's shape. Does the treatment reflect a proper diagnosis?

I have no doubt that, when some future Radzinowicz chronicles the history of crime in our time, he will speak of two crises. The first, about which we have been reminded, is the crime wave. I do not think that there is any dispute between the two sides of the House about the existence of the crime wave. There is no need to prove the obvious; but if one wanted figures, they were quoted during the debate in the other place. In 1980, about 55,000 cases were committed to the Crown courts and in 1985, over 84,000—an increase of over 50 per cent. The police have not been able to cope with that increase. In 1985, two thirds of those who committed crimes got away without being detected and of those who committed burglaries five sevenths were left free to enjoy the proceeds of their crimes. The courts, the probation service, the prisons—all the services related to crime—have been swamped by that massive increase.

I wholly agree with those who have said—I think that the Home Secretary said it—that the public are seriously concerned about the problem. I imagine that other hon. Members share my experience. When I return to my constituency, I am always harangued about the matter. But I agree with my right hon. Friend the Member for Birmingham, Sparkbrook (Mr. Hattersley). Those who have talked to me in the clubs about the crime wave do not perceive it in quite the same way as the Home Office. When those people speak of the crime wave, they are not concerned with City frauds or the distinction between murder and manslaughter. They are talking about burglaries by petty local burglars operating on the estate in which they live, about violence to the elderly, about vandalism and damage to lifts in blocks of flats.

Next weekend, when I am asked in one of the local clubs, what we have been doing in the House and I say that we have been discussing the Criminal Justice Bill, people will ask me what it contains. I suppose that I shall have to tell them about the abolition of jury challenges and about documentary evidence. I do not envisage that there will be dancing in the streets. Those people will say, "We want more policemen on the beat. We should like more street lighting in the Oldbury road. We should like burglar-proof locks on the front doors of flats and locks on the windows. But we cannot afford them. The council tells us that it cannot afford them." Perhaps the Home Secretary should tell the Secretary of State for the Environment that he is working in direct opposition to what the Home Secretary is trying to do.

We have heard little discussion about strategy. Are we directing our resources to the right crimes? If we cannot eliminate all crime, can we at least make sure that we pay attention to the activities which really trouble the community? It has been some years anything about official thinking on whic be regarded as crimes and which ac unfortunate or unpleasant, should be de

When Justice looked at the statute b ago, it found more than 7,000 statutory labelling a product in a way that does n prominence to the weight in grammes weight in pounds and ounces. If the publi in the fight against crime, the category of reserved for actions which seem seriously are regarded by the public with moral Justice Stephen in "The History of the wrote:

"The sentence of the law is to the moral public what a seal is to hot wax."

Unless there is a clear connection betw action and an act that is wicked, selfish community will not throw its weig enforcement.

We might ask ourselves whether t sanctions than those that we are using. crimes merit imprisonment. Of course, have to be taken out of circulation. But sho a clearer view of how effective imprisonment deterrent?

This bring us to the second matte historians will record about our generatio the prisons. Assuming that sending pe reduces crime, there must be a point additional custodial sentence adds to the cr which outweighs its value as a deterrent. I Home Office carried out some research in research study No. 64. It estimated that, imprisonment reduces crime, a 40 per cen the prison population would lead to convicted crime of only 1·6 per cent. Conve the number of offences by between 17 and would be necessary to increase the prison a factor of between four and seven times. inference that we can reduce the present pri without being overwhelmed by a further crime wave which would totally disrupt so

Mr. Hind: Does the right hon. and learn think that another sensible approach wo people to prison earlier in their criminal than later and for shorter periods rather th doing that, the fear of prison would be n prison would be a major deterrent in the would reduce the prison population in described by the right hon. and learned G

Mr. Archer: I have the misfortune to dis hon. Gentleman. The fear of prison may b but that fear disappears the moment people prison doors. After that, they have simp college for teaching the technology of crim them to prison earlier, one has given up h might be brought back into honest society.

Before embarking on a considera appropriate penal tariff for particular offen is worth considering how far the courts shou from the consequences of the sentences that right hon. Friend the Member for Sparkbro the proposals for the removal of remission. I the judge knows when he specifies a length of

it will bear no relation to what actually happens and indeed that he is required by law to close his mind to the provisions which govern the date of release.

Clearly, some account must be taken of matters which arise after sentence has been passed—for example, the prisoner's reaction to imprisonment. In 1967, his Honour Judge Stockdale told us that in Denmark it was possible for the court to pass an indeterminate sentence and that the court retained control over the subsequent process, so the court decides the date of release. If the proposal to remove remission is simply a method of increasing sentences, it does not seem to be a constructive approach, but if it is a way of looking again at the whole way in which the system operates, perhaps it is time we did look at it.

There have been debates in the course of the Bill's passage about how far the prosecution should have a role in the sentencing process. Judge Stockdale revealed that, in Holland, an important part of the prosecution's task is to ask for reports and to formulate proposals as to how best to deal with the offender. Frequently, it is not asking for higher and longer sentences. The judges are then involved, in various ways, with the offender's subsequent treatment.

I can understand that, since 1967, we have all lost our enthusiasm for reforming criminals. But presumably, even now, the penal process is intended to have some purpose and direction. Perhaps we could be told what the Home Office's thinking on all that is. I am making a plea for the Home Office to tell us how it wants to achieve what we should all like to achieve—the protection of our citizens from crime.

The amendment mentions our legal services. The House will not be dismayed to hear that I do not propose to embark on that subject tonight. There may be an opportunity to discuss it when the House discusses the Legal Aid Bill. But if we are urging people to respect the law, perhaps we should try to find ways of persuading them that the law respects them.

The first objective set out in the White Paper is "to ensure that the courts have adequate powers to punish. That is a reaction to the problems that confront us, but it is not the only possible one. As my right hon. Friend pointed out, it could be a reaction, not to the problems, but to sensational headlines in the tabloid press. Before we assume that higher sentences are necessarily an answer, we should ask whether we are using custodial sentences to the best advantage now, having regard to the crime that we want to deter.

I remember that my hon. Friend the Member for Hammersmith (Mr. Soley) in a publication some years ago entitled "Politics and Prisons", compared the loss to the Treasury from income tax frauds—then running at £4 billion a year—with the loss from social security frauds, which were running at £200 million a year. In the period under review, he contrasted the fact that there had been four sentences of immediate custody for income tax frauds and 404 for social security frauds. So is it not possible that the most effective discouragement for crime might be found in other directions?

I should have thought that the most effective discouragement—this might secure universal agreement in the House—from crime for any individual would be the disapproval of his peer group. Young unemployed people belonging to a minority group on a London housing estate are most likely to abstain from crime, not because Members of Parliament disapprove of it, but because we had managed to arrange things such young members of the minority group on th disapproved of it. So there might be an argumen Government re-examining "Faith in the City", wh dismissed in such a cavalier fashion some time ago them looking again at the recommendations Scarman.

The foreword to the White Paper states Government want to ensure that the court system effectively and efficiently. The most talked about in the Bill which seems to relate to that is the one already been discussed — to remove per challenges to jurors. When I talk about the Bill of my constituents who want to discuss it—I imagine that the conversation will get out of han will want to know what relevance that has to th Paper's objectives. Many will understand that depriving the defence of a right such it has enjoy before the days of Blackstone, and which wa intended, and has operated, to maintain confiden jury system.

This is not an occasion for rehearsing all the ar —I shall contain myself until some other opp arises—but the public have been repeatedly ass the virtues of the adversarial system, which means tries to maintain a balance between the prosecut the defence. The public will not easily understand defence is to be deprived of a right that is availabl prosecution, and which the Government propo remain so. When it is explained that it must available to the prosecution because the Crown sor needs to ask a juror to stand by and it wo embarrassing to explain the reasons for that, the will agree that that is true. If the prosecution w remove a juror because he is illiterate, for example, wants to stand up in open court and say, "Th cannot read." But the public will not understand w less embarrassing if it is the defence which wants to an illiterate juror.

When the right of the defence to challenge cause is under discussion, the public are told that i hurt someone if the defence suggested that he wa proper person to try a case. I can understand that so who is asked to leave the jury box might feel that been the subject of some unspecified criticism. Appa however, the juror suffers no similar blow to hi when the Crown says he is not a suitable perso public may wonder, if it would strengthen the jury and improve the court system to withdraw serious from consideration by people who are not accou why it would not strengthen the system also to re member of the National Front from the trial of a defendant without the need to go into a detailed a of his political views. Perhaps together we may be find some solution to that problem if we all keep minds. I promise that my hon. Friends and I will keep open minds; perhaps we may have a undertaking from the Government.

The next objective in the White Paper rela extradition. I would like to say a great deal, for reaso House may well know, about that, but, again, restrain my exuberance—except to say, as the was raised by the Home Secretary, that what is at i not whether the legal systems of specific foreign co are better or worse than ours. Certainly I hope th Government will not attempt to dispose of the is

[Mr. Archer]

saying that we can talk about whether the legal systems of some countries are good or bad when we get an hour and a half to debate an order at 11.30 some night. Not only would that be distasteful; it is not what is at issue. Something far more traditional and fundamental than that is at stake in this country.

The final objective is to include provision for the victims of crime. We have all thought for a long time that they should receive more attention than they do, and we support the victim support schemes which provide help at an early stage, when the victim is shocked and bewildered and unsure of where to go. People in that position need support. I am delighted to be able to assure the victim support schemes that the Government, too, approve of them, and will bear that in mind when the schemes come for more resources. So the test of the Government's sincerity was how they dealt with a proposal on the victim support schemes in another place.

The Criminal Injuries Compensation Board is to be placed on a statutory footing, which is good, because that is intended to improve its effectiveness. At present, when the board assesses compensation for the victim of a crime of violence, it includes the cost of damage to clothes. That might be a fairly minor matter to us, but to a pensioner it can be quite an important one. When the matter was raised in another place by the noble lord, Lord Morton, we wondered whether it had been left out by an oversight; but it transpired that the Government had left it out deliberately because it would save them £400,000 a year. So, in Committee, we may want to discuss the Government's commitment to supporting the victims of violence.

It would have been pleasing to know the Government's thinking on such issues as bringing together offenders and their victims. Of course, one must be selective and sensible. It cannot be done in every case. But the Home Office may have studied the victim-offender research programme in Kitchener, Ontario, where it was discovered that some offenders, on meeting their victims as people, realised for the first time the consequences of their crimes, and that had an important effect on their future conduct. Sometimes, the victim was less insistent on harsh sentences when he knew how the offence came about. Schemes such as that may make everyone wiser, and, if wiser, more likely to be law-abiding.

There is a great deal of common ground in the House about what the Government should be trying to achieve. Some provisions in the Bill merit our approval, but it must be judged as a whole. It fails to show a consistent policy. It gives less evidence of a constructive attempt to reduce crime than of a response to the baying of the tabloid press. It contains a number of proposals which are unfair and counter-productive. If we are looking for reasons to vote against the Bill, those seem reasons enough.

5.50 pm

Mr. Ivan Lawrence (Burton): I disagree with the right hon. and learned Member for Warley, West (Mr. Archer). The Bill has a consistent policy that is supported by the people. It contains so much that will improve the ability of our legal system to contain and, one hopes, to reduce crime and to secure the conviction of the guilty, that it is difficult to know where to start one's speech. I hope that I will know when to stop.

The speech by the right hon. Mem
Sparkbrook (Mr. Hattersley) was m
than the speech made by his right hon
for Manchester, Gorton (Mr. Kaufm
we debated the Bill. However, the con
Member for Sparkbrook for law and
more convincing if his party did not
time attacking the police, insulting th
breaches of the law.

The Government have already
amount to improve the legal system
rising incidence of crime. In that con
recall the passing of the Police and Cr
1984, which gave more powers to th
same time protected the liberty of t
think of the Drug Trafficking Offe
Prevention of Terrorism (Temporary
and the administrative introduction o
of interviews which, we hope,
widespread and national.

We think too of the setting up o
office, the measures taken against
particularly against insider dealings a
improvement to the police force in
equipment and organisation and the
followed. We think of the neighbourh
and of the many other measures that
the prevention of crime and we see
prison building programme. One cou
Government's achievements, and wh
downcast about the rate of crime, one
considerably by reminding oneself
measures that the Government hav
substantially increases even that cata
that one gives to the Opposition, who
crime that still exists—a deplorable
Conservative Government—is that on
much worse it would be if none of the m
listed had been taken.

There are so many issues in the Bill
quite an impossible corset in which to t
I shall take the time to raise some issu
which I do not agree and on which
Government cannot expect my supp
about one or two other areas in whic
taken. The Minister may take it as read
remaining important measures in the
waste the time of the House by attempti

I especially favour the measures be
with child abuse. The retrial provision
and the Government were quite rig
pressures to trim the amount of work t
Crown court by making petty theft t
magistrates court. I congratulate the
resisting that pressure.

I have had doubts about the extraditi
I, but the Home Secretary has persua
neither acceptable for Britain to be se
criminals nor for us to be unable to get
for trial our own suspected criminals.
tions should be weighed against the nee
prima facie rule.

We should remind ourselves that cla
number of important protections. It is n
of another state being able to take
offender whenever it asks, because under

cannot do so if it is for a political or a purely military offence, or if there is any intention to persecute the fugitive. That state cannot get him back if he is likely to be prejudiced at his trial by reason of his race, religion, nationality or political opinion. It cannot do so if his conviction in the foreign state was in absentia and it would not be in the interest of justice to return him. That state cannot have him returned if he has previously been acquitted or convicted of the offence, or if the object of returning him is for a prosecution or detention in respect of previous offences not covered by the request, or for lesser offences. Therefore, built into the provisions of the Bill there are certain substantial protections. On balance, I support the Government's extradition proposals.

I have considerable doubts about the proposed method of dealing with offensive weapons. I have tried, unsuccessfully, to urge on the Home Secretary that the better solution is to get at the knife carrier at the point of sale. What appals British juries is the thought that so many of these wicked weapons are openly on sale in weapon shops, especially in London but probably in other great cities as well. It may be that the proposals for dealing with possession of these weapons ought to be in the Bill, but I have real doubts about whether they will have any more effect on stopping possession than does the existing law with its provisions, which are far less offensive to the principle of burden of proof. I feel that we shall have to come back to this issue and introduce some kind of licensing scheme for shops.

It does not seem to be beyond the facilities of a police station that has in its locality a shop selling these weapons — and there cannot be many shops — to require the proprietor to submit a list of the weapons. A local police officer could then go to the shop and have a look at the catalogue or list. If he takes objection to any of the items on sale or to be sold or thinks that the chief of police would take objection, he could raise it with the shop owner. If, notwithstanding the advice that he has received, the shop owner wants to take the risk of putting the item on display, the chief of police could have it confiscated if permission is not given to sell it. After all, in the firearms legislation we are proposing substantially to widen the need for licensing of shotguns and firearms. The sale of weapons from a few shops would place very little extra burden on the police.

I shall now turn to the peremptory challenge provisions. It hurts me to say it, but here I agree with the right hon. Member for Sparkbrook. With 25 years of practice in the criminal courts behind me, my views are well known, and I shall not burden the House by giving a detailed explanation of them. It is, of course, complete nonsense to say that guilty people are acquitted wholesale because defendants are tailoring juries merely by having the right to say no three times. A jury cannot be tailored just by the defendant removing from the jury somebody he does not like the look of, unless he could decide which juror would be next and he knew in advance what their predispositions were. That never arises under a peremptory challenge, but it will arise if we have challenges for cause and we go down the very slippery path that the United States of America has gone down. The peremptory challenge should be left as it is because it is a safety valve. Neither hon. Members nor lawyers who do not practise in the criminal courts seem always to understand what goes on in those courts.

The defendant, who very often has been in a long time and thinks that the whole system against him, sits in the dock throughout the t he wishes to be there. Criminal trials are process.

If we make it look to the defendant as system is weighted heavily against him, he can difficult to conduct a criminal trial. Juries d when a defendant is taken down below, so he d the evidence adduced against him and is not i to instruct his counsel. With a peremptory c defendant knows that he has the right to as against the system; to say to three jurors wh been selected deliberately, as far as he know official somewhere, "I do not want you." He c three times and it takes three minutes. For tha price, the defendant feels that justice will be trial.

The Bill will sweep all that away, but it w than that. The illogicality and unfairness of defence challenging the jury, but allowing the the right to stand by for the Crown, was discus the Bill was debated, and the Government sai very important to maintain the right to stand Crown." The House of Lords forced the Gov modify the right to stand by for the Crown an absurdity to these proposals. If the prosec reasonable ground for thinking that somebody — perhaps because they have been convicte criminal offences, have had rows with the p some other reason — will favour the defend regard to the evidence, he will be able to do no it. With this absurd provision we shall build in of the prosecution, when justice would deman somebody stand by for the Crown and have a take his place.

The peremptory challenge provision is no a confidence trick on the British public, wh because the defendant will be screwed down a right which now exists, we shall convict m Everybody knows that in a criminal trial, if any reason to think that the state is being unf predisposition to acquit. The prosecution in trial must convince the jury at every stage tha else it may be doing, it is being wholly fair.

I come to the right of appeal by the prosecu inadequate sentences. It hurts me to go on ag the right hon. Member for Sparkbrook, but much of what he said. Our traditions mean particularly in our legal system, which is grea by countries which have changed the system a they had not done so. The tradition of double very important. We would transgress the rul jeopardy by giving the prosecution two bites o an opportunity to second-guess the first judg heard all the circumstances of the case — judge in the Court of Appeal — before sentence. It is contrary to our traditions t prosecution to do too much in regard to senten will be invited to do more if the provision go

We ought to have enough political nous to pressures, whether we call them political or ot Attorney-General will be under when the t goes to town on the alleged inadequacy of a the Attorney-General stands at the Dispat lawyer and says, "I have looked at the matter;

[Mr. Ivan Lawrence]

is not inadequate," too often, the Government will have a rotten reputation for always saying no to public clamour for reference to the Court of Appeal for increased sentences. If he comes in and refers a case to the Court of Appeal for consideration, the Court of Appeal will look at all the circumstances and in many cases will say that the sentence is right and that the press did not know what it was talking about because it was not there throughout the trial.

The press often comes in for the opening of a trial and the conclusion and it wants to whip up public feeling about a matter. It does not know about the social inquiry report and did not see the demeanour of witnesses or hear the defendant and other people who give evidence, who may have thrown a completely different light on the balanced facts of the case as opened by the prosecution. I can hardly remember taking part in a case where the evidence was exactly as the prosecution said it would be when the case was opened. The press is very seldom in the Central Criminal Court, so I do not suppose that it is any more often present from the beginning to end of trials in other courts. The press gives a completely wrong impression.

The provision is absolutely unnecessary because the Court of Appeal has developed guidelines. Recorders, assistant recorders, circuit judges or High Court judges, before they sentence, take out a great big book with all the guidelines in it. The guidelines on the types of offence that the public feel most upset about—child abuse, rape and drug offences—are all set out thoroughly; decision after decision of judges of the Court of Appeal saying, "If this is the situation, that should follow." We may as well abolish the guidelines if we are going to ask the judges of the Court of Appeal to review the sentences. It is unnecessary to change the system which has developed.

It has been said in the debate that it is inequitable that the defendant but not the prosecution should have the right to appeal against sentence. But there is no inherent balance between the rights of the prosecution and the rights of the defendant in criminal trials. It is because the powers of the state are so great — the power of investigation and of calling witnesses—that we redress the inherent imbalance by placing the burden of proof on the prosecution and by giving the defendant the right to remain silent. Those measures are in our criminal system to ensure balance where there is a natural imbalance, so the argument that it would be fair to have the same balance for the prosecution as for the defendant is irrelevant. I shall support or even table an amendment to change that provision and if a three-line Whip is imposed, I shall ignore it.

The life imprisonment provision for carrying firearms during the commission of a crime is another con on the public. The public think that the Government are somehow being macho. Nobody wants severe sentences for violent criminals more than I do—I want capital punishment for those who murder—but this is a crazy measure. If a gun is not used and is just carried, 14 years is an adequate sentence. If it is used for attempted murder or murder, the sentence is life imprisonment anyway, so this provision is not necessary.

What worries me is the possible temptation of a criminal caught with a gun to use it in order to escape identification and being brought to trial because the sentence for using it will be the same as for not using it.

A second worry concerns a young policeman faced by an offender with a gun. What on earth do we expect him to do, knowing that the man with the gun can escape if he shoots the young policeman dead and that if he is caught his sentence is the same for using the gun as for carrying it? Whether or not the public think that this would be a good measure, it is preposterous. The police are opposed to it and I hope that my right hon. and hon. Friends will think again.

We are changing the procedure to confiscate the profits of serious crime, which is good and long overdue. It started with the Drug Trafficking Offences Act 1986 and is now being extended. The problem is that its administration through our courts does not seem to have been working too well under that Act. I should rather like the Minister to tell me in just how many cases orders have been made and how much money has been collected by this administrative measure for enforcing the law on drug trafficking offences. I should also like him to explain to the House if he can, and if he cannot perhaps to write to us or to publish the answer in the *Official Report*, what improvements he is proposing to make in the administration of this measure to ensure that it works better than the Drug Trafficking Offences Act. Obviously, the principle is good, but if in the administration of the law this turns out to be a waste of time, we must take cognisance of that fact.

My right hon. Friend the Home Secretary came briefly to grips with the question of the right to silence. I am one of those who believes that the right to silence is now largely mythological and may even be dangerous. A jury might think that an innocent man would have given an explanation and may not be impressed in the least by being told that the solicitor has told him to say nothing. If he had explained his defence, he might not have been charged in the first place. That may not impress juries now, even if it did in the past. There is a risk of somebody who is innocent being convicted merely because, when he had an opportunity to give his defence, he did not do so. In some cases that may be the most significant piece of evidence in a trial. If there is that sort of risk, the right to silence has become a danger rather than a protection.

I say that the right to silence is largely mythological because what one says to somebody who is not a policeman or a customs officer without a warning is admissible against one. I was involved in a trial where it was held that the police did not have to caution a suspected offender until they had a prima facie case against him. Although the law has been slightly changed in recent years it is still open to a judge to pass an adverse comment in a case where a defendant has not given evidence. The judge will say, "There is one person who could have told us what happened, but he has chosen not to tell us. It is his right, but what a pity." In those and other circumstances the right to silence which a man can take advantage of and be criticised for is hollow.

However, I should like to see how the other improvements which the Government have introduced into our legal system, particularly the tape-recorded interviews of suspects, work out before I recommend to my hon. Friend that we interfere with the cherished right to silence. Therefore, I welcome the Home Secretary's statement today that he would want to delay any decision about any interference with the right to silence until there has been much more consultation and thought.

Finally, I turn to areas in which I should have liked to see some action, but, alas, there is none. I have already mentioned capital punishment and I have no doubt that its introduction would do more to reduce crime and violence in our society than any other single measure. Capital punishment is a deterrent I talk from some knowledge. In the early years of my practice at the criminal bar there were many heavy villains who may have done a bit of killing here and there and I used to ask them in the cells, where they fortunately were, whether they were deterred by the threat of the rope, and they used to say that they were. They were deterred from carrying weapons which might go off and from going on enterprises with juveniles on whom they could not rely to keep their heads in a tight corner.

I have little doubt, from anecdotal experience, together with a certain amount of common sense which I seem on this matter to share with the overwhelming number of people in our society, that capital punishment is a deterrent. Apart from that, people would believe that it was safer to walk the streets if they knew that at the end of the line they had the protection of the threat of capital punishment to deter violent criminals. But I know that that will not be included in the Bill, however much I suggest an amendment.

Secondly, the courts would like the power to suspend youth custody orders. At the most recent of the judicial boards' seminars there were about 60 or 70 judges, recorders and assistant recorders. I asked the judge in charge if he thought it right to ask the assembled gathering what their views were, and unanimity would not be too strong a way of describing their support for the right to suspend these orders.

Courts can suspend any other form of custodial treatment, so there is nothing wrong in principle with suspension. It would be the sword of Damocles over the head of a potential young offender who, having been convicted and having had a youth custody order suspended against him, might be deterred from acting in such a way as to bring the order into effect. It would help relieve the overcrowding in young persons' institutions which now occurs, because if a judge has no right to suspend a youth custody order and the appropriate sentence is a youth custody order, the judge sends the offender inside.

The Minister of State, Home Office (Mr. John Patten): My hon. and learned Friend has much experience in these matters both as a Member of Parliament and, like the hon. Member for Montgomery (Mr. Carlile), as a recorder. If suspended custodial orders were permitted, is there not a danger that they might be substituted for other forms of non-custodial disposal lower down the tariff?

Mr. Lawrence: That is always a problem. We have been over this before, when suspended sentences were introduced. On balance, however, suspended sentences have been thought to be right despite that possibility. If we can avoid sending into custody a reasonable proportion of young people who are currently sent into youth custody where they learn to become criminals, that would be a good thing. I think that there is a reasonable likelihood that there would be a significant saving, whatever might happen further down the line.

Mr. Alex Carlile: Does the hon. and learned Gentleman agree that when a young person is being sentenced there is often no money to pay a fine and a conditional discharge seems an absurdity for what may be a serious offence, with the result that many judges pass youth custody sentences? Does he agree that suspended custody orders would mean that many people would serve shorter terms or no immediate term at all?

Mr. Lawrence: I entirely agree with the hon. and learned Gentleman. There could also be partially suspended sentences. I ask the Government to think again about this. I have made representations to my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary in the past, but clearly they have no magic effect on him, as in this and other measures I have signally failed to persuade him. Nevertheless, judges want this not as a brutal and nasty thing to do but as a helpful and constructive measure both for the sentencer and for society.

Thirdly, there is no provision in the Bill to deal with people resident in Britain who may have been responsible for the mass murder of civilians or the killing of British soldiers captured by the Nazis in the last war. There is considerable concern about the continued presence in this country of a number of war criminals. I have heard one Home Office Minister say that if one such monster remains he should not be allowed to remain untried. That raises the question of how such a person can be tried for an offence committed outside the jurisdiction and when that person was not then a British citizen. Under our existing law, that is simply not possible, so the law must be changed. I ask, therefore, that consideration be given to an amendment to this Bill to achieve that.

Mr. Devlin: Retrospectively.

Mr. Lawrence: My hon. Friend says that it would be retrospective, and there would indeed be an element of retrospection in such legislation.

There are two kinds of retrospection, however—one that is unacceptable and one that is not. The unacceptable kind makes criminal an act that was not criminal at the time when it was committed, thus punishing people who had every reason to believe that they were innocent at the time when the act was committed. That is unacceptable retrospective legislation and we in this country are against it.

The other kind of retrospection involves bringing to trial a person who knew at the time that he was committing murder or, indeed, mass murder—we are talking here about genocide. It does not involve bringing to criminal trial a person who had reason to believe that he was innocent. The retrospection involves merely the procedures whereby the person is brought to justice. In matters of genocide, the law should always have been that the alleged perpetrators could be brought to trial by the forces of law and order wherever the act may have been committed. I do not believe that that form of retrospection is anathema to the British people. We could then bring to trial people who committed mass murder but got away with it because our system did not allow us to prosecute, either because the person was not a British citizen at the time or because the act was committed outside the jurisdiction.

Mr. Bermingham: Does the hon. and learned Gentleman agree that, regrettably, our law deals only with offences against the state and not with offences against humanity of the kind that he has described?

Mr. Lawrence: I agree entirely. I am grateful to the hon. Gentleman.

Faced with the same problem, other countries such as Canada and Australia have changed their laws in the way that I suggest and are asking why this country — the great legal force of the western world—has not yet done so.

My right hon. Friend the Home Secretary has said that he is considering all these matters and I know that he is most sympathetic and wants only the best. He has said that he does not intend to let the matter drop but that the time to deal with it is "not now". In the old rabbinical phrase, I ask my right hon. Friend, "If not now, when?" If we cannot introduce an amendment to this Criminal Justice Bill I am sure that those who run the affairs of this party in Parliament may find a thousand and one reasons why other legislation should take precedence over a specific measure to deal with this issue.

Mr. John Patten: My hon. and learned Friend may not have heard my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State say earlier that he intended to make his views known before this Bill had completed all its proceedings in this House.

Mr. Lawrence: My right hon. Friend also said that this Bill was not the place to make such a change. I ask him to reconsider that and to make the change in this Bill because I do not believe that legislative time will willingly be given by my right hon. and learned Friend the Patronage Secretary for a specific measure to deal with this matter.

Mr. Devlin *rose*——

Mr. Lawrence: If my hon. Friend will forgive me, I will bring my remarks to a close, as I have already taken too long.

This debate may have seemed to lack lustre because we have been going over ground that we have trodden before. Nevertheless, there is a great deal of good in the Bill. In my view, it is a pity to spoil it by including the parts that are bad. In my respectful submission, the Bill could be improved by including the provisions that I have mentioned. My hon. Friend the Minister of State has listened intently to speeches from all parts of the House. I hope that he will ask my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary to think again about some of the matters I have raised.

6.18 pm

Mr. Alex Carlile (Montgomery): The right hon. and learned Member for Warley, West (Mr. Archer) said that, as a newcomer to this Criminal Justice Bill, he viewed it with a sense of adventure. He is not the only one. The new Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office—the hon. and learned Member for Putney (Mr. Mellor) —and the right hon. Member for Manchester, Gorton (Mr. Kaufman) viewed it with such a sense of adventure that they took off to the Gaza Strip to take part in a little exercise in competitive aggression.

I view this Criminal Justice Bill mark 2 with a sense of the inevitable. However, I hope that it includes the inevitability that we will have as honest and earnest a debate on this Bill as we had on the Criminal Justice Bill mark 1. We have now the advantage of the expert hand and eye of their Lordships to guide us on certain points, although I will take strong issue with them on at least one.

I believe that no Criminal Justice Bill or law reform legislation is worth a pinch of salt unless it is part of a coherent strategy to achieve four aims. I would characterise the first aim as strengthening the rule of law; and the second as enhancing the regard in which the law is held by its consumers. After all, the law is the one commodity which the public are forced to consume every day of their lives, like it or not. I would characterise the third aim as increasing the efficiency of the law as a guarantor of justice to all; and the fourth as avoiding partisan political prejudices which, in my view at least, and I suspect in the view of most hon. Members, should have no place in any Criminal Justice Bill. I consider this Bill against that four-point test.

I am afraid that I believe that, although this Bill has many points to recommend it, it fails the test on a number of specific items. I want to begin by considering the item that strikes me as most offensive in that it falls prey to the fourth consideration — partisan political prejudice. I make no apology for returning to the matter of the peremptory challenge.

I listened with fascination to the debates in another place on the right of peremptory challenge. I stood at the Bar of the House in another place with the Minister of State and others. We heard some riveting speeches from several of their Lordships who have great experience of the criminal law. However, I must confess that I felt that some of those speeches were delivered with a rather shaky hand. Some of their Lordships were speaking about an area of the law in which they have not operated for 20 years or more, although partly of course because of the great distinction that some of them have achieved within the judiciary. It seemed to me that some of them were out of touch with the reality of the practical considerations of criminal trials about which the hon. and learned Member for Burton (Mr. Lawrence) spoke so eloquently a few moments ago, in a speech which lasted just over the 10 minutes he promised.

The debate in another place did not answer the question of how the alternative would work, and by that I mean the alternative from the point of view of the defence. No answer has been given to the proposition that we are about to embark on an unseemly procedure in which some judges will consider challenges for cause in the absence of the jury panel, while others will consider challenges for cause in the presence of the jury panel. Some challenges for cause will be couched elegantly and eloquently in terms which the jury cannot understand but the judge can: it is clearly offensive to the legal system to conceal what is being said from those concerned in the case, through the use of lawyers' code. Some judges will be prepared to hear applications, for example, on the ground that there should be more black people or women on a jury, but other judges will refuse to hear such applications. We will have a mess on our hands.

One of the points emphasised in previous debates on this issue was the inequality between the prosecution and the defence in the light of the Government's proposals to abolish the defence right of peremptory challenge. I should be grateful if the Minister would pay close attention to my next point. The Government have recognised that there is some force in the complaint of inequality between the defence and the prosecution based upon the previous proposals before the House. They have purported to deal with those objections. However, this time they have produced a severe handicap to the Crown.

Criteria have been laid down which were referred to in another place on 2 November 1987 by the then Minister of State, Home Office, the Earl of Caithness. He said that stand by would be permitted only in two sets of circumstances:

"The first is where a jury check has been authorised by the Attorney-General". — [*Official Report, House of Lords*, 2 November 1987; Vol. 489, c. 819.]

That applies to jury vetting cases. It encompasses an insignificant number of cases and we can forget about it for all practical purposes. The other category involves a juror who is manifestly unsuited for jury service. The example given by the Earl of Caithness involved an illiterate juror. That means that in the ordinary run of case, where juries are not vetted, the only right of stand by for the Crown will be if the juror is manifestly unsuited for jury service.

I have done a lot of prosecuting in my time and have attended many courts as a prosecutor when that ubiquitous figure of knowledge, the court police liaison officer, has sidled up to me and said, "Can I have a word please, Mr. Carlile? You see that fellow in the brown hat over there — he is known to associate with criminals. He's got no form, Mr. Carlile, but he is pretty high up our criminal intelligence list." Like a responsible prosecutor, I believe, I stood up without giving cause and said, "Stand by for the Crown." That juror is not manifestly unsuited for jury service under the criteria set down by the Earl of Caithness. He is certainly unsuited for service, but he will not be liable to exclusion under the guidelines which have been set down.

The Government have now introduced measures that will create difficulties for the prosecution, albeit in a commendable effort to create equality with the defence. The result is that there will be a complete dog's breakfast to replace a wholly practical system which has been operating for a very long time.

I am afraid that, like the hon. and learned Member for Burton and others, I will be returning to the issue of peremptory challenge to claim that there is no better solution than the current practice. I hasten to add that that is not an iconoclastic view. It is a practical view based on everyday experience in Crown courts all over the country.

I now want to consider extradition. We have reason to be proud — perhaps this is slightly iconoclastic — of the principle underlying our extradition law, the prima facie rule. That means that, before a foreign country can obtain extradition it must show that there is a case to answer on the charge. It has to show not that there is guilt, but that there is a case to answer. That is rather like what happens to a person who is sent for trial in a British court. Before he can be committed for trial, whether to the Old Bailey or Caernarfon Crown court, it must be shown that there is a prima facie case against him.

Surely it is justifiable to say that we should apply the same standard before we send a British subject or anyone else to a foreign country and foreign jurisdiction where there may not be legal aid and where he may even be left in solitary confinement for nine months while he awaits trial. Surely there should be a prima facie rule in his case as well. It is not a demanding rule. As the Heysel stadium case showed, the problem is the procedure, not the rule, and I welcome any measures to improve the rules of evidence to enable foreign states to achieve, by simple means, proof of their prima facie case.

Let us not forget that the present situation is not one in which a foreign country has to flounder in the British legal system. Every foreign state is represented by the Director of Public Prosecutions when it seeks an extradition. It has the whole machinery of the DPP's office at its disposal before it appears in court.

Mr. Lawrence: Is it not an unwarrantable interference in the internal affairs of other countries if we insist on having rules that they do not want for the production of their accused?

Mr. Carlile: I turn the hon. and learned Member's question on its head. We would welcome the introduction of a prima facie rule in other countries so that we could feel sure that a fair standard of justice was applied before extradition to Britain.

Of course there is another point. Comity is extremely important. When an order is passed by the House, we may be looking at a foreign state and at a system of government that we applaud, but the time may come when that changes. The most dangerous phase is when we are unsure about the system of government in that state. If a shocking dictatorship were introduced we should withdraw the order, but in the interim period, when we were not sure about the fairness of a judicial system, there would be a real risk of injustice. We are safer with the prima facie rule.

In regard to extradition, I am also concerned about the removal of the speciality rule, which would enable the Secretary of State, by an executive act, having extradited someone for one charge, to agree that he should be tried for another wholly different charge. I do not think that that should be left to executive action.

I turn to another aspect of the Bill that causes me great concern. As I hope I have already made clear, I am concerned that criminal procedures should be simple; but I am equally concerned that they should be fair. The part of the Bill that deals with documentary evidence in criminal proceedings goes much too far. Although judges would exercise control over their use, the Bill allows experts' reports to be given in evidence without the expert giving evidence in person. In criminal and civil cases, I have seen too many experts' reports which were simply wrong. The Minister of State should know that it is the experience of practitioners—if I can use a term of art—that some experts are on the game. They are prepared to give expert evidence according to the party asking for that expert evidence. This part of the Bill pays no regard to that fact.

A further piece of evidence which could well be let in as a result of changes introduced in the Bill is the note in the policeman's notebook—for example, of the remarks made by a witness in a police car. That is a form of hearsay evidence which is often not credible. Of course, most police officers prepare their notebooks fairly, but there are police officers who turn up in court using fair copies of notes made at the time. Those copies are fairer in writing than in justice. There is a great danger of the hearsay evidence contained in policemen's notebooks being introduced and causing great injustice, albeit in a minority of cases. We shall have to look closely at that category of documentary evidence which can be given in hearsay form before assenting to it.

I turn to the removal of certain types of case from the jury. Criminal damage of £1,999 or less, common assault and unlawful taking of a motor vehicle are no longer

[Mr. Carlile]

triable by jury. A person with no convictions who is tried for criminal damage amounting to £1,000 or £1,500 will usually be in jeopardy of a gaol sentence. He may well be in jeopardy of losing his job, and he will certainly be in jeopardy of losing his reputation and the respect of all around him. That is much too serious a case for the defendant to be deprived of his right to trial by jury.

Common assault is an offence that often arises in highly emotional situations. It is often dealt with rather too summarily by magistrates courts. Cases of common assault are two a penny, and most defendants plead guilty. However, a defendant who is charged for the first time in his life with an offence of violence against a person, even if he is charged only with common assault, surely should have the right for his peers to decide whether he has committed the offence.

The same applies to the unlawful taking of a motor vehicle. I have seen such cases in which the issues have been extremely complex—for example, those involving terms of employment. The professional skill of the judge has often been needed to sort out those issues and enable the matter to be fairly decided.

Mr. Devlin: I am sorry to interrupt the hon. and learned Gentleman in the middle of his flow, but would he be interested in tabling an amendment to cover his point about a first-time offender, allowing all other cases to be dealt with in the magistrates court?

Mr. Carlile: I used the example of the first-time offender as the starkest illustration of the point. My direct answer to the hon. Gentleman is no, although I should like to think about it further. If it is the best that we can salvage, and if the hon. Gentleman is offering to take part in such an effort, he may well find me, and other hon. Members, on board. I am grateful to him for his question.

I welcome many parts of the Bill. I welcome the fact that the Criminal Injuries Compensation Board has been put on a statutory footing. I welcome the tentative beginnings of video links for children, although I think that we will hear more radical suggestions from the hon. Member for Newcastle-under-Lyme (Mrs. Golding). I welcome, too, the parts of the Bill that deal with forfeiture, compensation, knives and child cruelty.

Like the hon. and learned Member for Burton, I should like to see a provision for suspended youth custody sentences. I introduced a ten-minute Bill on the subject a long time ago. The argument that more young people would end up in custody is wrong. The problem in sentencing a youngster of 17 or 18 is that usually there is no money with which to fine him. A conditional discharge sounds terribly weak and namby-pamby, so he ends up going straight inside for a short youth custody sentence. It is in those cases that a suspended or partly suspended sentence would be used. In this context, I reassure the Minister of State that the regular bulletins which are now sent round by the Judicial Studies Board are read by judges, who pay attention to them.

I agree, too, with the hon. and learned Member for Burton about war crimes, which need to be dealt with in a positive way. There is a world of difference between retrospectively rendering a crime something which was not a crime and making a jurisdictional change which, as the hon. Member for St. Helens, South (Mr. Bermingham) suggested, would deal with crimes against humanity. Surely every right-thinking person expects the He take measures to enable those guilty of crimes humanity to be tried, even long after the event. W heard a good deal about comity today in relat extradition, but a good number of our friends abroa dealt with this situation satisfactorily. It is possible criminals to be tried, and I suggest that it would be of comity if we did the same.

The Bill represents part of, if it is a strate incoherent strategy, in that it fails to build confid the rule of law and the legal system for the reasons have given and others. It weakens civil liberties nothing to deal with the problem of a burge population in the prisons, does not enhance respect law and can only earn the description, disappointment".

6.51 pm

Mr. Tim Devlin (Stockton, South): Although th has been gone through in some detail before, I was to take part then. I am grateful to the House for de its discussion of the Bill so that I could take part.

I do not have any children but, if I did, I think tha many parents in my constituency and the country whole, I should be feeling quite anxious about the pro of their being abused physically or sexually in some sordid corner of our society when I was not on ha keep an eye on them.

That web of fear and doubt has thickened throug the nation during the past year as those who care a children have brought more of this horrifying phen into the open. Some elements of the abuse—we may it passive abuse—has always gone on and all of us been vaguely aware of it. I refer to the taking of photographs of children and various exposures in fro them. The subject has not, however, been a matter of worry to the majority of people.

The sudden trumpeting by interested professiona the truly nasty cases—perhaps I might call them active cases—such as the baby battering, the phys sexual acts and the violence, have made the public rig anxious, especially when the perpetrator might be a tru or respectable person such as a teacher, vicar, s worker or doctor.

The prospect is frightening. Many of us grew u innocent children, unaware until comparatively late o ugly world that surrounds us. It is perhaps those who h had that privilege who express most horror when they the chilling statistics presented by the National Society the Prevention of Cruelty to Children or the Natio Children's Home and learn of the prolonged misery degradation of other children's lives.

The shift in attitude requires us to contemplate th matters within the bounds of the family, and often on perpetration of a deception of, perhaps, a spouse. O natural reaction is to rebound in horror or leave problem to someone else.

In my early days at the bar I took that attitude, beca I felt that child law was too complicated, too emotio and too difficult for careful and dispassionate conside tion. We cannot shy away from our responsibilit however. It is our responsibility to protect these sadden violated children, and that task is set about in the Bil welcome clause 43 wholeheartedly. Clause 30, on clos circuit television, is a much-needed improvement an commend the Government on bringing it forward. T

suggestion that we should bring in an extra amendment on the possession of child pornography is most welcome. I look forward to seeing the Government's proposals. Sorting out the law relating to the detention of children is also highly to be commended.

Clause 32 causes me the most unease in the light of my recent experiences in Cleveland. I should like to consider the scale of the problem. National estimates provided by the NSPCC are that 6,330 children were sexually abused last year. The MORI poll, which has often been quoted, failed to distinguish between what might be called active and passive abuse. The definition was very wide and, in an article in *The Times* last year, Roger Worcester, chairman of MORI, took the poll to show that one female child in 150 was sexually abused by her father and that only one child in 220 suffered sexual intercourse by a father or brother.

Our next difficulty is bringing to book those responsible for these horrible crimes. My hon. Friend the Minister and my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary have shown tremendous zeal in this respect. Calls have been made by many bodies which deal with children for a range of reforms to increase the conviction rate. One important reform that is not included in the Bill, and which should be, is a provision to lay a statutory duty on social service departments to consult the police and inform them of any relevant facts before action is taken to rescue a child.

The use of a live video link in court would also be a major advantage to the prosecution of these cases. The trauma to the young child, now separated from his or her parents, can only be heightened by having to reveal all the humiliating details in open court. Last year, we saw the terrible prospect of a trial collapsing because the children were too upset to give evidence. All the court could do to improve the situation was for the barristers and counsel to take their wigs off.

Children's and adult survivors' most vivid memories of these occasions are that facing the perpetrator and his lawyer is their worst ever experience. We must achieve a balance, however, and not tip the scales of justice out of line. We cannot allow children's evidence to go unchallenged and we cannot refuse a defendant his right of cross-examination.

We should for a moment imagine that some of my constituents in Cleveland are absolutely right — a possibility that is being determined by a judicial inquiry. We should put ourselves in the position of an ordinary loving family man whose children are thought, for some reason—a denunciation or a faulty medical diagnosis—to be abused. He might be a doctor, teacher or vicar. The accusation is made. He must, in the name of justice, be given a fair trial. He will suffer suspension from his job and be reviled by his neighbours, his friends and perhaps even his wife. The children are taken away. He wakes up one day to find himself in a situation not dissimilar to Kafka in "The Trial". That is what is alleged to have happened in my constituency.

We should imagine what will happen when, having legislated safeguards into the system, we have also removed the ability to cross-examine the accusing child. We should imagine what would happen if we did not build in the legal safeguards proposed by the Bill. The uncorroborated evidence of the child would be accepted as the sole evidence on which somebody could be convicted. Would we not be moving from Kafka to Arthur Miller?

The hon. Member for Middlesbrough (Mr. Bell) said last summer when we met two anguished parents together, "This is Salem." He was wrong, but I fear that, with children being able, unchallenged or insufficiently challenged, to accuse parents of vile and hateful things, and with social workers prepared to read and believe papers which say that children do not lie about things that they have not experienced, we might indeed move to Salem. Will we then be back with a protection from false prosecution Bill to remove this anomaly next year? I hope not.

We must press forward with all due diligence to catch and successfully prosecute child molesters. I welcome many of the features of the Bill which will help to do that, but I warn the House against overlooking essential safeguards in pursuit of desirable ends. I warn the Committee against turning children to behave like Abigail Williams in a witch hunt which could burn the innocent as well as the guilty.

6.59 pm

Mr. Gerald Bermingham (St. Helens, South): Some of us who served on the Standing Committee on the previous Criminal Justice Bill feel what is almost a sense of déjà vu. No doubt, if I am lucky enough to be selected to serve on the Committee on this Bill, I shall see one or two new faces on the Government side, but I do not expect to see too much of the Home Secretary, who appeared only towards the end of the previous Bill.

That is no criticism of the right hon. Gentleman. However, some effort was made to improve the original Bill through the spirit of that Committee. Various Ministers accepted a number of Opposition amendments, and, indeed, often cross-party amendments, and a number of ideas were taken on board. I had hoped that, during the long summer that lay behind us, the Home Secretary and other Ministers would have looked again at what was said in that Committee, and thought again about some of the ideas that it discussed.

Over the past couple of months, I have floated one or two ideas on sentencing policy, in the hope that they will be taken up when the Bill continues its passage through the two Houses. It contains a number of features which are, sad to say, retrogressive, rather than progressive. When there are more than 50,000 people in prison and more than 10,000 on remand, we ought to take the opportunity to ask ourselves why that is. Why do we appear to be the most criminal country in Europe? Why do we incarcerate more people, for longer periods, in quite appalling conditions, than any other country in the civilised world? Is it, perhaps, that we have got our sentencing wrong?

You will recall, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that a few months ago, when a certain well-known jockey obtained his just deserts for trying to defraud the taxman, I suggested that there might be another way of sentencing him: it seemed an appropriate example at the time. I agree with everything that has been said today about vicious and violent criminals. They deserve to go to prison, and they deserve to go there for a long time, as do those involved in sexual offences. I am not speaking of them; the statistics show them to form a minority of the offenders who are to be found in our prisons. Research has shown that the vast majority are the thieves, the fraudsters, the car thieves, burglars and other non-violent persons.

For many such people, the most effective part of a prison sentence is the first 14 or 28 days. I suggested 28

[Mr. Gerald Bermingham]

days in a recent speech, and promptly received a shoal of letters from experts, who told me that the first 14 days were the bit that hurt. The remainder of the sentence is not constructive, as was said here earlier. All that it does is teach the chap to commit, perhaps, a different type of crime. He is kept in conditions in which he learns nothing, and his family is supported by the state. We keep him there at enormous cost, and then chuck him back again at the end.

Why should we not try to be constructive? If the short, nasty taste of the prison cell is required, let the sentence be for, say, 18 months, but with only 28 days to be served. During the balance, the offender would be expected either to repay the victim of his crime—after all, the victims are the people whom we mostly forget in the administration of criminal justice—or, perhaps, to repay society through an extended community work programme.

It can be done, it would not require much alteration of our laws, but it would at least be positive sentencing. During the period that the offender spent in the community, under, as it were, the sword of Damocles—the combined, rather than the single, sentence — he would be expected to put back into society what he had taken out, and, at the same time, to maintain his family. The probation service is quite capable of administering such a sentencing policy.

That is constructive, but it is not very populist. It is populist to call for longer and longer sentences. I agree with much of what the hon. and learned Member for Burton (Mr. Lawrence) said — for example, about extending to life imprisonment the sentence imposed for possession of a firearm in the course of a robbery or other indictable offence. Where, in that case, would be the point in not shooting? The sentence would be the same either way. That is silly and will not achieve anything. Judges, of course, do not have to impose certain sentences; they are quite capable of imposing the appropriate sentence. The current sentencing powers of the judiciary are wide enough for that.

Over the weekend, I have to admit that I read *The Mail on Sunday*, which mentioned the idea of tagging. We did not receive a clear and definitive answer on that today. *[Interruption.]* Ah, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Naughties are happening. The Minister has indicated that he will answer the question on tagging.

It would be nice if we knew at the beginning of a debate what would come up during it. Surely the purpose of a debate is for the House to be able to give its views. If the Minister is to make some suggestions about tagging, I shall be glad to give way to him for a moment so that the matter can be placed before the House and before other persons.

Mr. Hurd: Give us your view.

Mr. Bermingham: The Home Secretary asks for my view: he can have it. If the system is to be anything like the Massachussetts system, it is barmy. I took the trouble to go and have a look.

If "tagging" means a system of reporting, with a machine that is coded so that the telephone can pick up the code, I can see some sense in it. However, to confine people to their houses 24 hours a day for 12 months—if I have understood *The Mail on Sunday* corr frankly barmy. It is useless, and will achieve not merely sending people to prison in their own h

The object of keeping people out of prison m be to reform them, educate them and lead them i direction. I have no objection to people having at such and such an hour, or to a means of chec they are ringing from where they say they are which could be achieved very easily by as telephone number of the works where they shoul ringing them on that number. That may be too be politically attractive, but the Americans seem it a better method than a magic bracelet worn ar arm, enabling the person to be contacted at an ap time.

I fear that we must wait until the Minister speaks at about half-past nine to learn the mys what he proposes. I think it a little discourteou proposals are to be made, for us to be told of the end of the debate, rather than during it. But old-fi manners are, I fear, a thing of the past.

Clause 128 deals with knives. Under the cla defence rather than the prosecution case must be One of the grounds on which a defence can be under subsection (4)(a), is that the knife is "fo work". I suggest that the drafting of that tiny pa be looked at again. Let us suppose that a man t kitchen knife from his home to his car parked in th perhaps to deal with a problem in the upholstery, some screw or other tiny part in the ignition technically not at work, so technically the defen Perhaps the words "for work" rather than "at should be used. It is only a tiny amendment, but overcome that minor problem. We shall have to rec the drafting of the Bill with great care.

I wish to mention two other points. I welcome 41, which contains the retrial provision, but the po the Court of Appeal should have been widened respect a long time ago. I should have liked the pr to go a little wider. Perhaps we can discuss Committee, but the principle is welcome. It may the occurrence of cases in which there has been miscarriage of justice and people have had to go Court of Appeal several times. The classic example Cooper v. McMahon case in which the Home Se ultimately opened the doors and out they went, bu a situation should be avoided in the future. I ask the Secretary to reconsider the Select Committee's repo remands in custody and then to reconsider clau which grants the power to remand in custody for u days, rather than up to eight days, as at present.

One of the saddest sights is to go to a prison at v time and watch the remand prisoners being visited b wives and families. An even sadder sight is to end whether in a magistrates court or in a Crown cou declare an interest as a practising barrister—and a man acquitted when he has been in custody for time.

It is time that we reconsidered the position with r to theft. Of course the person accused of murder, rap other serious offences must be remanded in custod there should be some way of reviewing the lesser off and the remand period. When sentences are settled remand period, we must ask ourselves questions how we deal with bail.

I note the provision in respect of bail hostels. I appreciate that an increase in the number of bail hostels may lead to fewer people being remanded in custody. I appreciate that, under section 20 of the Prosecution of Offences Act 1979, it is proposed that trials now proceeding——

Mr. John Patten: I have listened to the hon. Gentleman's speech with great care. On the issue of bail hostels, is he aware that, when the nine new bail hostels announced by my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary are fully occupied, it could mean that up to 900 people a year should be free of the need to be in gaol and should be in the bail hostels?

Mr. Bermingham: Yes, I am aware of that. I welcome the nine new bail hostels. Perhaps there should be more, given that there are more than 10,000 people on remand today, more than 500 of whom are in police stations. The situation is appalling and any improvement is welcome. There is no justification for more than 500 people being remanded in custody in police stations. The Home Secretary's predecessor gave an undertaking that they would be emptied and that no people would be remanded in custody in police stations.

The Home Secretary has made several attempts to improve the situation, including early release, but too many people are on remand and too many are receiving too long sentences. However, I shall not seek to trespass down that alleyway tonight.

I hope that the Bill will be given a Second Reading and that, when it goes into Committee, Government supporters will approach it with an open mind, ready to make changes and to listen to arguments, not necessarily from the Opposition but from interested parties outside who often have much to offer. I hope that the Government will not set their mind against any ideas that will help to achieve the essential elements of a criminal justice system. Fairness is an essential part of such a system and leads to a conviction which is not challengeable. When that conviction occurs, the sentence should reflect both the crime and the needs of society and of the victim. If we can work towards that, we shall go somewhere, but I fear that the Bill contains many of the sins of previous legislation. Perhaps some of us will be lucky enough to have a second bite at the cherry, if we do not find the stone completely bare.

7.15 pm

Mr. Chris Butler (Warrington, South): I welcome the Bill and the strong warning that it will give to any knife-happy thugs. There is a stronger warning implicit in it than the one I read when I was in Florida last year in the code given to children before they start school. They are told that they

"may not commit any criminal acts at the school. Bringing a gun, or another weapon such as a razor blade, ice pick, nunchakus"—

goodness knows what that is—

"mace or any chemical or electric weapon will result in expulsion, as will selling alcoholic beverages or drugs, murder or rape."

I am sure that it will be a great consolation to the victim of murder or rape to know that the schoolchildren will be expelled.

I studied physical anthropology at university and I know that there is a credible theory that Neanderthal man never died out. Some inadequate people bolster their inadequacy by the use of knives. They mistake the fear tha they engender with their blades for the respect which the cannot secure. When they wield their blade, they believ that they are big, but in fact they are pygmies. They shoul be dissuaded from carrying their symbols of power. Som of them are rather dense and a couple of pints of lager ca convert boastful bores into punchy paranoids.

Only last Saturday night, there was a stabbing in a disc in my constituency. A young man was stabbed twice an his life was saved only by the quick-witted action of Mr Roy Aspinall, affectionately known as "Ocker", who pu his fingers in the gaping wounds. The culprit was caugh at the door and was found to have two flick knives. He should never have been carrying any knives at all. The message of the Bill should be not only that people who carry knives are inadequate but that they are mugs becaus the law will bear down on them if they are stupid enough to carry knives.

I welcome clause 34 and the right to refer unduly lenient sentences to a higher court. The knee-jerk reaction of the Opposition is to oppose this. They purport to represent the working class. I sometimes wonder how long it is since they were in a working-class club or pub and listened to the good sense that is occasionally talked over a few pints of bitter. The verdict of the ordinary man in the street about some of our daft, lenient sentences is very clear. Legal academics, too—Nigel Walker, for example—have been quick to point out that the one-sided English system is "quixotic". In 1965, the Donovan committee found that there was a strength in these arguments, but eventually it dismissed the idea because it was

"a complete departure from our tradition."

In my view, tradition is an insufficient cause for not doing justice in these cases.

I have one reservation which I share to some extent with the right hon. Member for Birmingham, Sparkbrook (Mr. Hattersley), despite his rather disparaging remarks about Elliot Ness, whom I have always greatly admired. That reservation concerns the potential role of the press. Mostly, our attention is drawn to soft sentences by the press. There is a certain section of the press that wallows in the gutter. I trust that the Attorney-General will have an objective system of review, and that we shall not be subject to the "objectivity" that is associated with the denizens of the gutter.

The Bill is a response to popular concern about the surging crime rate. It is designed to strengthen the forces of law and order. It is an unashamed attempt to punish and deter more severely those who commit the more severe crimes, and to lessen the opportunities for malefactors to exploit the system as it stands.

The Labour party has heard that outcry as well. On 27 November 1986 the right hon. Member for Manchester, Gorton (Mr. Kaufman) put forward his own solution. Predictably enough, it was the election of a Labour Government, to provide the policies

"to unite the nation against crime."

and

"to bring the British people together as partners against crimes."—[*Official Report*, 27 November 1986; Vol. 106, c. 484.]

—whatever that may mean. In the same speech, the right hon. Gentleman opposed the abolition of the right of peremptory challenge. He opposed the raising of the limit

[Mr. Chris Butler]

on sentences for those who carry firearms in the commission of crime, and he opposed the referral of lenient sentences to higher courts.

We in the Conservative party are arguing that the balance in our criminal justice system should be turned further against the criminal. I may be reading the runes wrongly, but it seems to me that the Opposition tend to argue the case of the malefactor.

If the public are to judge the theme of partnership, and if they are to judge the way in which political parties approach that theme, we need to look at who partners whom — who partners whom in Manchester, not far from my constituency, where the ruling Labour group spends hundreds of thousands of pounds every year on its "Police Watch" magazine, which attacks the police, who partners whom on the Broadwater Farm estate, and who partners whom in the Lobbies tonight.

7.22 pm

Mrs. Llin Golding (Newcastle-under-Lyme): Since the Bill last appeared before the House for consideration, many words have been written, and indeed spoken, about the need to reconsider the law on the giving of evidence by children in courts. The emotion, anger and disgust expressed by so many people about the abuse of young children have led to a public outcry on the need to change the law.

It now falls to us to see that the laws can no longer be described as a child molesters' charter. We in the House have the opportunity in the Bill to change the law, to start to help not only those children, but their families and those convicted of abusing children, for if we cannot prosecute them and help them, how can we even begin to halt the increase in child abuse?

Much progress has been made in the past year. The attitude of many in the legal profession has changed. The Government have suggested that they are prepared to consider a change in the law on corroboration and video evidence, which is most welcome.

I followed with care and a great deal of interest the debate on the Bill in the other place, but I am far from satisfied that there is a full understanding of what needs to be done. However, I should like to pay tribute to the many Members in the other place who battled long and hard on the issue in an effort to convince the Government of the need for radical change.

To understand the giving of video evidence, we must first understand what a video link is. What it most certainly is not is a " closed circuit television", which was the amendment accepted in the other place. What it most certainly is is a "live audio-visual link", which is capable of being used as a means of communication during a trial and for the transmission of other sounds and images in connection with the trial — that is, without the intervention of another person to control or operate the system during the giving of evidence; and in such a manner that a witness giving evidence by means of the system may be seen at the trial throughout the giving of his evidence; and in such a manner as to permit the transmission to persons present at the trial of any sounds and images transmitted by means of the system. That is what a video link is and that is what I am reliably informed by Datapoint UK, a firm that produces equip courts in more enlightened countrie successfully does.

I should like to refer to the proposed corroboration of children's evidence. T welcome the Government's proposals, th evidence of a child shall now be admissibl if it is uncorroborated. The provision that understand the duty of speaking the truth stumbling block to the giving of evidence children. The essential point is that a chil telling the truth virtually from the age whe talk, but as the law stands the court will n story until she understands the concept of which could be not until she is very much

That a very young child is capable of information is known by everyone who young children. There is the well-documen American girl of three who was abducted, dropped in a cesspit to drown but survive account of her experiences, which her attac confirmed in every detail. Much research h which comes to the conclusion that there is n between a child's reliability in describing an child's knowledge of the difference betwe "falsehood" and "truth".

In France, Germany and many states States of America, child witnesses of all ag to. It is right that their evidence is treated wit it is right that in this country the courts sh listen to a tiny child. I hope that the Govern further consideration to that in Commit important that all evidence should be listen

I now refer to the use of audio-visual li Bailey case last September, when a nine-y broke down in the witness box and was unab evidence, resulting in 23 charges against the dropped, has won the argument that to subj such mental torture makes the law cruel and forward to seeing the Government's proposa visual links, which I hope will allow evidenc by children in all cases where there is a likeli being intimidated when giving evidence.

Mr. John Patten: I am following closely the thought-provoking speech. I she aware tha things that has disappointed us in the Home having circulated a consultation document on issue, we have had, alas, fewer responses fro might be interested in the correct conduct of cross-examination than we had hoped? We kn Lady's views. If she can do anything to enco to make their views known during the Commi shall be grateful.

Mrs. Golding: I thank the Minister information. It is the quality that counts, not t I assure him that the quality was good when support on audio-visual links. I shall not go full list now, but if the hon. Gentleman wants of the quality, he may have it.

The proposal that very young children allowed to give evidence through a fit per acceptable to the court would be in the inte accused and the child. A tiny child is likely completely if questioned directly by a strange

sympathetic that stranger may be or however sympathetically the questions may be put. If the question is put through another person—the so-called child examiner—whom the child knows and trusts, it is sensible to suppose that the child would find it easier to understand and answer the questions. It should not do away with the right of defence counsel to question the child directly should the defence so wish. I hope that the Minister will see the sense in the provision of a child examiner and include it in the Bill.

I shall now deal with the proposals for the admittance of video tapes in the giving of evidence by children. I cannot understand how, with agreed safeguards, anyone could object to such a proposal. Surely it must be acceptable that a video recording, made as soon as practicable after the events, is likely to be of greater use in the search for the truth than the cross-examination of a child months after the events, when much effort will have been made by concerned people to help the child come to terms with what has happened. Surely it must be possible for the police and social services, with the appropriate training, to obtain a statement that would be admissible in evidence. The Nottinghamshire constabulary and those working on the Bexley experiment are two groups that have done much work on the subject. The reports that they have presented have convinced me that it could be done and that a code of practice could be drawn up.

It would be essential that the video recording be available in complete form, with nothing added, omitted or altered, and the accused person and his legal representatives should have the right to inspect and view it. In Texas, 221 out of 235 accused people have pleaded guilty having seen the video recording of the child's evidence, thus saving the child the ordeal of a court hearing. If video tapes are not to be admissible as evidence, more children will suffer the trauma of court hearings, which cannot be what the Minister wants.

The change that is proposed is for the video tape to be used as the child's statement to the court, and that cross-examination would be directed to what she or he has said on the tape. It is intended to be used in the same manner as a written statement.

I should like to think that, in the Bill, we shall take the opportunity to change the law, to do away with the accusation of having a child molester's charter, to help young children and to support the family. We must seek the truth to find the answer to protect the child and the accused.

7.32 pm

Mr. Michael Irvine (Ipswich): One's approach to a Second Reading debate of a Bill that contains no fewer than 154 clauses and 14 schedules must inevitably be selective. I propose to concentrate on three issues, the first being the extension of the powers of the Court of Appeal as set out in clauses 34 and 41 of the Bill.

In his speech, the right hon. Member for Birmingham, Sparkbrook (Mr. Hattersley) attacked clause 34 on the basis that it would lead to a convicted offender being sentenced twice and having to serve the longest of those two sentences. That argument—the so-called double-jeopardy argument—is fatally flawed. The issue is not whether the offender should serve the longer of the two sentences: or for that matter whether he should serve the shorter. What is important is that the sentence tha offender serves is a just one. Clause 34 will help to e that the sentence he receives is a just one.

Reform enabling the Court of Appeal to inc unduly lenient sentences is long overdue. Standar sentencing by the judiciary are generally very Occasionally however, even the best of judges can a mistake. If they get it wrong and pass an unduly s sentence, the matter can be put right by the Cou Appeal; justice is done and the anxiety of the pub allayed. It seems absurd to argue that, if a judge g wrong the other way and passes an unduly le sentence, the matter cannot be put right. When happens, not merely is justice not done, it manifest seen not to be done. Not only is the victim of the c wronged and resentful, but public confidence in judiciary and the legal system is undermined.

The hue and cry among the media that follow sentence that is perceived to be unduly lenient b intolerable and undesirable pressures to bear on the j in question and may deter other judges from acts of m in instances where they are merited. It may deter ju from passing lenient sentences that, in the partic circumstances of the case, are proper and right.

I see clause 34 lessening the hue and cry among media. It will help to maintain public confidence in legal system and, above all, it will lead to gre consistency in sentencing. It will lead to better justice, to better justice being seen to be done.

Clause 41 complements clause 34 admirably. It enable the Court of Appeal to order a retrial w previously, because of a misdirection or because s technicality has not been observed, a guilty verdict ha be set aside and an acquittal directed, even though facts of the case pointed strongly towards the guilt of accused.

Clause 112 will abolish the right of peremp challenge. On this issue I part company strongly with hon. and learned Friend the Member for Burton (Lawrence). The peremptory challenge is used regulari the hope of obtaining a more sympathetic jury fo defendant. It is used to obtain not a representative jury an unrepresentative jury.

Mr. Ieuan Wyn Jones (Ynys Môn): Is the h Gentleman aware of a recent report that showed tha 45 per cent. of cases it made no difference whatsoeve

Mr. Irvine: What about the 55 per cent. in which it d

Another important factor that cannot be separa from the peremptory challenge is the growth of ju nobbling—the practice of identifying members of jury who it is thought might be pliable and then bring to bear one or more kinds of pressure or inducement them. Last summer, the Metropolitan police's assist commissioner and head of special operations, Mr. Dell drew attention to the development of this problem. claimed—it was reported prominently in *The Time* that the Mafia and other organised gangs were employ professional jury-nobblers to pervert the course of just and obtain acquittals.

We would be foolish not to heed the warning. With growth of organised crime and the massive resour behind some of the international drug-smuggling a other criminal rings, that sort of pressure could extremely great and could be a far greater danger a

[Mr. Irvine]

threat to the maintenance of trial by the jury system than the abolition of the right to peremptory challenge. I say that abolition of the right to peremptory challenge will make it just that more difficult for such gangs to operate effectively.

Mr. Archer: I am trying to follow the hon. Gentleman's reasoning. On the face of it, abolition of the right to peremptory challenge would make it more likely that people would attempt to nobble juries.

Mr. Irvine: Not at all. If peremptory challenges are used to secure juries that are thought to be more sympathetic to a defendant, and if that assessment is accurate, it follows that such juries may be more pliable and a much more acceptable target for the nobblers who are employed by criminal gangs. That is an important factor when we are considering the effectiveness of the jury system. I contend that the abolition of the peremptory challenge will make it just that much more difficult for gangs such as the Mafia and other international drug-running organisations to pervert the course of justice by bringing improper pressure to bear on juries.

Clause 128 introduces the offence of having with one in a public place an article with a point or blade. My right hon. Friend the Home Secretary spoke about the appalling rise in the incidence of robbery in London and the increasing degree to which knives are being used in such robberies. They were strong words and I was glad to hear them. I was glad earlier when it was announced that this special offence would be included in the Bill.

However, subsection (5) states:

"A person guilty of an offence under subsection (1) above shall be liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding level 3 on the standard scale."

So the penalty for the offence of carrying a knife in a public place is to be a fine. That is a slap on the wrist, and a limp one at that. Knife-carrying is a dangerous and reprehensible habit and it needs to be stopped in its tracks. Deterrent sentences are needed that will trumpet out that to carry a knife carries the risk of a severe sentence from the courts. I hope that this flaw is remedied in Committee. It is a flaw on the face of what is otherwise, on the whole, an admirable Bill.

7.43 pm

Mr. John Fraser (Norwood): Anyone who represents a constituency such as Brixton lives constantly with the problem of crime. I have always taken an interest in these matters because I want to represent the interests of those who should be able to live their lives peacefully and who do not deserve to have that right interrupted by assaults either on their person or on their property.

I have learnt over the years that the battle against crime is won by partnership, co-operation and confidence within the community in the proper enforcement of the law and the judicial system. There were times when we had considerable doubts about the way in which the magistracy behaved. That was partly because of selection and partly because of inopportune comments that were made about defendants and, sometimes, prosecution witnesses. We worked hard to overcome those difficulties and the changes that have taken place since the Scarman report have done much to reinforce co-operation between the community at large, the police and others who are concerned with the enforcement of law and order.

I think that there is agreement on House that the peremptory challe opportunity for a defendant to challenge way to ensure that it is reasonably rep defendant's peers. We know of the de took place in the southern states of Am people were tried by juries composed of I have in mind the outcry that would member of the National Front were offence of racial harassment in Brick la jury composed entirely of people of Ba

If a defendant is tried by a jury whic face of it to be unsympathetic or antipath a lack of belief in the effectiveness of ou It will be all the better if the traditional rig challenge, which was there partly to incr effectiveness of our judicial system, is p

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary Home Department (Mr. Douglas Hogg): the hon. Gentleman's argument. Is it not a member of the National Front should by exercising the right of peremptory cha a coloured juryman?

Mr. Fraser: It is much better that one g be acquitted than that several innocent convicted. That, however, is not the centr that people should believe in the credibili system, and I am sure that overall the rem of peremptory challenge will weaken c system rather than reinforce it. In the bro removal of that right is likely to have a rather than a favourable one.

My constituents, along with oth concerned about the carrying of knives. R has been urged by the Lambeth po consultative council and by an organisa Helpless Youngsters—WHY—which ha my constituency and throughout Londo

There has been co-operation between council, WHY and the local authority. I authority has mounted exhibitions of dan local libraries. We have reached a co community that something needs to be about the carrying of knives. This is partl increase in the number of robberies that the use of knives in which terror is struck e into the heart of the victim and partly number of altercations that result in de injury that might have been comparatively knives had not been carried. For three w my constituency last year persons were k of fights with knives. In two instances th did not include the proposed commission involved an argument about a traffic ac carrying of a knife resulted in a death.

There is widespread concern about t knives and the deaths and injuries which consequence of it. It would be idle to pre is not some fashion in the carrying of kn some who believe that it is right to car fashionable to do so. There are many who w peer group do not meet any expression because they carry a knife. In fact, the rever the position.

There are two principal reasons why people do not commit crimes. First, they believe it to be wrong to do so. The commission of a crime would offend their consciences. There are many who would feel a sense of guilt if they committed a crime. Secondly, there is a less powerful barrier against crime. It is the belief that the individual is likely to be caught and punished, even if he does not believe that he is doing something that is morally wrong. After a while, if the law is reinforced, the fact that a person is likely to be caught and punished gradually becomes part of his consciousness.

That is true of drunken driving. At one time, there was a general tolerance of drinking and driving, but, gradually, the idea has got through to people—as we saw with the anti-social habit of smoking—that not only does one run the risk of being punished, but it is thoroughly wrong to do such a thing. We have to reinforce the law so that there is a greater chance of people being caught and punished as well as greater social disapprobation at the carrying of knives.

I welcome some of the Government's measures, principally the powers to outlaw weapons that cannot possibly have any legitimate use. A series of lethal weapons — such as death stars, flails and sharpened credit cards — are shown in some magazines. By no stretch of the imagination can those weapons have any use except an unlawful one. The Government propose to list those items in a statutory instrument to make carrying them an absolute offence, without any defence available to the carrier. I understand that the magazines that advertise those items will cease to do so not only because the pressure of the Advertising Standards Authority code will be brought to bear but because it will be a criminal offence to supply or sell them. I welcome the Government's proposal and do not think that there is any dispute about it.

There is a difficulty with some weapons—principally knives, as well as chisels and other instruments—that may be carried for a legitimate reason or an illegitimate reason. The Bill is deficient in defining a weapon that is inherently dangerous as having a blade of more than 3 in. I have seen some deadly weapons—some of which I had exhibited in the House—with blades of less than 3 in. I have seen many more weapons with longer blades. Those knives may not be on the list prescribed by the Home Secretary but they cannot possibly have any useful purpose. Other instruments, such as kitchen knives, may have a use which is unlawful or lawful.

I should like the Bill to include a number of measures. Of course there must be a defence of reasonable excuse, including use of the instrument at work, but the defence as defined in the Bill may let people out. Almost everyone has heard of the tragic stabbing of Police Constable Hammond, who while trying to prevent a robbery in a south London shop was stabbed with a kitchen knife by a young lad who worked as a kitchen assistant. Undoubtedly, that boy had the knife for use at work. People who are accused of having a knife on them often tell me that they work in a kitchen and need the knife at work, that they work as electricians and need the knife to strip cable or that they work in a garage and need the knife to cut upholstery in a vehicle. But that alone as a defence is not sufficient. The important point is whether the knife can be readily used at the time a person is found with it.

A Stanley knife is fairly lethal. If I had one locked in my tool case in the back of my car, that is one thing, but if I have it in my pocket at a dance, that is di ingredient of a person's defence should be tha was not for immediate use—for example, it w part of his work of cutting hedges or pruning t a Stanley knife was kept in a tool case or container, which meant that it could not immediate use, that ought to be a defence. I knife, which has an ambiguous use—it can injure and threaten people as well as for a purpose—is ready for use at the time it is public place, there should be a presumptio subject to any other defence of reasonable use

Such is the widespread use of knives in London that I believe that it is wrong that any s sell any knives or sharp instruments to a perso and most certainly they should not be sold t under 16. We worried for a long time about the and eventually concluded that we would n offence to sell to a person under 16 somethin inherently dangerous. Public disapproval of th of knives will be reinforced and buying knive more serious matter if we as a legislature say be illegal to sell a knife to a person under 18. bought by an adult but not by a child.

We should make it an offence for a shopke the weapon as well as for a young person to b a provision would not occasion any great di those who legitimately want a knife or o instrument for their work or hobby but would a sufficient barrier to the acquisition of knives t society's disapproval of the carrying of those

I should also like to outlaw the selling of kniv shops and magazines when the use of those kniv more likely to be for an illicit than for a legal p a tool shop, Stanley knives, chisels and other sh are on sale in the context of tools and other g to be used for a legitimate purpose. In th department of Peter Jones, Harrods or a store kitchen knives are sold in the context of p glassware and kitchenware and an atmosphere are likely to be used for a legitimate purpose. that a person who wanted to get hold of a sha knife would go to such a store and buy it, but would be sold in a lawful context.

In some shops in south London and other p country lethal knives are on sale in such a conte reason for buying them can only be for the sake knives rather than using them for legitimate purp no justification for encouraging such sales in an crimes involving the use of knives are numero the terms of the Bill, a person who goes into su buys a knife and is caught on the pavement o invariably commit an offence. Such a person cross the shop's threshold to commit an offe wrong that the person on one side of the thre carries a dangerous knife commits an offence, w person on the other side who encourages its sale with impunity. In those circumstances, it is un the knife will be sold for anything other than an purpose.

On the balance of convenience, I should like in co-operation with local authorities, to have to cause such a shopkeeper to discontinue t knives. Even more important, I should like t knives through mail order services to be bann

[Mr. Fraser]

when they are sold as part of a set of tools or are likely to be used for a legitimate purpose. These are the matters that concern my constituents.

I said at the beginning of my speech that the enforcement of the law and the working of a peaceful community depend on co-operation. I can understand the point of using stop-and-search powers when a crime has been committed and a search takes place in the immediate proximity of the place in which the crime has been committed—for instance, in a dance hall or at a football match. In such cases, there is no subjective test; a crime has been committed involving a knife or other weapon, and it is matter of searching within the proximity. But we must be careful about the use of powers of search in circumstances that would merely widen the use of search and perhaps create enmity and distrust in the community.

I am doubtful about the extra powers the Bill would provide, and they must be used with great circumspection if the law is to be respected and if we are to carry the weight of the community behind the new restrictions that—on the whole—we are quite properly introducing.

8 pm

Mr. Timothy Kirkhope (Leeds, North-East): This is the sort of Bill about which many of us have had a lot of correspondence from constituents. It contains so many different clauses that people have suggested that it should also contain other things which are not to be found in it now. However, I shall confine my remarks to the issue of the victims of crime and the parts of the Bill that try to help such victims and their families.

It is important to consider who the victim is. He tends to be generous towards the person who perpetrated the crime. He is often quite undemanding of revenge against the criminal. That means that a greater responsibility is incumbent on society to ensure that whatever is done is done to help the victim; and that a crime does not result in too much deep consideration of assistance to the criminal, but rather in consideration of the victim.

Obviously there are ways in which we can assist. I am heartened to see the growth in many areas of the country of victim support schemes. In the main they have been most helpful and have arisen out of a genuine wish on the part of the community in which the victim lives to be of help in the immediate aftermath of appalling incidents such as violent crimes, and to see that psychological help, for instance, is given to the victim. It is important to establish whether a loss has been sustained and what can be done directly and quickly to assist.

However, although such schemes are successful, we owe it to ourselves to bear in mind the needs of the victim. I am pleased that the Bill has, to a large extent, taken matters further than before—in relation to the criminal injuries compensation scheme, the compensation of victims by the courts and the confiscation of a criminal's assets, which is an important feature of compensating the victims of crime.

It is difficult to know how to strike a happy medium, but although the criminal injuries compensation scheme has been in existence for 23 years, it always had about it a level of discretion which was undesirable. It was felt that its discretion might not be always exercised in favour of a claimant, for one reason or another, which was not always wholly fair. So the absolute right to receive compensation, on production of [illegible] requirements of probability, seems [illegible] as a replacement for that discretion.

Another important new introducti[illegible] now be a direct relationship between [illegible] victim through the work of the compensation scheme. It is vital that, offenders should be responsible compensating their victims. Various [illegible] forward, and victims do not necessar[illegible] person who perpetrated the crime ag[illegible] think, would be wrong; but they can k[illegible] of the crime through the compensatio[illegible] seeing that there is a direct link and t[illegible] committed the crime against them or th[illegible] responsible for the compensation. T[illegible] proposal, which deserves our support.

For many years I have practised [illegible] contact with clients was not usually th[illegible] courts but had largely to do with matte[illegible] I have found that victims are loth t[illegible] compensation. When one examines th[illegible] for compensation orders being made, [illegible] see that in future reasons will have [illegible] compensation order is made in [illegible] Previously the onus was on the victim t[illegible] wrong. Society has an obligation to see [illegible] orders are made without them having [illegible] people who might not wish to do so fo[illegible]

Although the confiscation of assets d[illegible] directly assist a victim, it is very importa[illegible] there is an attitude of mind which says [illegible] criminals—especially professional crim[illegible] able to get away with their crimes. The[illegible] and, because of the increase in police [illegible] they will continue to be caught in even la[illegible] there has always been a feeling that such [illegible] able to serve out their sentences and the[illegible] gold when they come out of prison, livi[illegible] rest of their lives, while the person who [illegible] crime—I suggest that we all lose becau[illegible] —must continue as before. He may no[illegible] well, while the criminals live it up in the [illegible] foreign country.

That is unacceptable, and it was ri[illegible] should be extended to ensure that the con[illegible] on a pre-trial basis, for instance, should [illegible] discretionary matter, and that a stronger[illegible] available to the courts to do that. Tha[illegible] people much more confidence in our ju[illegible] our system of punishment.

I said at the beginning that this was [illegible] have covered many things. Something t[illegible] liked it to cover—I hope that somethi[illegible] will be brought forward at some point[illegible] consideration should be given to provid[illegible] would allow us to prosecute someone w[illegible] suspicion of his having committed war cr[illegible] many such people cannot be dealt with pr[illegible] many victims of such people both in Brita[illegible] who look to us to try to consider, ever[illegible] discussing war crimes, [illegible] way in whic[illegible] people to book, preferably under the E[illegible] justice. For all its faults, our system of just[illegible] to the rest of the world and is much follow[illegible] enhance our reputation for justice.

8.10 pm

Mr. Ieuan Wyn Jones (Ynys Môn): I have listened to many of the speeches and it seems that many hon. Members have had the opportunity to debate an earlier Bill. I may be at some disadvantage in that this is the first time that I have been able to speak on this Bill. Other Members have had one bite of the cherry and have made some progress in amending an earlier measure. I am aware that the Bill has already been in another place, where it was amended. I am hopeful that in the lively debate we might get in Committee further amendments will be made.

An Opposition Member spoke about what he called the philosophy that underlies the Government's view of the Bill. Some provisions commend themselves to me and to my hon. Friends, but its fundamental philosophy is flawed. That is because the Government seem to believe that increased prosecution powers and increased sentencing powers are in themselves a way of arresting crime and preventing people from re-offending. That is a fundamentally flawed philosophy because one must look at other issues.

This debate takes place against the background of a substantially increasing prison population. It is unacceptable that the proportion of people who reoffend is very high, and that, proportionately, the prison population in the United Kingdom is much higher than in any other EC country. It is a sad reflection of our society that six out of 10 male offenders and four out of 10 women offenders leaving gaol are back behind bars within two years. It is a further sad reflection that two thirds of young offenders are reconvicted within two years of release.

I confirm the Opposition claim that the number of people on remand in prison is unacceptably high. The conditions in many of our remand centres are intolerable. I am afraid that the matters addressed by the Government in the Bill do not directly address those issues. We cannot solve crime merely by shifting the balance in favour of the state or by increasing sentences. As I have said, it involves much wider issues, such as looking at the conditions that breed so much despair, violence and crime in the urban areas and the deprived rural areas.

I shall now deal with some specific aspects of the Bill. First, on extradition, the removal of the prima facie rule is a controversial provision. If we are to have a system of justice under which anybody who appears before a Crown court has first appeared before a magistrates court in which the examining magistrate has had to be satisfied that the defendant should answer a charge in the Crown court, then that system should also apply to people who go to other countries to face charges and to citizens of the countries of Britain who face charges elsewhere.

We seem to be adopting double standards and ought to have the same approach to offences that have taken place here as we have to offences that take place elsewhere. Therefore, if in extradition proceedings we ask an examining magistrate merely to be a rubber stamp at the behest of the country seeking extradition, it is a sad day for justice. I should like to see amendments withdrawing that clause, and I hope that the progress made in another place to temper these provisions will be continued in Committee.

I should like to deal with a specific issue on the proposals about evidence, especially the increased reliance on the use of written statements and reports. That could be construed as another example of the interests of the prosecution overriding the interests of the appears before the court. The Law Society i the need for these provisions in these terms may well be irrelevant in the light of secti Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984, whi certain aspects of written evidence.

The Bill introduces the possibility of writte and reports being used in evidence withou maker or author of those statements or repo from experience that much use is currently ma statements and documents in our courts and considerable amount of time. In magistrates committal proceedings are popularly known paper committals because the examining ma consider only paper statements. Even in later trials, unless the defence has made a request to be present, the statement of that witness

I know of many instances in magistrate Crown courts of the increasing use of writte The main criticism of this provision is that in it reduces and limits the right of a defenc solicitor to request the attendance of the statement or report. As some hon. Member many statements and reports can be extremel sial. Therefore, in the final analysis each def have the right to call any witness to gi especially in cases where the defendant is in criminal charge.

Mr. Hind: The hon. Gentleman must be a every case, either in a magistrates court on c in a Crown court on a jury trial, counsel representing the defence has the right, havi papers, to decide to call a witness. There safeguard for the defence and now, as a con legislation, there is disclosure of all papers in a court if that is requested. Perhaps in the light o situation the hon. Gentleman would reconsi has said.

Mr. Jones: I have read with great deliberations that took place on the Bill in an The Government, in pronouncing on the me other place, envisaged the situation where wi not available because they had absconded ab the judge could decide that the statemen admitted without challenge. That is a retrogr should not be allowed.

I accept parts of the provision on particularly those for increasing maximum offences of cruelty to young persons and insider dealings. With many other hon. Memb to the extension of the maximum penalty offences to life imprisonment. I have liste eloquent contributions of hon. Members an learned Members who have experience of cas firearms in the Crown court. It is sensible to there is the same sentence for carrying a fir using it, the person carrying the firearm ma abscond and will face the same sentence whet it or not. The Police Federation has expres about the proposal, on the ground that to same maximum penalty for carrying a firearm it would disregard proportionality betwee another.

I welcome the provisions on compensat particularly the placing of the Crimin

Hospital/specialty	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	198
Coventry and Warwickshire hospital										
Trau and orth	1,413	1,752	2,011	1,928	1,925	2,153	1,733	1,515	1,122	1,08
Oral surgery	157	220	252	247	283	303	245	266	231	25
Total	1,570	1,972	2,263	2,175	2,208	2,456	1,978	1,781	1,353	1,33
Gulson Hospital										
General surgery	35	13	26	117	199	256	0	0	0	
Radiotherapy	26	27	24	25	23	27	16	21	14	2
Total	61	40	50	142	222	283	16	21	14	2
Paybody hospital										
Ophthalmology	598	790	941	810	902	1,163	1,374	1,220	1,153	1,34

Telephone Exchange for the Deaf

Mrs. Golding: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what discussions have taken place between his Department and British Telecom on the telephone exchange for the deaf; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Scott: I refer the hon. Member to my reply to my hon. Friend the Member for Beverley (Mr. Cran) on 12 January at column *243*.

Medical Laboratory Scientific Officers

Ms. Richardson: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what is the percentage of women medical laboratory scientific officers working in the public health laboratory service; and what are the total numbers of women so employed.

Mr. Newton: There were 475 women medical laboratory scientific officers employed in the public health laboratory service at 30 September 1987, representing 50·5 per cent. of all MLSOs in PHLS.

Sexual Harassment

Ms. Richardson: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what is his Department's policy on sexual harassment at work; whether guidance on reporting complaints has been issued to all staff; how many complaints have been reported in the past five years; and what disciplinary action has been taken.

Mrs. Currie: The Civil Service policy on sexual harassment is set out in the programme of action to achieve equal opportunities for women in the Civil Service, which was published by Cabinet Office (then Management and Personnel Office) in 1984. Sexual harassment at work is not tolerated and is dealt with as a disciplinary matter through the usual complaints procedures.

The Department of Health and Social Security has brought this policy, together with guidance on complaints procedures, to the attention of all staff in a departmental circular.

Records are not kept of any complaints which are dealt with by immediate line management but serious complaints are referred to headquarters for appropriate action. There have been six such complaints since 1983 all involving harassment of female staff. The penalties imposed were a local warning as to future conduct (two cases), formal reprimand by headquarters (one case), a reprimand plus promotion bar (one case), a reprimand, promotion bar and incremental reduction (one case) and downgrading and a repromotion bar (one case).

Social Security Tribunals

Mr. Grocott: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services in what percentage of social security tribunal cases in each year from 1980 to 1986 the claimant was represented.

Mr. Portillo: The tables give the information required. Prior to April 1984, appeal statistics on representation were kept only for supplementary benefit appeal tribunals. There are no comparable figures for national insurance local tribunals.

(A) Supplementary Benefit Appeal Tribunals
Great Britain 1980 to 1984

Year	(1) Appeals heard and decided	(2) Number represented	(3) Column 2 as a percentage of column 1
1980	49,355	12,765	25·9
1981	49,864	13,529	27·1
1982	56,084	15,279	21·2
1983	60,567	16,827	27·8
1984[1]	16,871	4,302	25·5

(B) Social Security Appeal Tribunals—all Benefits
Great Britain 1984 to 1986

Year	(1) Appeals heard and decided	(2) Number represented	(3) Column 2 as a percentage of column 1
1984[2]	74,542	16,770	22·5
1985	114,550	25,728	22·5
1986	125,838	27,282	21·7

[1] First quarter only
[2] Nine month period: April to December 1984

Royal National Orthopaedic Hospital

Mr. Fearn: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will make it his policy that appropriate capital and revenue funding needed for the development of the Royal National orthopaedic hospital at Stanmore will be forthcoming in the near future; and when a decision will be announced.

Mrs. Currie: Bloomsbury health authority, which manages the Royal National orthopaedic hospital, is responsible for setting the hospital's budget. The health authority has consulted publicly on an appraisal of options for the future role and location of the hospital; the results are now with the North East Thames regional

health authority for its consideration. Ministers are committed to taking the final decision on any proposals from the region for significant changes at the hospital.

St. John Ambulance Brigade

Mr. Stern: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if his Department has considered an application for an exhibition relating to the St. John Ambulance Brigade centenary to be displayed in the Upper Waiting Hall.

Mrs. Currie: I understand that, under procedures agreed by the Services Committee, arrangements have been made with the authorities of the House for the exhibition to be held in the Upper Waiting Hall from 15 February 1988 to 19 February 1988.

Nurses and Midwives

Mrs. Ann Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) if he will specify the methods used by his Department to determine the number of staff midwives in post in the National Health Service;

(2) if he will specify the methods used by his Department to distinguish between staff nurses and midwives when collecting manpower statistics relating to employment in maternity units.

Mr. Newton: Computer tapes are received from regional payroll systems. Those data for staff nurses and staff midwives are then extracted by using the particular payscale and occupation code. The occupation code enables staff nurses and staff midwives employed in maternity units to be separately identified. Information to this level of detail is produced annually as at 30 September.

Medical Research Council

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what response he has given to the request from the Medical Research Council for £700,000; and for what purposes such a sum will be used.

Mr. Newton: I have agreed to the provision of £700,000 for the Medical Research Council's programme of AIDS epidemiology research.

Brook Hospital, Woolwich

Mr. Cartwright: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services when he received the recommendation from the South East Thames regional health authority to transfer the neurosciences unit from the Brook hospital, Woolwich; what consideration he has given to this proposal; and when he plans to visit the hospital.

Mrs. Currie: The recommendation from South East Thames regional health authority to build a new regional neurosciences unit, which will replace the existing provision at the Brook hospital and the Maudsley hospital, was sent to the Department on 22 June 1987. Either my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State, or my right hon. Friend the Minister for Health, will visit both hospitals after departmental officials have received and considered further information and clarification from the regional health authority on a number of important issues. This complex proposal, involving capital expenditure of at least £29 million and which would result in the closure of the neurosciences unit at the Brook hospital, is being given detailed and careful consideration.

District Health Authorities (Land)

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will list the district health authorities which have disposed of land since 1982; who purchased the land; and what is the use to which it has been put.

Mrs. Currie: I regret that information at the level of detail requested is not routinely collected by the Department and to obtain it would be to incur disproportionate expense.

Hospital Beds

Mr. Robin Cook: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what are the numbers of available beds in National Health Service hospitals in England for each year since 1979, expressed as totals and by specialty; and if he will break down the totals by region.

Mrs. Currie: The information requested is contained in the booklets "Forms SH3, EDP4, 5 & 6—Regional and National summaries", copies of which have been placed in the Library.

Mr. Robin Cook: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will list, by district health authority, regional health authority and special health authority, the average daily number of beds available in 1979 and 1986 for all specialties and for acute specialties.

Mrs. Currie: For the information on the total number of beds in each health authority I refer the hon. Member to my reply to the hon. Member for Peckham (Ms. Harman) on 17 December 1987, at columns *699-703*. The information requested on acute beds is given in the table. Between 1979 and 1986 the number of in-patient and day cases treated in the acute sector rose from 4·8 million to 5·9 million, an increase of 24·5 per cent.

Average daily number of available beds, acute sector, 1979 and 1986

Health authority	*1979*	*1986*
Northern RHA	10,509	9,500
Hartlepool	359	348
North Tees	469	431
South Tees	1,418	1,064
East Cumbria	[1]—	522
South Cumbria	[1]—	396
West Cumbria	381	309
Darlington	398	403
Durham	506	443
North West Durham	426	327
South West Durham	296	296
Northumberland	743	661
Gateshead	508	477
Newcastle upon Tyne	2,039	1,977
North Tyneside	436	417
South Tyneside	413	380
Sunderland	1,156	1,051
Yorkshire RHA	11,855	10,782
Hull	1,058	983
East Yorkshire	635	476
Grimsby	471	478
Scunthorpe	448	440
Northallerton	276	241
York	[1]—	704
Scarborough	391	362

Health authority	1979	1986
Harrogate	[1]—	502
Bradford	1,224	1,167
Airedale	513	422
Calderdale	580	501
Huddersfield	592	524
Dewsbury	408	411
Leeds Eastern	[1]—	1,357
Leeds Western	[1]—	1,231
Wakefield	702	570
Pontefract	439	413
Trent RHA	12,197	11,636
North Derbyshire	589	609
South Derbyshire	1,361	1,118
Leicestershire	1,850	1,883
North Lincolnshire	849	740
South Lincolnshire	647	646
Bassetlaw	240	233
Central Nottinghamshire	829	757
Nottingham	1,765	1,673
Barnsley	513	517
Doncaster	[1]—	739
Rotherham	[1]—	551
Sheffield	2,203	2,170
East Anglian RHA	5,276	5,227
Cambridge	[1]—	794
Peterborough	661	624
West Suffolk	[1]—	521
East Suffolk	[1]—	811
Norwich	1,395	1,311
Great Yarmouth	370	508
West Norfolk and Wisbech	438	373
Huntingdon	[1]—	285
North West Thames RHA[2]	11,288	8,602
North Bedfordshire	503	494
South Bedfordshire	468	465
North Hertfordshire	506	454
East Hertfordshire	416	372
North West Hertfordshire	478	469
South West Hertfordshire	471	418
Barnet	1,232	740
Harrow	559	545
Hillingdom	1,233	921
Hounslow and Spelthorne	[1]—	803
Ealing	242	382
Brent	528	434
Paddington and North Kensington	1,082	848
Riverside	2,359	1,257
North East Thames RHA[2]	13,501	11,732
Basildon and Thurrock	671	686
Mid Essex	502	588
North East Essex	924	631
West Essex	684	608
Southend	634	608
Barking, Havering and Brentwood	1,437	1,189
Hampstead	[1]—	701
Bloomsbury	[1]—	1,472
Islington	[1]—	523
City and Hackney	[1]—	1,035
Newham	761	523
Tower Hamlets	[1]—	797
Enfield	679	520
Haringey	878	715
Redbridge	415	423
Waltham Forest	1,001	713
South East Thames RHA[2]	12,083	10,097
Brighton	1,184	1,014
Eastbourne	466	461
Hastings	521	429
South East Kent	549	575
Canterbury and Thanet	990	762
Dartford and Gravesham	661	569
Maidstone	415	361
Medway	570	
Tunbridge Wells	829	
Bexley	392	
Greenwich	1,074	
Bromley	879	
West Lambeth	[1]—	
Camberwell	968	
Lewisham and North Southwark	1,704	1,
South West Thames RHA[2]	8,348	6,
North West Surrey	544	
West Surrey and North East Hampshire	457	
South East Surrey	567	
Mid Surrey	462	
East Surrey	584	
Chichester	414	
Mid Downs	525	
Worthing	495	
Croydon	648	
Kingston and Esher	[1]—	
Richmond, Twickenham and Roehampton	[1]—	
Wandsworth	1,344	
Merton and Sutton	955	
Wessex RHA	7,600	7,
East Dorset	1,118	1,
West Dorset	457	
Portsmouth	1,142	1,
South West Hampshire and Southampton	1,370	1,
Winchester	413	
Basingstoke	488	
Salisbury	463	
Swindon	583	
West Wiltshire and Bath	1,255	1,
Isle of Wight	311	
Oxford RHA	5,976	5,
East Berkshire	949	
West Berkshire	1,029	
Aylesbury	[1]—	
Wycombe	475	
Milton Keynes	[1]—	
Kettering	469	
Northampton	777	
Oxfordshire	1,650	1,
South Western RHA	8,872	8,
Bristol and Weston	1,240	1,
Frenchay	567	
Southmead	779	
Cornwall and Isles of Scilly	773	
Exeter	[1]—	
North Devon	327	
Plymouth	1,040	1,
Torbay	[1]—	
Cheltenham	[1]—	
Gloucester	[1]—	
Somerset	1,016	1,
West Midlands RHA	14,491	13,
Bromsgrove and Redditch	529	
Herefordshire	493	
Kidderminster and District	211	
Worcester and District	581	
Shropshire	1,228	1,
Mid Staffordshire	401	
North Staffordshire	1,182	1,
South East Staffordshire	394	
Rugby	208	
North Warwickshire	[1]—	
South Warwickshire	[1]—	
Central Birmingham	[1]—	1,
East Birmingham	770	
North Birmingham	496	
South Birmingham	[1]—	
West Birmingham	[1]—	
Coventry	1,018	

Health authority	1979	1986
Dudley	847	831
Sandwell	484	523
Solihull	[1]—	269
Walsall	507	482
Wolverhampton	899	780
Mersey RHA	8,722	6,991
Chester	549	494
Crewe	[1]—	520
Halton	60	147
Macclesfield	[1]—	348
Warrington	481	484
Liverpool	2,483	1,939
St. Helens and Knowsley	[1]—	660
Southport and Formby	419	343
South Sefton	1,230	1,047
Wirral	1,815	1,008
North Western RHA	13,467	12,219
Lancaster	447	417
Blackpool, Wyre and Fylde	858	849
Preston	[1]—	788
Blackburn, Hyndburn and Ribble Vly	740	766
Burnley, Pendle and Rossendale	724	657
West Lancashire	604	493
Chorley and South Ribble	[1]—	62
Bolton	681	579
Bury	396	404
North Manchester	1,219	947
Central Manchester	935	859
South Manchester	1,545	1,380
Oldham	510	440
Rochdale	551	430
Salford	983	915
Stockport	868	788
Tameside and Glossop	419	449
Trafford	477	353
Wigan	641	643
Special Health Authorities[2]	2,861	2,254
The Hospital for Sick Children	512	394
National Hospitals for Nervous Diseases	357	329
Moorfields Eye Hospital	208	152
Bethlehem Royal and Maudsley Hospitals	58	55
National Heart and Chest Hosptials	603	423
The Royal Marsden Hospital	361	354
Hammersmith and Queen Charlotte's	[1]—	547

[1] Comparable figures for 1979 not readily available due to NHS restructuring in 1982.
[2] Figures for 1979 no comparable with those given for 1986 because of NHS restructuring in 1982.

Private Patients

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will give, for each regional health authority, district health authority, and special health authority, and for England as a whole, the number of attendances in 1983 and 1986 by *(a)* private out-patients, *(b)* private day cases and *(c)* private regular day patients.

Mrs. Currie: I shall let the hon. Member have such information as is available centrally without incurring disproportionate costs as soon as possible.

Heating Benefit

Mr. Ieuan Wyn Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) what measures his Department is taking to assist those tenants on estates designated by his Department as exceptionally expensive to heat who will lose heating benefit under the Social Security Act 1986;

(2) how many households will lose the help which they presently receive through the social security system towards their heating bills with the implementation of the Social Security Act 1986.

Mr. Portillo: In general transitional protection will be paid to existing supplementary benefit recipients, where overall benefit entitlement under income support would otherwise decrease. This will ensure that they will not lose the cash value of the help they currently receive towards heating costs.

Benefits

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what proportion of people living in *(a)* the United Kingdom, *(b)* Wales, *(c)* Scotland, *(d)* England and *(e)* each of the standard English regions is dependant upon supplementary benefit; and what are the corresponding figures for each year since 1979.

Mr. Portillo: The available information is as follows:

Proportion of Total Population Dependent on Supplementary Benefit (per cent.).

Year	United Kingdom	England	Scotland	Wales
1979	8·14	7·82	8·66	9·51
1980	9·06	8·75	9·27	10·30
1981	11·37	10·99	11·74	13·14
1982	13·12	12·69	13·64	15·18
1983	13·45	12·99	13·84	15·58
1984	14·30	13·81	15·00	16·84
1986	15·28	14·73	16·24	17·65

Information on the numbers of people dependent on supplementary benefit is not available by standard English region.

Mr. Ieuan Wyn Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services whether he has any plans to raise the £3,000 capital threshold used to determine supplementary and other benefits; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Portillo: The capital cut-off will be doubled to £6,000 when income support replaces supplementary benefit in April. An income of £1 for each band of £250 capital held between £3,000 and £6,000 will be assumed. The same rule will apply in family credit, which will replace family income supplement, and housing benefit.

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services how many people are claiming supplementary benefit in *(a)* the United Kingdom, *(b)* Wales, *(c)* Scotland, *(d)* England and *(e)* each of the standard English regions; what are the corresponding figures for each year since 1979; and what was the actual and percentage increase between the latest figures and the corresponding figures for 1979.

Mr. Portillo: The available information is as follows:

Numbers of people claiming supplementary benefit (000's)

	United Kingdom	England	Scotland	Wales
1979	2,970	2,400	286	172
1980	3,247	2,627	304	186
1981	3,873	3,131	371	221
1982	4,431	3,590	423	253
1983	4,524	3,649	440	260

	United Kingdom	*England*	*Scotland*	*Wales*
1984	4,790	3,866	468	275
1986	5,122	4,141	506	291
Actual increase (since 1979)	2,152	1,741	220	119
Per cent. increase	72·46	72·54	76·92	69·19

Information on the numbers of people dependent on supplementary benefit is not available by standard English region.

Medical Laboratory Scientific Officers

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will make a statement on his proposals to improve the conditions of medical laboratory scientific officers.

Mr. Newton: The pay and conditions of medical laboratory scientific officers are matters for the professional and technical staffs B Whitley council. I understand that the management side of that council has been preparing proposals for a comprehensive grade restructuring which are to be put to the staff side as early as possible.

Transplants

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will establish a register of all transplants carried out, and all transplant organs used, as suggested by Sir Roy Calne FRS; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Currie: The establishment of such a register is under active consideration in conjunction with the British Transplantation Society, but a final decision has not yet been reached.

Medicines (Exemption from Licensing)

Mrs. Peacock: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what is the average length of time taken in each of the last three years by his Department to process applications under article 3 of the Medicines (Exemption from Licences) (Manufacturer and Assembly Temporary Provisions) Order 1972; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Newton: I refer my hon. Friend to my reply to her on 18 December 1987 at column *905*.

Mentally Handicapped Persons (Written Question)

Mr. Cryer: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services why the hon. Member for Bradford, South has not yet received a substantive reply to his question tabled for priority written answer on 1 December 1987 concerning care for the mentally handicapped; when he may expect to receive a reply; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Currie: I apologise to the hon. Member that he has not yet received a substantive reply. It has been necessary to make inquiries to bring up to date the information held centrally. I hope to be able to let him have a reply soon.

Merseyside (Funds Allocation)

Mr. Bermingham: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what is the sum to be allocated to the Merseyside regional area out of the £100 additional funds made available in the financ 1987-88; and how much of that sum is to be allo the St. Helens and Knowsley district health auth

Mrs. Currie: Total additional funding for the Kingdom announced on 16 December 1987 by r hon. Friend the Minister for Health, is over £100 of which £13·3 million is to offset the costs of the caused by the severe storms on 16 October and affects health authorities in London and the south- the remainder, £75 million is for English health au and includes £10 million in further recognition particular pressures from the steadily rising nu AIDS cases which three of the Thames regions ar this year.

The Mersey regional health authority's shar additional funds is £3·4 million. It is for the re determine how these extra resources are spent loc the hon. Member may care to contact the chairman for information on how the money is bei

Medically Qualified Staff

Mr. Matthew Taylor: To ask the Secretary of S Social Services if he has any data regarding the tir by medically qualified staff who work in the con to arrange transport to and from hospital fo patients; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Currie: I regret that the information requ not available. It is the responsibility of health au locally to make arrangements for transporting to those patients who are considered by a clinician to the facilities of the NHS ambulance service. The as day-to-day operational arrangements are also f decision.

Nurses, Midwives and Health Visitors

Mr. Campbell-Savours: To ask the Secretary for Social Services (1) whether he will seek to ref Nurses, Midwives and Health Visitors Act 1979 two appropriate representatives from the pr professions who are not members of the United K Central Council for Nursing, Midwifery and Visiting may serve on the professional conduct co in order to increase flexibility and reduce dela hearings;

(2) how many cases are currently awaiting a he the professional conduct committee of the Kingdom Central Council for Nursing, Midwif Health Visiting; and what is the current average time for such hearings;

(3) what are the reasons for the delays in hearin professional conduct committee of the United K Central Council for Nursing, Midwifery and Visiting; and what action is being considered reduce the meeting times and the backlog of case

Mr. Newton: Responsibility for hearings professional conduct committee of the United K Central Council for Nursing, Midwifery and Visiting rests with the UKCC. I understand fr UKCC that when it was created in 1983 it inherite 100 cases awaiting hearing, and that this figure h risen to approximately 150. The current average time from arrival with the committee is about 12

This build-up of cases of alleged professional misconduct is thought to be largely the result of increased public awareness accompanied by an increased understanding of professional accountability following the issue by the UKCC of a code of professional practice.

The UKCC is very concerned about these delays and is at present considering what arrangements can be introduced to reduce the backlog and facilitate a speedier clearance of these cases in the future.

We would be happy to consider any request from the council for a change to primary legislation to enable non-council members to serve on the professional conduct committee, but can give no assurances at this stage as to when time might be found in the legislative timetable.

Abortion

Ms. Richardson: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what information he has as to in which year the following countries introduced laws to make abortion legal, either on request or in certain circumstances *(a)* the Federal Republic of Germany, *(b)* the United States of America, *(c)* France, *(d)* Spain, *(e)* Italy and *(f)* Portugal.

Mr. Newton: I understand that the information requested is as follows:

(a) Federal Republic of Germany—1974 and 1976;
(b) United States of America—there is no federal legislation on abortion but in 1973 a ruling established the constitutional right to an abortion in certain circumstances. Individual States enact a wide range of laws;
(c) France—1975 and 1979;
(d) Spain—1975;
(e) Italy—1978 and 1981;
(f) Portugal—1984

Adopted Children

Ms. Richardson: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services when he expects to publish statistics on characteristics of adopted children as proposed in his second report to Parliament on the Children Act 1975, HC 20,1984-85.

Mrs. Currie: As reported in "OPCS Monitor" issued on 11 August 1987, difficulties have been experienced with the statistical returns giving detailed information on all aspects of adoption, including the characteristics of adopted children. Insufficient numbers of completed returns have been received to yield reliable statistical information. The results of an inquiry are being analysed to see what corrective measures should be introduced. In the meantime, information on adoption continues to be available in "OPCS Monitor" (series reference FM3), copies of which are available in the Library.

Thames Health Regions

Ms. Ruddock: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will express the sums of money allocated to the four Thames health regions from the £100 million extra moneys allocated to meet 1987-88 shortfall announced on 16 December 1987, excluding the moneys allocated *(a)* for AIDS, *(b)* for storm damage, *(c)* for the reduction of waiting lists and *(d)* any other specially allocated moneys.

Mr. Newton: The information requested is as follows:

	£ m
North West Thames	
North East Thames	
South East Thames	
South West Thames	

Redundant Shipyard Workers

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Secretary of State Social Services when he will reply to the letter writte him by the hon. Member for Birkenhead on 29 Oct 1987 on arrears of benefit for redundant shipyard work

Mr. Portillo: I have written today.

Neighbourhood Nursing Schemes

Mr. O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for So Services what are the guidelines given to district he authorities which introduce neighbourhood nur schemes; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Newton: Guidance to health authorities on organisation of community nursing services, including introduction of neighbourhood nursing schemes, issued last November in health circular HC(87)29.

Mr. O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for So Services what financial assistance is given by Department to district health authorities which introd neighbourhood nursing schemes; and if he will mak statement.

Mr. Newton: Regional health authorities are resp sible for allocating resources to district health authori It is for individual authorities to fund service deve ments from within the resources available to them.

Health Authorities (Expenditure)

Mr. Matthew Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State Social Services' pursuant to his reply of 11 Janu regarding the number of representations received by Department regarding the overspend of health authori and health cutbacks prior to his announcement of e funding on 16 December 1987, *Official Report*, colu 169, if he will provide whatever more specific informat is available to him.

Mr. Newton: As I said in my earlier reply considerable number of representations of one kind another have been received. It would take substantial t and effort to collate and classify these, which I do think would be a justifiable use of public resources.

Disabled Child Premium

Mr. Gareth Wardell: To ask the Secretary of State Social Services if he has any plans to include child under the age of two years as eligible for the disab child's premium; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Scott: The disabled child premium will be paya in respect of a child or young person who is blind or v is in receipt of attendance allowance or mobi allowance. The qualifying conditions for the premiu paid in respect of ill health or disabilities will be kept un review.

Social Fund

Mr. Peter Griffiths: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services when he will introduce the regulations needed for the operation of the social fund in April.

Mr. Portillo: I have laid the following before Parliament today:

(i) The Social Fund (Application for Review) Regulations 1988;
(ii) The Social Fund (Recovery by Deductions from Benefits) Regulations 1988;
(iii) The Social Fund Maternity and Funeral Expenses (General) Amendment Regulations 1988.

Low-income Households

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services when he now expects to publish the data on low-income households for 1985.

Mr. Scott: We hope to receive the report of the current technical review shortly. Decisions on the content and timing of the next edition will be taken in the light of its recommendations.

Community Care (Review)

Mr. Andrew Bowden: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he is yet in a position to say when he expects Sir Roy Griffiths to complete his review of community care, and if a report of his findings will be published.

Mr. Tom Clarke: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services, pursuant to his answer on 12 January, *Official Report*, column *138*, when he no receive the report from Sir Roy Griffiths o care; and when he expects it to be published

Mr. Newton: I understand that Sir R complete his review shortly. Issues arisi including publication, will then be considere

Deaf Persons

Miss Nicholson: To ask the Secretary of St Services when his Department intends to ma about funding the postqualification course i with deaf people proposed by the Open Univ National Training Group consortium organisations.

Mr. Scott: This application is under acti tion and a decision will be taken as soon as

Nurses

Mr. Gordon Brown: To ask the Secretary Social Services if he will give the numbers c the total pay at current and at 1987 pric employed directly by the National Health Se time, *(b)* part-time and *(c)* in total in (i) hos other National Health Service services for ea 1979.

Mr. Newton *[holding answer 14 Decembe* information requested about the numbers given in Table 1:

Table 1: NHS nursing and midwifery staff (excluding agency staff) at 30 September—England Whole time equiva

	Hospital			*Other services*[2]		
Year	*Total*	*Whole time*	*Part time*	*Total*	*Whole time*	*Part time*
1979	315,300	230,000	85,200	39,100	31,200	7,900
1980	326,000	237,600	88,400	39,900	31,600	8,300
1981	344,000	254,600	89,400	44,000	34,400	9,600
1982	348,900	260,700	88,200	45,100	35,200	10,000
1983	348,100	260,900	87,200	46,600	36,200	10,400
1984	346,800	260,500	86,300	46,900	36,100	10,800
1985	348,600	261,700	86,900	48,500	36,900	11,600
1986	349,600	261,500	88,100	47,700	36,100	11,600

[1] Figures are independently rounded to the nearest one hundred (100) whole time equivalents.
[2] Other services are Primary Health Care (community), centrally based services and Administration.

The total pay of these staff derived from the annual accounts of health authorities in England since 1979 and at 1986-87 prices is given in Table 2:

Table 2: National Health Service staff salaries and wages: Nursing and midwifery staff[1]

Year	*Per annual account £ million*	*At 1986-87 prices £ million*
1978-79	1,354	2,634
1979-80	1,649	2,745
1980-81	2,294	3,221
1981-82	2,511	3,211
1982-83	2,713	3,236
1983-84	2,828	3,225
1984-85	3,034	3,314
1985-86	3,210	3,307
1986-87	3,495	[2]3,495

[1] Expenditure on non-NHS (agency, etc.) nursing staff is excluded.
[2] The figures for the earlier years have been expre prices by the use of the Gross Domestic Product def

Separate information for full time and pa is not available centrally.

Family Practitioner Service

Ms. Harman: To ask the Secretary of Sta Services what is the planned family practit expenditure, net of charges, for the years 1990-91.

Mr. Newton *[holding answer 18 Decer* Government expenditure on the family services, including administration, in Englan at £4,178 million, £4,490 million and £4,84 1988-89, 1989-90 and 1990-91 respectively.

are net of charges and, for 1988-89 only, allow for assumed receipts from a reconstitution of the General Practice Finance Corporation.

Social Security Reform

Mr. Hood: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what specific measures Her Majesty's Government are taking to make sure that existing disabled claimants are protected against any reduction in their benefits after the changes in social security benefits of April in the current year.

Mr. Scott *[holding answer 14 January 1988]:* At the point of change, existing disabled claimants will receive protection in real terms for high domestic assistance additions paid under the existing scheme and protection in cash terms for all other shortfalls arising from changes in the rules. All real terms protection will be subject to an eight weeks linking rule if entitlement to income support is broken, as will most protection in cash terms of £10 or more. The rules governing the reduction of this protection are provided for in regulations 12 to 15 of the Income Support (Transitional) Regulations 1987.

District Health Authorities (North-West)

Mrs. Ann Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what has been the total per capita expenditure by the National Health Service in each district health authority in the north-west region upon *(a)* in-patients, *(b)* out-patients and *(c)* the total population, in each of the last three years for which figures are available.

Mrs. Currie *[holding answer 30 November 1987]:* Per capita figures based on total populations of the district health authorities in the north-western region are shown in the table. For information on average treatment costs of in-patients and out-patients by type of hospital within the region, I refer my hon. Friend to the Department's annual publication "Health Services Costing Returns" (the latest being for 1985-86)—copies of which are held in the Library.

Hospital and Community Health Services total per capita expenditure

District Health Authority	*1984-85* £	*1985-86* £	*1986-87* £
Lancaster	327	334	346
Blackpool, Wyre and Fylde	159	175	184
Preston	544	565	561
Blackburn, Hyndburn and Ribble Valley	197	213	217
Burnley, Pendle and Rossendale	215	241	245
West Lancashire	207	213	225
Chorley and South Ribble	70	71	77
Bolton	159	159	175
Bury	141	151	165
North Manchester	372	396	414
Central Manchester	480	508	563
South Manchester	454	483	484
Oldham	146	168	195
Rochdale	129	137	141
Salford	321	318	338
Stockport	158	156	168
Tameside and Glossop	134	151	158
Trafford	136	136	138
Wigan	155	151	164

Sources:

(a) Annual accounts of health authorities comprising the North Western Region.

(b) Mid-year estimates of population 1984, 1985 and 19 of Population Censuses and Surveys).

Notes:

1. The expenditure figures used for each district incl revenue and capital expenditure together with sums in r capital schemes within each district recorded in the annual of the North Western Regional Health Authority. Rev capital expenditure incurred by the latter authority for the a whole is excluded.

2. Expenditure on family practitioner services is exclu expenditure is accounted for by family practitioner co (FPCs) and cannot strictly be attributed to particular However, prior to 1 April 1985 many of the health distric associated FPC and their total district health authority ex for 1984-85 included small, not separately identifiable relating to FPCs' administrative expenses.

3. Significant variations in per capita expenditure figures level arise principally because:

(i) people travel across district boundaries for treatment regional resource allocations reflect the pattern provision locally.

(ii) the population figures used make no allowance f resident in one district who receive treatment in anot the differences in morbidity and age/sex structure of populations.

Health Authorities (Additional Resources

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State fo Services (1) how many regional health authoriti been refused additional resources in 1987;

(2) how many regional health authorities ha granted additional resources in 1987;

(3) how many district health authorities ha granted additional resources in 1987;

(4) how many regional health authorities have for additional resources in 1987;

(5) how many district health authorities ha refused additional resources in 1987;

(6) how many district health authorities have for additional resources in 1987.

Mr. Newton *[holding answer 7 December* Allocations to regional health authorities are m accordance with the recommendations of the R Allocation Working Party and not in response Allocations to districts are a matter for Authorities are expected to plan on the understand pay and price increases and the cost of developments must be met from within the resourc available to them, from increased efficiency, an income generated locally. But where major new d would otherwise result in reductions in patient services we have responded with additional fu 1987-88 for example we have made additiona available in year as follows:

Announced on 23 April:	
Review body awards	
Announced on 23 October:	
AIDS	
Announced on 16 December:	
AIDS	
Storm damage	
Other	
Total	

District Health Authorities (Beds)

Mr. Meacher: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what has been the reduction or increase in the number of beds in each district health authority each year since 1979, including whatever data are available for 1987.

Mrs. Currie *[holding answer 9 December 1987]:* The available information for the years 1979 to 1981 is given in the table. For the later years requested I refer the hon. Member to my reply to the hon. Member for Holborn and St. Pancras (Mr. Dobson) on 8 December 1987 at column *138*. Data for 1987 are not yet available. For England as a whole the number of available beds decreased by 12·7 per cent. between 1979 and 1986, whilst the number of in-patient cases treated rose by 18·8 per cent.

Average daily number of available beds in NHS hospitals, England

Regional, District and Special Health Authority	*Average daily number of available beds*		
	1979	*1980*	*1981*
Northern RHA			
Hartlepool	592	614	600
North Tees	956	971	954
South Tees	2,282	2,232	2,122
East Cumbria	[1]—	[1]—	[1]—
South Cumbria	[1]—	[1]—	[1]—
West Cumbria	1,113	1,094	1,045
Darlington	1,310	1,336	1,326
Durham	1,192	1,188	1,181
North West Durham	717	697	685
South West Durham	1,921	1,890	1,847
Northumberland	3,996	3,988	3,870
Gateshead	1,368	1,378	1,357
Newcastle upon Tyne	3,479	3,570	3,567
North Tyneside	719	724	723
South Tyneside	771	762	828
Sunderland	2,426	2,379	2,356
Yorkshire RHA			
Hull	2,145	2,128	2,024
East Yorkshire	2,184	2,113	2,004
Grimsby	797	800	806
Scunthorpe	993	983	962
Northallerton	437	448	448
York	2,985	2,960	2,933
Scarborough	689	701	674
Harrogate	995	927	954
Bradford	2,721	2,719	2,724
Airedale	1,528	1,533	1,501
Calderdale	1,370	1,385	1,344
Huddersfield	2,625	2,389	2,391
Dewsbury	777	778	785
Leeds Western	[1]—	[1]—	[1]—
Leeds Eastern	[1]—	[1]—	[1]—
Wakefield	2,607	2,505	2,473
Pontefract	854	848	873
Trent RHA			
North Derbyshire	1,722	1,674	1,701
South Derbyshire	4,208	4,323	3,913
Leicestershire	5,140	5,221	5,221
North Lincolnshire	2,815	2,749	2,693
South Lincolnshire	1,894	1,868	1,835
Bassetlaw	403	408	412
Central Nottinghamshire	1,997	1,967	1,949
Nottingham	4,198	4,088	4,041
Barnsley	962	1,013	1,014
Doncaster	[1]—	[1]—	[1]—
Rotherham	[1]—	[1]—	[1]—
Sheffield	[1]—	[1]—	[1]—
East Anglian RHA			
Cambridge	[1]—	[1]—	[1]—
Peterborough	1,122	1,120	1,149
West Suffolk	[1]—		
East Suffolk	[1]—		
Norwich	3,928		
Great Yarmouth	852		
West Norfolk and Wisbech	830		
Huntingdon	[1]—		
North West Thames RHA			
North Bedfordshire	1,233		
South Bedfordshire	813		
North Hertfordshire	849		
East Hertfordshire	829		
North West Hertfordshire	3,288		
South West Hertfordshire	2,385		
Barnet	2,841		
Harrow	908		
Hillingdon	1,628		
Hounslow and Spelthorne	[1]—		
Ealing	1,709		
Brent	2,316		
Paddington and North Kensington	1,365		
Riverside[2]	[1]—		
North East Thames RHA			
Basildon and Thurrock	1,893		
Mid Essex	1,282		
North East Essex	3,381		
West Essex	1,256		
Southend	1,937		
Barking, Havering and Brentwood	3,283		
Hampstead	[1]—		
Bloomsbury	[1]—		
Islington	[1]—		
City and Hackney	1,990		
Newham	941		
Tower Hamlets	1,561		
Enfield	1,234		
Haringey	1,236		
Redbridge	1,655		
Waltham Forest	3,311		
South East Thames RHA			
Brighton	1,896		
Eastbourne	1,714		
Hastings	1,064		
South East Kent	1,004		
Canterbury and Thanet	2,926		
Dartford and Gravesham	2,646		
Maidstone	1,741		
Medway	991		
Tunbridge Wells	2,419		
Bexley	1,653		
Greenwich	1,777		
Bromley	2,591		
West Lambeth	[1]—		
Camberwell	1,432		
Lewisham and North Southwark	2,336		
South West Thames RHA			
North West Surrey	2,138		
West Surrey and North East Hants	1,743		
South West Surrey	857		
Mid Surrey	2,901		
East Surrey	2,776		
Chichester	1,255		
Mid Downs	1,576		
Worthing	933		
Croydon	3,192		
Kingston and Esher	[1]—		
Richmond, Twickenham and Roehampton	[1]—		
Wandsworth	2,871		
Merton and Sutton	2,687		
Wessex RHA			

daily number of lable beds 1980	1981
[1]	[1]
[1]	[1]
3,979	3,991
862	875
882	833
[1]	[1]
1,259	1,230
1,649	1,649
851	857
763	772
3,310	3,277
2,308	2,237
2,800	2,771
902	914
1,480	1,528
[1]	[1]
1,713	1,753
2,332	2,263
1,276	1,236
[1]	[1]
1,880	1,922
1,276	1,260
3,244	3,137
1,174	1,187
1,941	1,924
3,238	3,183
[1]	[1]
[1]	[1]
[1]	[1]
1,867	1,743
924	936
1,484	1,605
1,217	1,137
1,122	1,143
1,655	1,650
3,318	3,245
1,851	1,770
1,710	1,702
1,016	974
1,043	1,081
2,838	2,762
2,552	2,478
1,697	1,680
982	972
2,396	2,338
1,667	1,635
1,666	1,623
2,491	2,466
[1]	[1]
1,366	1,332
2,257	2,208
2,041	2,001
1,773	1,712
872	930
2,835	2,592
2,666	2,597
1,244	1,250
1,572	1,625
925	952
3,089	3,006
[1]	[1]
[1]	[1]
2,689	2,543
2,610	2,510

Regional, District and Special Health Authority	Average daily number of available beds 1979	1980	1981
East Dorset	2,126	2,135	2,093
West Dorset	1,704	1,702	1,693
Portsmouth	3,058	3,032	3,037
South West Hampshire and Southampton	3,112	3,106	3,129
Winchester	921	915	910
Basingstoke	1,634	1,623	1,617
Salisbury	999	959	960
Swindon	1,478	1,435	1,382
West Wiltshire and Bath	3,044	3,029	2,974
Isle of Wight	946	909	868
Oxford RHA			
East Berkshire	1,773	1,775	1,759
West Berkshire	2,987	2,820	2,758
Aylesbury	[1]	[1]	[1]
Wycombe	778	737	724
Milton Keynes	[1]	[1]	[1]
Kettering	849	875	896
Northampton	2,116	2,129	2,163
Oxfordshire	3,288	3,246	3,155
South Western RHA			
Bristol and Weston	2,276	2,278	2,254
Frenchay	2,968	2,941	2,894
Southmead	2,175	2,089	2,060
Cornwall and Isles of Scilly	2,670	2,693	2,747
Exeter	3,848	3,792	3,738
North Devon	[1]	[1]	[1]
Plymouth	[1]	[1]	[1]
Torbay	1,021	1,048	1,057
Cheltenham	[1]	[1]	[1]
Gloucester	[1]	[1]	[1]
Somerset	3,478	3,389	3,392
West Midlands RHA			
Herefordshire	1,174	1,151	1,126
Bromsgrove and Redditch	1,227	1,206	1,101
Kidderminster & District	1,313	1,238	1,214
Worcester and District	1,684	1,645	1,619
Shropshire	2,603	2,573	2,578
Mid Staffordshire	1,372	1,399	1,372
North Staffordshire	3,492	3,499	3,504
South East Staffordshire	1,514	1,483	1,482
Rugby	327	327	328
North Warwickshire	[1]	[1]	[1]
South Warwickshire	[1]	[1]	[1]
Central Birmingham	[1]	[1]	[1]
East Birmingham	966	966	988
North Birmingham	1,879	1,753	1,680
South Birmingham	[1]	[1]	[1]
West Birmingham	[1]	[1]	[1]
Coventry	1,871	1,937	1,930
Dudley	1,492	1,476	1,510
Sandwell	747	771	805
Solihull	[1]	[1]	[1]
Walsall	1,762	1,697	1,676
Wolverhampton	1,543	1,503	1,484
Mersey RHA			
Chester	2,031	1,943	1,911
Crewe	[1]	[1]	[1]
Halton	452	438	445
Macclesfield	[1]	[1]	[1]
Warrington	2,991	2,974	2,917
Liverpool	4,024	4,003	3,805
St. Helens and Knowsley	[1]	[1]	[1]
Southport and Formby	1,324	1,275	1,250
South Sefton	1,755	1,709	1,740
Wirral	2,789	2,703	2,622
North Western RHA			
Lancaster	2,645	2,601	2,508
Blackpool, Wyre and Fylde	1,564	1,576	1,664

Regional, District and Special Health Authority	Average daily available 1979	19
Preston	[1]	[1]
Blackburn, Hyndburn and Ribble Valley	2,825	2,7
Burnley, Pendle and Rossendale	2,591	2,5
West Lancashire	886	8
Chorley and South Ribble	[1]	[1]
Bolton	1,361	1,3
Bury	716	7
North Manchester	2,041	2,0
Central Manchester	1,137	1,2
South Manchester	2,408	2,4
Oldham	1,045	1,0
Rochdale	953	9
Salford	3,098	3,0
Stockport	1,677	1,6
Tameside and Glossop	869	9
Trafford	836	8
Wigan	1,479	1,4
Special health Authority		
The Hospital For Sick Children	517	5
National Hospitals for Nervous Diseases	357	3
Moorfields Eye Hospital	208	2
Bethlem Royal and Maudsley Hospitals	472	4
National Heart and Chest Hospitals	603	5
The Royal Marsden Hospital	361	3
Hammersmith and Queen Charlotte's	[1]	[1]

[1] Comparable figures not readily available becaus restructuring on 1 April 1982.

[2] Hammersmith and Fulham DHA and Victoria DH 1985.

Nurses (Unpaid Overtime)

Mr. Wareing: To ask the Secretary of State f Services what estimate he has of how muc overtime working is undertaken by nurses; and make a statement.

Mr. Newton *[holding answer 16 December 19* not possible to estimate how much, if any overtime is undertaken by nurses as inform overtime worked is only collected for pay roll Excess hours payments are normally made to a staff up to and including the pay grade of senio who are required by their employing authority t excess of 37½ hours a week when extra off-d cannot be granted.

Ms. Harman: To ask the Secretary of State f Services (1) if he will *(a)* list the number of staff time equivalents in each main category of staff f general practitioners are entitled to claim reimb for part of their salaries under the ancillary staf *(b)* give the average cost per whole-time equival reimbursement to unrestricted principals in practice for each category of staff and *(c)* breakdown of these figures for each family pr committee;

(2) if he will give the total, and a breakdown family practitioner committee, of the nu unrestricted principals in general practice in Eng Wales as at 1 October 1986.

Mr. Newton *[holding answer 18 Decembe* Information is not available centrally on the separate categories of staff. Otherwise the inform England and Wales at 1 October 1986 is as follo

Family Practitioner Committees	Total all types	Wholetime equivalents: Secretary	Receptionist	Secretary/ Receptionist	Dispenser	Nurse	Any combi
Northern Region							
Cleveland	357	56	183	86	0	23	
Cumbria	339	20	153	76	7	29	
Durham	416	47	128	70	0	51	
Northumberland	239	23	106	47	2	12	
Gateshead	136	7	79	25	0	7	
Newcastle	216	29	121	49	0	17	
North Tyneside	100	1	12	74	0	1	
South Tyneside	89	7	46	21	0	7	
Sunderland	154	6	92	39	0	3	
Yorkshire Region							
Humberside	518	89	230	115	21	27	
North Yorkshire	500	41	219	53	23	52	
Bradford	222	17	97	51	2	10	
Calderdale	120	11	68	19	0	6	
Kirklees	197	12	82	67	0	6	
Leeds	418	39	190	139	3	35	
Wakefield	200	17	96	32	2	12	
Trent Region							
Derbyshire	521	49	195	124	6	45	
Leicestershire	483	81	277	42	11	52	
Lincolnshire	413	22	147	65	10	29	
Nottinghamshire	502	45	189	98	5	35	
Barnsley	137	11	59	41	7	6	
Doncaster	166	13	80	42	0	18	
Rotherham	114	6	69	20	0	6	
Sheffield	288	21	110	43	1	31	
East Anglia Region							
Cambridgeshire	421	38	170	54	23	76	
Norfolk	511	106	128	107	21	70	
Suffolk	464	36	165	46	22	41	
North West Thames Region							
Bedfordshire	383	26	182	53	17	34	
Hertfordshire	691	139	315	146	5	67	
Barnet	178	29	92	43	0	14	
Brent and Harrow	262	21	110	89	0	42	
Ealing, Hammersmith and Hounslow	303	41	136	94	0	31	
Hillingdon	111	5	64	22	0	11	
Kensington, Chelsea and Westminster	230	47	54	69	0	49	
North East Thames Region							
Essex	1,171	79	525	231	31	129	
Barking and Havering	169	4	81	47	0	4	
Camden and Islington	174	29	86	29	0	14	
City and East London	279	19	143	71	0	13	
Enfield and Haringey	250	16	125	59	0	13	
Redbridge and Waltham Forest	263	18	151	53	0	17	
South East Thames Region							
East Sussex	422	114	122	131	4	34	
Kent	971	196	437	188	11	79	
Greenwich and Bexley	207	10	117	25	0	11	
Bromley	186	37	85	43	0	13	
Lambeth, Southwark and Lewisham	399	32	229	78	0	15	
South West Thames Region							
Surrey	639	44	206	112	3	37	
West Sussex	474	47	151	71	7	48	
Croydon	164	14	78	46	0	12	
Kingston and Richmond[1]	199	11	83	24	0	36	
Merton, Sutton and Wandsworth	288	18	148	57	0	21	
Wessex Region							
Dorset	486	48	177	96	8	50	
Hampshire	1,045	74	378	120	14	113	

her	Unrestricted
tion	principals
9	269
53	266
119	289
50	163
18	110
0	155
12	100
8	79
14	142
36	412
112	379
46	236
17	93
30	181
12	377
41	167
103	460
20	435
138	290
130	464
12	111
13	140
14	111
83	272
60	327
79	367
154	327
71	269
18	524
0	175
0	279
0	370
9	117
12	217
176	767
33	183
16	198
32	320
36	255
25	232
17	366
61	774
44	212
9	145
44	407
237	511
149	360
14	166
46	160
44	317
106	333
345	825

Family Practitioner Committees	Total all types	Wholetime equivalents: Secretary	Receptionist	Secretary/ Receptionist	Dispenser	Nurse	Any other combination
Wiltshire	358	47	110	139	6	27	29
Isle of Wight	91	8	29	10	2	13	29
Oxford Region							
Berkshire	513	49	207	43	6	39	170
Buckinghamshire	364	48	185	41	4	41	45
Northamptonshire	361	82	173	27	4	33	41
Oxfordshire	426	51	153	31	10	63	119
South Western Region							
Avon	424	29	132	77	1	36	149
Cornwall and Isles of Scilly	408	30	82	68	10	49	170
Devon	642	96	243	162	13	81	47
Gloucestershire	385	81	163	64	5	42	30
Somerset	316	25	137	38	7	19	91
West Midlands Region							
Hereford and Worcester	434	92	209	62	15	47	7
Shropshire	262	15	87	39	5	35	80
Staffordshire	571	70	257	110	12	74	48
Warwickshire	349	25	103	35	6	38	141
Birmingham	858	93	455	201	0	45	64
Coventry	164	10	86	33	0	19	17
Dudley	145	12	69	33	0	9	22
Sandwell	156	27	82	38	0	6	2
Solihull	146	18	73	26	0	15	13
Walsall	139	8	80	21	0	7	24
Wolverhampton	137	13	78	34	0	6	6
Mersey Region							
Cheshire	580	56	275	118	12	32	87
Liverpool	345	29	202	92	0	5	18
St. Helens and Knowsley	183	6	122	36	0	5	14
Sefton	179	17	94	62	0	6	0
Wirral	198	18	102	47	0	9	21
North Western Region							
Lancashire	618	37	289	188	3	32	69
Bolton	144	20	68	45	0	6	4
Bury	102	6	64	23	0	4	6
Manchester	334	32	158	120	0	7	17
Oldham	75	9	52	11	0	3	0
Rochdale	103	14	53	25	0	3	8
Salford	154	15	91	41	0	6	0
Stockport	175	6	86	45	0	11	27
Tameside	125	4	62	30	0	3	25
Trafford	135	15	49	34	0	2	35
Wigan	157	4	87	35	0	7	24
Wales							
Clwyd	256	16	114	38	2	8	77
Dyfed	227	12	102	49	2	22	39
Gwent	288	10	134	32	3	31	78
Gwynedd	177	8	60	18	2	18	70
Mid Glamorgan	328	12	159	44	2	24	87
Powys	92	15	36	9	1	2	29
South Glamorgan	238	5	148	39	0	9	37
West Glamorgan	251	11	120	58	0	25	36
England and Wales	31,297	3,273	13,693	6,212	399	2,641	5,079
England	29,441	3,184	12,818	5,925	387	2,501	4,626

[1] Estimated.
Note: Totals may not agree because of roundings.

Appeals Procedures (Report)

Mrs. Beckett: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services when he received the report of the central management support inquiry team on procedures for handling appeals; what were its main recommendations; what steps he is taking to implement them; and whether a copy of the report will be placed in the Library.

Mr. Portillo *[holding answer 13 January*
central management support report "Appeal
Local and Central Offices" has been pr
recommendations are being studied and an a
implementation of those which are accepted
up. The report examines detailed procedu
within the Department for the handling of s
studies are internal and technical reviev

procedures and are not normally made available outside the Department. However, I recognise that delays in the processing of appeals and ways whereby they may be reduced are matters of concern to a number of hon. Members and I have therefore arranged for a copy of the report to be placed in the Library.

Written Answers to Questions

Tuesday 19 January 1988

DEFENCE

Hospitals

Mr. Warren: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many beds there are in service hospitals in the United Kingdom; what is the current percentage of their occupancy by patients; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Freeman: I refer my hon. Friend to the answer I gave my hon. Friend the Member for Twickenham (Mr. Jessel) on 13 January 1988, *Official Report*, columns *200-202*.

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many beds there were in service hospitals in 1979 and in the latest year for which information is available.

Mr. Freeman: The information requested for the United Kingdom, which is based on average figures of beds available in 1979 and the current actual figures for beds available on 6 January 1988 is:

Beds available for use in Military hospitals

	1979	*1988*
RNF Haslar	365	228
RNH Plymouth	209	98
BMH Aldershot	229	261
Princess Louise unit Aldershot[1]	64	—
BMH Catterick	170	130
BMH Woolwich	458	427
RAF(H) Ely	142	170
RAF(H) Halton	170	170
RAF(H) Wroughton	280	238
Military wing Belfast[2]	68	58
RAF(H) Nocton Hall[3]	142	—

[1] This unit is now incorporated in the BMH Aldershot facilities.
[2] This unit is attached to Musgrave Park civilian hospital.
[3] This unit is now closed.

Tyneham

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if it is his intention to restore the village of Tyneham to those remaining of its original inhabitants; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Freeman *[holding answer 13 January 1988]:* There are no plans to review the use of Lulworth training area which encompasses Tyneham village.

PRIME MINISTER

Windscale Fire

Mr. McGrady: To ask the Prime Minister if, pursuant to her answer of 11 January, *Official Report*, column 2, she will give the number of papers on the Windscale fire in 1957 withheld under the terms of the Public Records Act.

The Prime Minister: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the reply that I gave to the hon. Member for Copeland (Dr. Cunningham) on 14 January at column *353*.

European Court of Justice

Q42. **Mr. Teddy Taylor:** To ask the Prime Minister if she will pay an official visit to the European Court of Justice.

The Prime Minister: I have at present no plans to do so.

Bilton

Q43. **Mr. Pawsey:** To ask the Prime Minister if she has any plans to make an official visit to Bilton, near Rugby.

The Prime Minister: I have at present no plans to do so.

Efficiency Unit (Progress Reports)

Mr. Tim Smith: To ask the Prime Minister if she will give the title of each progress report that has been made to her by the efficiency unit since its inception; and, in each case, when she received the report and whether it was subsequently published.

The Prime Minister: The efficiency unit reports to me from time to time on a variety of matters. The unit's reports "Consultancy, Inspection and Review Services in Government Departments", which I received in July 1984, and "Making Things Happen: a report on the implementation of government efficiency scrutinies", which I received in May 1985, were published. The unit also keeps me in touch with progress on the central scrutiny programme: topics included are listed annually, most recently in response to a question from my hon. Friend the Member for Stratford-on-Avon (Mr. Howarth) on 6 April 1987 at column *23*.

Engagements

Mr. Atkinson: To ask the Prime Minister to list her official engagements for Tuesday 19 January.

Mr. Harry Greenway: To ask the Prime Minister to list her official engagements for Tuesday 19 January.

Mr. Andrew MacKay: To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 19 January.

Mr. Pike: To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 19 January.

Mr. Stern: To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 19 January.

Mr. Adley: To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 19 January.

The Prime Minister: This morning I had meetings with ministerial colleagues and others. In addition to my duties in the House, I shall be having further meetings later this afternoon. This evening I am speaking at the Britain-Australia Society's bicentennial celebration at the Guildhall.

Inner Cities

Mr. Heddle: To ask the Prime Minister if she will publish in the *Official Report* details of measures which the Government have introduced since May 1979 to deal with urban dereliction and inner city decay; and what further measures the Government propose to introduce to improve the quality of the environment, the opportunity for employment and the encouragement of the private sector to invest in inner urban areas.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: I have been asked to reply because of my responsibility, under the Prime Minister, for the co-ordination of Government action on inner cities and for its presentation.

Since 1979 the Government have developed a range of policies and initiatives to deal with urban dereliction and inner city decay through encouraging development and raising business confidence. The following measures cover initiatives in England; my right hon. Friends the Secretaries of State for Scotland and Wales have also developed a range of programmes and initiatives to encourage urban regeneration.

Urban Development Corporations

Urban development corporations have been set up with powers to acquire, reclaim and service land, bring land and buildings into effective use, promote new development and housing and support community facilities. The London Docklands and Merseyside development corporations have been in operation since 1981. Four more were set up in 1987: Trafford Park, Teesside, Tyne and Wear and the Black Country. The London and Merseyside corporations have helped to create or retain nearly 14,000 jobs.

My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment announced on 7 December 1987 three new urban development corporations — in Bristol, Leeds and Central Manchester, and the extension of the Black Country development corporation to Wolverhampton;

Derelict Land Grant

Derelict land grant encourages the reuse of land which has been so damaged by former industrial or other development that it cannot be used without treatment. In assisted areas and derelict land clearance areas grants for reclamation are paid at 100 per cent to local authorities and at 80 per cent. to private sector owners. Elsewhere the rate is 50 per cent. for all applicants. Priority is given to schemes which will provide land for housing, industry and commerce. Through derelict land grant over 1,000 hectares are reclaimed every year;

Land Registers

Land registers of unused and underused land owned by public authorities are held by the Department of the Environment to help prospective developers to obtain the release of particular sites. The Department has powers to direct public owners to sell land which is registered on the open market. The land registers currently contain some 40,000 hectares; over 20,000 hectares have been removed from the registers since they were introduced in 1981;

Urban Development Grant

The Government introduced urban development grants in late 1982 to encourage the economic and physical regeneration of inner urban areas by attracting private sector investment in projects which would not otherwise take place in these areas. Nearly £130 million in urban development grants have been approved which will lever at least £526 million of private investment;

Urban Regeneration Grant

Urban regeneration grant, introduced under the Housing and Planning Act 1986, promotes the economic and physical regeneration of older urban areas affected by urban change, by enabling the private sector to redevelop large sites and refurbish large groups of buildings. Grant is paid direct to private sector owners and developers;

Estate Action

Estate Action was launched in June 1985 to work with local authorities to develop innovatory solutions to problems arising on their rundown housing estates. They included new ways of running estates such as tenant management co-operatives or trusts, measures to diversify tenure, involving private sector finance and estate-based management initiatives to give tenants greater involvement and control. Over 100 new schemes were launched in 1987/88;

Task Forces

In 1986 the Government launched inner city task forces in inner city areas to encourage local enterprise and initiatives and motivate communities. Sixteen task forces, which are currently the responsibility of the Department of Trade and Industry, are now operating. More than 200 companies are already working with the task forces whose business development funds, aimed at new and small businesses, have so far assisted over 160 businesses;

Enterprise Zones

As an experiment to encourage development by deregulation, 17 enterprise zones have been set up in England since 1981. These help to unlock land for industry and commerce by removing tax burdens and relaxing administrative and planning controls. The zones have led to the development of 700 hectares of land. A total of £90 million has been spent to improve their infrastructure and release their potential;

Local Enterprise Agencies

In co-operation with Business in the Community, the Government support a network of local enterprise agencies, with special emphasis on developing those inner city areas.

Since 1979 the Government have recast the interdepartmental urban programme, which supports some 12,000 inner city projects annually, to give priority to area-based regeneration involving the private sector. They have also strengthened the Government's contribution to local regeneration by the formation, in 1985, of city action teams to bring together the relevant programmes of the Department of Trade and Industry, the Department of Employment and Manpower Services Commission and the Department of the Environment. Other Departments' programmes, for example, Home Office crime prevention and ethnic community initiatives and inner city school-employer and adult training initiatives supported by the Department of Education and Science, have contributed significantly to inner city regeneration.

The Government intend to build on these substantial achievements by taking further steps to involve the private sector in inner city regeneration and widen the choice and opportunities open to inner city residents. The measures proposed in the White Paper "DTI—the department for Enterprise" (Cmnd. 278), laid before the House on 12 January, include significant proposals to encourage enterprise and industry in inner city areas. For example, the new consultancy initiatives will offer higher levels of grant in urban areas to encourage the growth and development of small firms.

ENVIRONMENT

Ettingshall Park Farm Estate

Mr. Turner: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment when the residents of Ettingshall Park Farm estate in Wolverhampton will receive information about the results of the investigation of old limestone workings in the area; and what advice he will give the residents about the long-term stability of their homes and the effect on property values of these investigations.

Mr. David Trippier: The Department recently approved 100 per cent. derelict land grant to enable Wolverhampton metropolitan borough council to undertake further site investigations of the abandoned limestone mines which underlie parts of Ettingshall Park Farm estate. The results will be available this summer. It will be for the borough council to assess them and keep local residents informed. What happens next will depend on the outcome of the site investigations. However, the Department secured an agreement last year that insurance cover and mortgage lending will be available on normal terms for properties in

limestone areas. This should help to protect the confidence of householders concerned. Further details are set out in the DOE news release of 6 April 1987.

Local Authorities (Disposal of Land)

Mr. Pike: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment, pursuant to his answer to the hon. Member for Burnley on 12 January, if he will list in the *Official Report* those authorities directed to dispose of land under section 98 of the Local Government, Planning and Land Act 1980 in the last 12 months.

Mr. Chope: The authorities are:

Barking and Dagenham LB
Barrow-in-Furness BC
Blackburn BC
Burnley BC
Cheshire CC
Doncaster MBC[1]
Kingston upon Hull City Council[2]
Kingston upon Thames LB
Kirklees MBC[1]
Leicestershire CC
Macclesfield BC
Mansfield DC
North Hertfordshire DC
Rotherham MBC
Sheffield City Council
Southwark LB
Sutton LB[1]
York City Council[1]

Notes:
[1] Two directions.
[2] Four directions.

Rating Reform

Mr. David Nicholson: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what sources, other than the electoral register, will be available to those responsible for compiling the register of those liable to pay the community charge.

Mr. Howard: Each community charge registration officer will be able to require other registration officers, his own and other local authorities, and electoral registration officers to supply information from their records. In addition, CCROs will be able to obtain information from a responsible person at each address and from persons subject to the community charge.

Mr. Speller: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if *(a)* service personnel or *(b)* students who use a parental address as a home base and electoral address are to be liable for the community charge.

Mr. Howard *[holding answer 18 January 1988]:* United Kingdom service personnel will generally be liable to pay the personal community charge at their sole or main residence. A minority of service men—those who reside in properties designated in the interests of national security or because the turnover is too rapid to make registration for the personal charge practical — will pay a contribution, similar to that paid by residents of properties designated for the collective community charge, which will be passed on by the Government to the relevant local authority.

Full-time students will be liable to pay 20 per cent. of the personal community charge at their term-time address.

Water (Privatisation)

Mr. Gow: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what proposals he has for the future of the water companies after the water authorities have been privatised.

Mr. Moynihan: The Government intend to bring the statutory water companies under the same system of regulation as the privatised water utilities and to remove current controls over dividends and related restrictions. It is also proposed to give the companies the option of becoming public limited companies. Last year the Department sent the Water Companies' Association two consultation papers on these matters:

(i) Statutory water companies: removal of financial controls
(ii) Statutory water companies: conversion to public limited companies.

Copies of these papers have been placed in the Library of the House.

Nature Reserves

Mr. Gareth Wardell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if it is his policy to direct the Nature Conservancy Council to sell off its holdings in the three national nature reserves at Whitford, Gower Coast and Oxwich.

Mr. Moynihan: I have asked the Nature Conservancy Council to consider whether there is greater scope for national nature reserves to be held in private ownership under conservation safeguards. The council's advice is expected later this year. The council does not own the reserves at Whiteford or Gower Coast, and owns only part of the reserve at Oxwich.

Mr. Gareth Wardell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will publish in the *Official Report* a list of each national nature reserve in *(a)* Wales, *(b)* England and *(c)* Scotland, indicating for each reserve its total area and the proportion (i) owned by private landowners, (ii) owned by the Nature Conservancy Council and (iii) owned by other public bodies.

Mr. Moynihan: Some of this information is available in the NCC's published annual report, though not in this precise form. It will take a little time to produce the full information requested, but I will do this as soon as possible.

Merseyside Residuary Body

Mr. Wareing: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what is the present situation respecting the Merseyside residuary body; how long it is expected to remain in existence; how much it has cost in each year of its existence; what its budget is expected to be in 1988-89; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Chope: The Merseyside residuary body and other residuary bodies are required to use their best endeavours to secure that their work is completed as soon as practicable and in any event within five years of the date of abolition of the Merseyside county council.

The cost of the Merseyside residuary body since its inception in 1985 is shown in its annual statements of accounts for 1985-86 and 1986-87, published on 18 November 1986 and 25 November 1987 respectively.

Copies of these documents are available in the Library of the House. Costs in respect of 1987-88 will not be known until the 1987-88 accounts have been audited and certified. Budget estimates for 1988-89 are matters for the residuary body.

Croxteth Hall Country Park, Liverpool

Mr. Wareing: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will make a statement on progress towards the setting up of the trust to administer Croxteth hall country park, Liverpool.

Mr. Moynihan: I am still considering this matter.

Docklands (London)

Mr. Leighton: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what was the number of unemployed in the three docklands boroughs in July 1981 and at the latest available date; and what is the change as a percentage.

Mr. Cope: I have been asked to reply.

On 10 December 1987 the number of unemployed claimants in the London boroughs of Southwark, Tower Hamlets and Newham were 18,737, 14,243 and 14,405 respectively. Unemployment figures for London boroughs are derived from the ward-based system and are available only from June 1983.

Fuller Peiser

Mr. Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list all consultancies carried out by the London-based agents Fuller Peiser since 1983 on behalf of his Department.

Mr. Chope *[pursuant to his reply, 14 January 1988, c. 358]:* Fuller Peiser was commissioned in September 1985 to schedule and value the assets to be licensed by the Ministry of Defence to the commercial contractors of the royal dockyards at Devonport and Rosyth; that commission was let by the Property Services Agency on behalf of the Ministry of Defence. The commercial contractors began their operations in the dockyards on 1 April 1987 and Fuller Peiser completed its commission in December 1987.

Housing Benefit

Mr. Nicholas Bennett: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what representations he has received on the housing benefit system; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Portillo: I have been asked to reply.

The Secretary of State is required formally to consult only the local authority associations and we have received representations from all six of the associations on the housing benefit reforms. In addition, many comments and suggestions have been received during the process of reform from other organisations and individuals. All of these were considered carefully in the context of finalising the details of the new scheme.

EMPLOYMENT

Manufacturing Industry

Mr. Leighton: To ask the Secretary of State fo Employment what is the present average number of hou overtime a week worked per operative in Britis manufacturing industry, ignoring short-time working.

Mr. Cope: The average number of hours of overtim per operative in manufacturing industries in Great Britai in November 1987 was 3·7, seasonally adjusted.

YTS

Mr. Leighton: To ask the Secretary of State fo Employment how often, on average, a YTS scheme ma expect to be inspected by the Training Standards Advisor Services.

Mr. Cope: There are currently 3,150 organisatio approved by the Manpower Services Commission organise and deliver YTS training programmes. Th Training Standards Advisory Service expects to visit eve approved training organisation at least once within a fiv year period. The comprehensive inspections which th service carries out are additional to the regular monitorin of YTS delivery carried out by MSC area and region office staff.

Work Accidents

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State fo Employment how many reported accidents at work the have been in each year since 1979 in *(a)* Waltham Fores *(b)* London and *(c)* nationally.

Mr. Nicholls: The available information for acciden to employees is as follows:

	Reported accidents to employees at work resulting in:		
	Death	*Major injury*[1]	*Over thr day absen*
(a) in Waltham Forest[3]			
1981	..	15	7
1982	0	15	7
1983	..	11	
1984	1	10	
1985	0	15	
1986[6]	0	5	
1986-87[5]	0	47	3
(b) in London[4]			
1981	..	1,021	33,6
1982	..	1,210	32,2
1983	..	1,168	
1984	..	1,104	
1985	..	1,175	
1986[6]	..	264	
1986-87[5]	19	1,774	13,3
(c) in Great Britain reported to all Enforcing Authorities			
1979	492	..	509,0
1980	440	..	407,0
1981	449	12,312	422,0
1982	469	12,286	377,0
1983	463	12,453	
1984	437	12,494	
1985	399	13,176	
1986[6]	91	3,871	
1986-87[5]	357	19,927	155,7

.. not available.

[1] Major injuries were first defined under the Notification of Accidents and Dangerous Occurences Regulations (NADOR), 1980. Data are therefore not available before 1981. The definition was widened from April 1986 with the introduction of the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurences Regulations (RIDDOR), 1985. Figures for 1986-87 are therefore not comparable with those for earlier years.

[2] For 1979-80, over three day absences leading to claims for industrial injury benefit from DHSS, years starting on 1st Monday in June; for 1981-82 these claims as notified to the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) for calendar years. This source was effectively abolished in 1983. From April 1986 the information is reported to enforcing authorities under RIDDOR. It is not comparable with that for the earlier years and may be subject to under-reporting. Data for 1986-87 exclude over three day injuries reported to Her Majesty's Mines and Quarries Inspectorate, other than those reported to them by British Coal. They also exclude such injuries reported to the Petroleum Engineering Division.

[3] Those injuries reported to the London borough of Waltham Forest (data not available for 1981 and 1983). Non fatal injuries also include those reported to Her Majesty's Factory and Agricultural Inspectorates, and known to have occurred in Waltham Forest.

[4] Those injuries known to have occurred in any of the London boroughs and reported to them or to Her Majesty's Factory and Agricultural Inspectorates. Local Authority figures are based on voluntary returns from the 33 London boroughs. Not all the London boroughs return figures in each year.

[3] and [4] Fatal and major injuries reported to Local Authorities will include a relatively small number of injuries to the self employed. These could not be distinguished from injuries suffered by employees, without disproportionate cost.

[5] Provisional data for the year 1 April to 31 March.

[6] January to March.

[7] Total 192.

Labour Statistics

Mr. Cummings: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how many people have been unemployed for more than one year in the Peterlee and Seaham areas.

Mr. Lee: On 8 October 1987, the numbers of unemployed claimants in the local authority wards[1] which most closely correspond to the Peterlee and Seaham areas, who were unemployed for one year or more were 1,426 and 873 respectively.

[1] *Note*—The wards which cover Peterlee are Shadforth, Acre Rigg, Blackhalls, Dene House, Easington Colliery, Easington Village, Eden Hill, Haswell, Hordern North, Hordern South, Howletch, Passfield, Shotton, South Hetton. The wards which cover Seaham are Dawdon, Deneside, High Colliery, Murton East, Murton West, Park, Seaham, South.

Jobcentres

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what is his policy regarding the provision of jobcentre facilities via other agencies in communities not served by jobcentres; and will he list such agents.

Mr. Lee: My Department's policy is to provide jobcentre facilities for everybody who needs them. In some parts of the country, especially rural areas, a community may be served by a jobcentre which is some distance away. Very often in these circumstances, arrangements have been made to provide a service to the community through initiatives such as local displays of vacancies and information, the use of freefone, mobile jobcentres, and the payment of interview fares for all unemployed people who travel more than three miles to attend an interview at their jobcentre.

The employment service is also seeking to provide jobclub services in such areas through agents normally chosen by competitive tender. Such agents include chambers of commerce, local education authorities and private training providers.

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will list the jobcentres which have closed in Wales in each year since 1979, and those which have moved from their own premises to be administered by other agencies.

Mr. Lee: The following jobcentres have closed in Wales since 1979:

1980
- Abergele[1]
- Burry Port[1]
- Rhos[1]

1982
- Pembroke Dock site office[1]

1983
- Bethesda
- Llandovery
- Swansea (Castle street merged with Swansea, Grove House jobcentre)
- Cardiff (St. Mary street merged with Cardiff, The Friary jobcentre)

1985
- Bridgend industrial estate (merged with Bridgend jobcentre)

[1] Employment office offering service similar to those provided by jobcentres.

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will list those agencies used by the Manpower Services Commission in Wales which offer on behalf of the Manpower Services Commission those services usually available at jobcentres; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Lee: The Manpower Services Commission ceased to have responsibility for jobcentres from 26 October 1987. From that date the employment service of the Department of Employment took control of the operations of the jobcentres as well as the unemployment benefit offices.

There are no agencies used by the employment service or the Manpower Services Commission in Wales which offer the full range of services usually available at jobcentres. There are currently 37 jobclubs in Wales which are operated by agents on a contract basis. Arrangements are being made for a list of these to be forwarded to the hon. Member separately. Jobclubs are also situated in jobcentres and operated by jobcentre staff. The employment service offers a wide range of services, of which jobclub is only one.

ENERGY

Alternative Sources of Energy

Mr. Harry Barnes: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what funding is currently provided towards research into renewable energy; and whether he has plans to increase such levels of funding in the future.

Mr. Michael Spicer: Nearly 250 research, development and demonstration projects on renewable energy valued at

over £60 million are currently in progress. In the financial year 1987-88 the estimated outturn of spend in this area is about £19 million. This includes external contributions from the private and public sectors and the European Commission. In 1988-89 my Department plans to increase its expenditure on renewables R and D by 15 per cent.

Nuclear Fuel

Mr. Harry Barnes: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what criteria he uses in deciding the appropriateness of taking safeguards issues into account in relation to considerations of security and commercial sensitivity over the reprocessing of spent nuclear fuel and the handling of plutonium.

Mr. Michael Spicer: I refer the hon. Member to the reply from my hon. Friend the Member for Eddisbury (Mr. Goodlad) to the then hon. Member for Walthamstow, Mr. Deakins, on 23 July 1985 at column *474*.

CEGB (Privatisation)

Mr. Adley: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy when he next intends to meet the chairman of the Central Electricity Generating Board to discuss privatisation.

Mr. Michael Spicer: My right hon. Friend and I meet Lord Marshall, the chairman of the CEGB, regularly to discuss our proposals for the privatisation of the electricity supply industry.

Coal Industry Dispute

Mr. Skinner: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy whether he will reconsider his decision not to undertake discussions with the chairman of British Coal regarding the reinstatement of the more than 200 miners sacked during the 1984-85 coal strike; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Michael Spicer: No. The dismissal and re-employment of mineworkers is a matter for the management of the British Coal Corporation.

Fast Breeder Reactor Programme

Mr. John M. Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what forward plans exist for a fast breeder reactor programme in the United Kingdom.

Mr. Michael Spicer: The commercial ordering of fast breeder reactors is a matter for the Central Electricity Generating Board. I will ask the chairman to write to my hon. Friend.

British Coal Enterprise

Mr. Cummings: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what loans British Coal Enterprise has given to operators of licensed mines and private opencast site operation in the county of Durham over the last two years; and if he will indicate to whom the assistance was made and the location of the mines and opencast sites.

Mr. Michael Spicer: This is a matter for British Coal Enterprise Ltd., and I am asking the chairman to write to the hon. Member.

Nuclear Power Station (Hinkley Poin

Mr. John D. Taylor: To ask the Secretary of Energy how many objections to the propose power station at Hinkley Point have been rece *(a)* Northern Ireland and *(b)* outside th Kingdom; when he expects the public inquiry station at Hinkley Point to be held; and whether from outside the United Kingdom will be a participate at any public formal hearings into th Point proposal.

Mr. Michael Spicer: The objections to Hinkl received by my Department pursuant to section Electricity Act 1957 inc[illegible]de three from outside t Kingdom, all from the R[illegible]public of Ireland. Non received from Northern [illegible]reland.

Details of the public [illegible]nquiry into the propo announced in due cours[illegible]. Overseas individual have no entitlement to [illegible]pear at the inquiry inspector may decide that [illegible]y should be allowe

British Nuc[illegible]r Technology

Mr. Darling: To ask the Secretary of State f if he was consulted on the formation of the c British Nuclear Technology; and if he will statement.

Mr. Michael Spicer: British Nuclear Fuels plc my Department before the consortium was for

WALES

Sexual Harassment

Ms. Richardson: To ask the Secretary of State what is his Department's policy on sexual hara work; whether guidance on reporting complaint issued to all staff; how many complaints h reported in the past five years; and what di action has been taken.

Mr. Peter Walker: My Department's poli sexual harassment at work is not tolerated an with as a disciplinary matter through the u Service complaints procedures. Guidance on complaints has been issued to my staff. No c have been reported in the past five years.

Employment Statistics

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State how many people are at present employed in industry in Wales; and what are the correspondi for 1978, 1968 and 1958.

Mr. Peter Walker: Available data are Nati Board/British Coal estimates of the average nu colliery books in Wales.

	(thousands)
1958	108
1968	52
1978-1979	29
1986-1987	13

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State how many people are at present employed labourers in each county in Wales; and wha corresponding figures for 1978, 1968 and 1958.

Mr. Peter Walker: Figures for family and hired workers in each county in Wales are shown in the following table. Fully consistent data are not available for each of the years requested.

	Clwyd	Dyfed	Gwent	Gwynedd	Mid Glamorgan	South Glamorgan	West Glamorgan	All Glamorgan	Powys	Wales
1958										
Regular Workers	5,835	10,495	2,765	5,303	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	3,074	5,876	33,348
Seasonal and Casual Workers	764	2,266	612	787	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	659	887	5,975
Total	6,599	12,761	3,377	6,190	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	3,733	6,663	39,323
1968										
Regular Workers	3,167	6,068	1,544	2,522	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	1,658	3,461	18,420
Seasonal and Casual Workers	540	1,971	441	475	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	626	651	4,704
Total	3,707	8,039	1,985	2,997	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	2,284	4,112	23,124
1978										
Regular Family Workers	960	2,277	494	896	219	115	160	494	1,264	6,385
Regular Hired Workers	1,637	2,134	588	957	178	288	161	627	1,101	7,044
Total Regular Workers	2,597	4,411	1,082	1,853	397	403	321	1,121	2,365	13,429
Seasonal and Casual Workers	1,257	3,829	614	1,018	434	285	352	1,071	1,276	9,065
Total	3,854	8,240	1,696	2,871	831	688	673	2,192	3,641	22,494
1986 (Latest Available)										
Regular Family Workers	763	1,966	460	791	171	108	163	442	1,095	5,517
Regular Hired Workers	1,061	1,760	512	773	152	287	124	563	1,030	5,699
Total Regular Workers	1,824	3,726	972	1,564	323	395	287	1,005	2,125	11,216
Seasonal and Casual Workers	1,100	3,301	649	1,093	409	212	391	1,012	1,514	8,669
Total	2,924	7,027	1,621	2,657	732	607	678	2,017	3,639	19,885

Notes:
1. Figures are for June each year and relate to main holdings only. However, from time to time, particularly between 1958 and 1968, the definition of a m holding has changed slightly.
2. Regular workers includes those working full-time and part-time.
3. Figures are not available prior to 1970 showing family and hired workers separately.

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many people are employed in the iron and steel industries in Wales; and what are the corresponding figures for 1978, 1968 and 1958.

Mr. Peter Walker: Figures for 1978 and 1987 are given in the following table. Comparable figures for earlier dates are not available.

Date	British Steel Corporation Manpower	Private Sector Manpower
September 1978	51,840	[1]6,567
September 1987	18,550	2,379

[1] At the end of December. All other figures relate to September.

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many people are employed in transport in Wales at present; and what are the corresponding figures for 1978, 1968 and 1958.

Mr. Peter Walker: The data available are shown in following table. "Transport" has been defined for 1978 minimum list headings 701-707 and 709 in the 19 standard industrial classification (SIC), and for 1984 classes 71-77 in the 1980 SIC (full details of SICs can obtained from CSO publications). An indication of effect of these differences of definition is given by figu from the 1981 census of employment.

	1968 SIC	1980 (thousa
June 1978	42·1	
(September 1981	37·6	
September 1984	—	

Welsh Language

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales when he expects the new working party on the Welsh language to meet for the first time; and when he expects they will be in a position to report.

Mr. Wyn Roberts: The first meeting of the working party will be held on 25 January, and we will report as soon as is practicable.

Acute Services

Mr. Alan Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will now answer the question asked by the right hon. Member for Swansea, West *Official Report*, column 4, 7 December 1987 as to what action has been taken about the requirement that Welsh health authorities save 0·5 per cent. a year on spending on acute services in hospitals; and when.

Mr. Grist: Health authorities in Wales are required to increase significantly the efficiency of all their activities, and not only those in the acute sector. Since 1983 there has been a specific requirement that the proceeds of the first 0·5 per cent. of cash releasing efficiency savings, as a proportion of recurrent revenue budgets, should be reinvested to develop services for elderly people, those with mental handicaps and those suffering from mental illness. £6 million is to be redeployed in 1987-88 as a result of this initiative.

From 1988-89 no minimum level of redeployment of efficiency savings will be stipulated by the Department. However, health authorities will be expected to continue to maintain a high standard of services for these patient groups and the Department will continue to monitor as part of the annual review process the extent to which health authorities have been able to continue a measure of redeployment of efficiency savings.

Welsh Health Promotion Authority

Mr. Raffan: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what allocation of resources is to be made to the Welsh Health Promotion Authority for the financial year 1988-89.

Mr. Grist: Subject to parliamentary approval, we propose to allocate £1·792 million in 1988-89 to the Welsh Health Promotion Authority in support of its existing functions and of its strategy development in the context of annual review. This will represent a further and substantial additional commitment of resources to the WHPA over the £1·198 million allocated in 1987-88.

Written Questions

Mr. John D. Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many of the 21 written questions on the Order Paper for Thursday 14 January for answer by him on that date were answered on that date; if he will distinguish between *(a)* questions for written priority answer and *(b)* questions for ordinary written answer; and if he will further indicate how many questions received (i) holding answers and (ii) substantive answers.

Mr. Peter Walker: Of the 21 written questions tabled for answer on Thursday 14 January, 13 questions were for priority written answer and eight were for ordi answer. Twelve of the priority written questi substantive replies and one a holding reply.

A full answer in relation to the holding re on Monday 18 January.

Welsh Development Agency

Mr. Alan Williams: To ask the Secretary Wales what, at 1988 prices, has been t Government subvention to the Welsh D Agency in each year since its establishment.

Mr. Peter Walker *[holding answer 18 Jan* The mainstream subvention to the Welsh D Agency (WDA) at 1987-88 prices is as follow

	£ million
1976-77	24·0
1977-78	52·5
1978-79	46·7
1979-80	36·3
1980-81	63·4
1981-82	57·6
1982-83	52·9
1983-84	46·0
1984-85	46·7
1985-86	35·7
1986-87	36·7
1987-88 budget	46·4
1988-89 plan	62·0

Special provision of about £120 million wa available to the WDA to tackle the needs of W from the steel closure. The annual additional was as follows:

	Cash
1978-79	15·5
1979-80	27·5
1980-81	22·3
1981-82	33·2
1982-83	13·8
1983-84	5·6

Direct subvention is only part of what the make it possible for the WDA to spend. T budget is enhanced by capital and current rece from the factory rents and sales. It is the con direct subvention and the use of receipts that important figure of how much the Governm for the WDA to spend each year.

The gross mainstream expenditure is as fo

	Cash
1976-77	22·8
1977-78	33·3
1978-79	36·7
1979-80	35·1
1980-81	65·7
1981-82	54·4
1982-83	62·4
1983-84	61·9
1984-85	74·7
1985-86	66·7
1986-87	72·9
1987-88	86·5
1988-89	113·0

AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FOOD

Environmentally Sensitive Areas

Mr. John Garrett: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food whether he has plans to monitor the condition of environmentally sensitive areas; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Donald Thompson: We are in the process of establishing a monitoring programme for environmentally sensitive areas. This will collect and analyse data on landscape, wildlife, historic features, farming practices and socio-economic developments. Our objective will be to assess the scheme's effects of these inter-related items. I hope to publish a first report, as required by section 18(8) of the Agriculture Act 1986, during the course of 1988.

Beef (Intervention Stocks)

Mr. Ieuan Wyn Jones: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what is the present extent of overhang of beef intervention stocks; how this compares with the situation at this time in 1986 and 1987; and what are the prospects for 1988.

Mr. Donald Thompson: A note setting out the volume of intervention stocks in the EC and the United Kingdom on the latest available dates, which includes figures for beef, is deposited in the Library of the House and is updated monthly. Prospects for 1988 will depend on the development of the market, Commission proposals for stock disposal and sales opportunities.

Farm Incomes

Mr. Ieuan Wyn Jones: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what was the percentage change in farm incomes in the United Kingdom for the most recent 12-month period for which information available; and what were the corresponding figures each year since 1979.

Mr. Donald Thompson: The information requested set out in the table:

Percentage changes in United Kingdom farm income 1978-79 to 1985-86

	Percentage
1978 to 1979	−9
1979 to 1980	−9
1980 to 1981	+30
1981 to 1982	+28
1982 to 1983	−19
1983 to 1984	+46
1984 to 1985	−48
1985 to 1986	+31

A White Paper will be published shortly giving data 1987.

Mr. Ieuan Wyn Jones: To ask the Minister Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what was the percent change in farm incomes in the European Community each of the member states for the most recent 12-mo period for which information is available; and what the corresponding figures for each year since 1979.

Mr. Donald Thompson: Comparable estimates of farm income as defined in the annual review of agricul White Paper are not available from all EC member st The table gives net value added at factor cost in agricul (net product): which includes incomes accruing to agricultural workers, whether principals or hi landlords or commercial debt holders.

Percentage changes in net value added at factor cost in EC Member States

	1979 to 1980	1980 to 1981	1981 to 1982	1982 to 1983	1983 to 1984	1984 to 1985	1985 to
Belgium	+6	+12	+10	+15	0	0	
Denmark	+11	+20	+29	−10	+37	−5	
Federal Republic of Germany	−10	+8	+22	−18	+17	−11	
Greece	+30	+24	+28	+6	+32	+18	
France	−4	+7	+32	0	+8	−1	
Ireland	−9	+16	+23	+13	+17	−9	
Italy	+14	+8	+13	+21	+2	+2	
Luxembourg	−6	+13	+47	−10	+3	+1	
Netherlands	+1	+27	+11	+1	+6	−4	
Spain	+9	−5	+20	+14	+19	+4	
United Kingdom	+8	+16	+18	−5	+21	−14	
EC 11[2]	+4	+7	+18	+2	+10	−2	

Source: Eurostat.
[1] Provisional estimates.
[2] Data for Portugal not yet available.

Mr. Ieuan Wyn Jones: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what was the percentage change in farm incomes in England and in each of the standard English regions for the most recent 12-month period for which information is available; and what were the corresponding figures for each year since 1979.

Mr. Donald Thompson: The percentage changes i estimated farm income in England for the period 19 to 1985-86 are as follows:

	Percentage
1979	−1
1980	−4
1981	+22

	Percentage
1982	+25
1983	−17
1984	+41
1985	−43
1986	+28

The percentage changes to the estimates of farm income attributed to each of the eight English regions for the years 1983-85, the only data readily available, are set out in the table:

Percentage changes in farm income of English regions 1982-83 to 1984-85

	1982 to 1983	*1983 to 1984*	*1984 to 1985*
Northern	−10	+41	+47
Yorkshire and Humberside	−21	+78	+45
East Midlands	−11	+100	−49
East Anglia	−25	+100	−46
South East	−32	+40	−34
South West	−14	−55	−13
West Midlands	−12	+27	−66
North West	+2	−22	0

Milk

Mr. Geraint Howells: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food how many dairy farmers in England do not produce milk up to their allocated quota; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Donald Thompson: Levy liability is calculated on the basis of the net excess over quota in the England and Wales Milk Marketing Board area as a whole, and separate figures for England are not available. In the 1986-87 quota year 16,611 dairy farmers in England and Wales produced less than their allocated quota.

At the end of each quota year, unused quota is utilised mainly to offset the supplementary levy liability of over-quota producers, and thereby provides an important element of flexibility within the system.

Horse Markets and Sales

Mr. Harry Greenway: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what steps he is taking to implement the recommendations of the Farm Animal Welfare Council to improve conditions at horse markets and sales; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Donald Thompson *[holding answer 18 January 1988]:* The Government response to the report on the welfare of livestock at markets, announced in October, accepted that legislation should be introduced to cover horse markets and other sales. Proposals for a new order and code of practice will be issued for consultation later this year.

EDUCATION AND SCIENCE

Aberdeen University

7. **Mr. Kennedy:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what representations he has received concerning the funding of Aberdeen university; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Jackson: We have received many representations about the funding of Aberdeen university. The university is in discussion with the University Grants Committee about the careful planning needed for the t funding levels indicated by the committee's resource allocation model introduced in 19

Education Councils (Representa

13. **Mr. Corbyn:** To ask the Secretar Education and Science what steps he will that women are properly represented on National Curriculum Council and the N and Assessment Council.

Mrs. Rumbold: Our first priority must b members people with the relevant k experience so that the councils under informed and independent roles. In doin apply Government policy, which is that w considered equally with men when appointr to public bodies; and we therefore expect members to be women.

Education Reform

15. **Mr. Matthew Taylor:** To ask the Se for Education and Science what recent rep has received concerning the changes in fun education contained in the Education Ref

27. **Mr. Beith:** To ask the Secretary Education and Science what recent represe received concerning the Education Reform higher education.

Mr. Kenneth Baker: We have receive comments on various aspects of the hi provisions.

16. **Mr. Nellist:** To ask the Secretar Education and Science what proposals h that any programme of national assess schools is free from sex bias; and if h statement.

Mrs. Rumbold: The report of the t assessment and testing, published last recommendations on ways of dealing with the proposed assessment arrangements wit curriculum. We have welcomed the broad the report and will be considering recommendations, together with any com on them.

26. **Mr. Fearn:** To ask the Secretar Education and Science what recent represe received concerning the opting-out pro Education Reform Bill.

37. **Mr. Hind:** To ask the Secretary Education and Science what recent represe received on the opting-out proposal in Reform Bill; and if he will make a statem

Mr. Bob Dunn: I refer hon. Members to my right hon. Friend gave to my hon. Frie for Mid-Kent (Mr. Rowe) earlier today.

39. **Mr. Chapman:** To ask the Secreta Education and Science what represent received seeking further detail on the propo subjects in secondary schools in the Edu Bill.

Mrs. Rumbold: The overwhelming majority of the responses we have received were in favour of the fundamental principles of breadth and balance in the school curriculum. These principles were first set out by the Government in the White Paper "Better Schools"; the Education Reform Bill will guarantee them through the requirement for all pupils to study the national curriculum foundation subjects.

46. **Mr. Clelland:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what representations he has received with regard to the proposed national core curriculum and the promotion of equal opportunities for girls and boys in schools and colleges.

Mrs. Rumbold: Several responses to the consultation document on the national curriculum have referred to the promotion of equal opportunities for girls and boys. Many have welcomed our proposals as a means of ensuring that all pupils, regardless of sex, experience the same broad, balanced and relevant curriculum.

53. **Mr. Hardy:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will make it his policy to ensure that schools will be provided with sufficient resources in order to pursue the national curriculum to which he is committed.

Mrs. Rumbold: It will be for local authorities and schools to ensure that their spending is directed towards implementing the national curriculum within planned overall levels of resources. The Government will also assist the development of aspects of the national curriculum through the education support grants and in-service training grants programme.

59. **Mr. Andrew MacKay:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he has received further representations about the Education Reform Bill; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Rumbold: My right hon. Friend welcomes the fact that he continues to receive many representations from organisations and the general public on the proposals in the Bill. To date, the Department has received more than 20,000 responses, all of which, except those from members of the public, are lodged in the Libraries of the House.

64. **Mr. John Greenway:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what further representations he has received on the national curriculum since the Education Reform Bill was published.

Mrs. Rumbold: I refer my hon. Friend to the answer I gave to my hon. Friend the Member for Suffolk, South (Mr. Yeo) earlier today.

65. **Mr. Robert G. Hughes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what representations he has received on the religious education provision of the Education Reform Bill; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Rumbold: My right hon. Friend has received some 50 letters commenting on the position of religious education in the Education Reform Bill. The Government believe strongly that religious education must continue to be taught in our schools in accordance with the relevant provisions of the 1944 Education Act. The Education Reform Bill reinforces these provisions and generally strengthens the position of religious and moral education in the school curriculum.

68. **Sir John Biggs-Davison:** To ask the Secr State for Education and Science what guidelines h issued for the establishment of temporary g bodies for schools to be formed as the r reorganisation.

Mr. Dunn: Annex 1 of circular 7/87, issued Department in August last year, gives guidance provisions of the Education (No. 2) Act 1986 rel the establishment of temporary governing bodies and newly-maintained schools, including new formed as a result of statutory reorganisations.

Mr. Leighton: To ask the Secretary of S Education and Science how the development technical and vocational education initiative cu will be reconciled with the core curriculum.

Mrs. Rumbold: TVEI will operate wit framework of the national curriculum, and the co updating of the TVEI curriculum criteria will take of that framework. Within both TVEI and the curriculum there will be much scope for in curricular planning and development, nation locally, in what is taught and how.

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Secretary of S Education and Science what are his proposals i of schools with units for those with partial heari choose to opt out of the state system under the p in the Education Reform Bill as to how far the required to maintain the level of special provisio

Mr. Dunn: The Education Reform Bill provid school which becomes grant maintained may not a significant change of character as part of the p changing its status. My right hon. Friend woul any proposal to cease existing provision for the hearing as a significant change of charac admissions policies of grant-maintained sch require the Secretary of State's approval and the arrangements for dealing with complaints if pa that these policies are not being complied w school's grant will equate to funding it wo received had it remained within local authority Additional costs incurred in respect of child special needs will therefore be taken into account i the same way as for a similar LEA-maintained

Grant-maintained Schools

17. **Mr. Paddy Ashdown:** To ask the Secretar for Education and Science what recent represent has received concerning the composition of g bodies for grant-maintained schools.

Mr. Dunn: A number of respondents consultation paper on grant-maintained schools ted upon the proposed composition of the governing bodies. We have not received any mo representations.

45. **Ms. Armstrong:** To ask the Secretary of Education and Science whether he will issue gui schools on the requirements of the Sex Discrimin 1975 for admission and selection procedures f maintained schools.

Mr. Dunn: The relevant provisions of Discrimination Act 1975 will be extended to

governing bodies of grant-maintained schools. Schools applying to become grant-maintained will be advised of this and of the requirement to agree their admissions arrangements with the Secretary of State.

Overseas Students

18. **Mr. Teddy Taylor:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science how many overseas students attended British universities on the most recent date for which figures are available; and what was the comparable figure 10 years previously.

Mr. Jackson: In autumn 1986 there were 42,000 overseas students at universities in Great Britain. In 1976 the comparable figure was 35,600.

Teachers (In Loco Parentis)

19. **Mr. Harry Greenway:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what is his policy towards the responsibilities and role of teachers in loco parentis; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Rumbold: My right hon. Friend's policy is to support governing bodies, head teachers and teachers in exercising their responsibility for maintaining discipline in schools.

Universities (Women Entrants)

20. **Mr. Morgan:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science whether he will meet the Committee of Vice Chancellors and Principals to discuss recruitment and promotion prospects for women within British universities.

33. **Mr. Home Robertson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science whether he will consider meeting the Committee of Vice Chancellors and Principals to discuss the problems of women academic staff who are employed on short-term and temporary contracts.

Mr. Jackson: No. Universities are autonomous institutions. Matters relating to the employment of women academic staff are, within the law, entirely for them.

Disabled Students

21. **Mr. Wigley:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science when he last met representatives of disablement organisations to discuss his Department's policy towards disabled school children and students.

Mr. Dunn: On 1 December 1987 my right hon. Friend, and my hon. Friend the Minister for Social Security and the Disabled, met the Prince of Wales and members of His Royal Highness's advisory group on disability to discuss the further and continuing education of people with special needs.

City Technology Colleges

22. **Mr. Pawsey:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science how many local education authorities have now shown interest in the establishment of city technology colleges.

Mrs. Rumbold: Discussions have been held with a number of local education authorities about the establishment of city technology colleges.

58. **Dr. Michael Clark:** To ask the S for Education and Science what recent has received on city technical colleges; a a statement.

Mrs. Rumbold: The Department fr letters or arranges discussions about vari city technology colleges programme. approaches are constructive.

Teachers (Pay)

23. **Miss Mowlam:** To ask the Secr Education and Science if he will publis to the interim advisory body on t conditions; and if he will make a state

28. **Mr. Hinchliffe:** To ask the Secr Education and Science if he will publis to the interim advisory body on t conditions; and if he will make a state

30. **Mr. Eastham:** To ask the Secr Education and Science if he will publis to the interim advisory body on t conditions; and if he will make a state

Mrs. Rumbold: A number of submissi bodies have been made to the interim ad on teachers' pay and conditions. It is fo consider whether to make them more u understand the committee has principal consultees should have the consider each other's submissions.

24. **Mr. Madel:** To ask the Secre Education and Science whether he expe interim report from the Chilver comm teachers' pay, with particular reference by teachers; and if he will make a state

Mrs. Rumbold: The interim adviso school teachers' pay and conditions h submit its advice by 31 March 1988. I h that the committee intends to submit a advance of that date.

50. **Mr. Fisher:** To ask the Secre Education and Science if he has any pla money available for the current yea award; and if he will make a statement

Mrs. Rumbold: My right hon. Frie interim advisory committee to make about teachers' pay in 1988 which do n an additional £300 million in the 1988 and he has no plans to change that ren

67. **Mr. Morley:** To ask the Secre Education and Science if he will now ta teachers' negotiating rights on pay a service; and if he will make a statemen

Mrs. Rumbold: The Government p Paper, "Teachers' Pay and Condition Document" (Cm. 238) last autumn wh establishment of a teachers' negotiat would provide for future negotiations and conditions. Comments on the prop Paper were requested by the end of thi

Kingshurst, Solihull

25. **Mr. Anthony Coombs:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science how many applications for admission have been received by the new city technology college in Kingshurst, Solihull; how many places are available; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Rumbold: More than 700 inquiries were received about the 180 places available in September 1988 at the city technology college, Kingshurst. By the closing date of 21 November 1987, 315 firm applications had been made and offers of places have now been made.

Nursery Education

29. **Mr. Flynn:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will publish the numbers of children receiving nursery school education, expressed as a percentage of the nursery school child population, in *(a)* Gwent, *(b)* Wales and *(c)* Great Britain.

Mr. Dunn: The numbers of full-time and part-time pupils under five in January 1986, the latest year for which comparable figures are available, attending nursery schools in Gwent, Wales and Great Britain expressed as a percentage of the estimated 3 and 4-year-old population are as follows:

	Percentage
Gwent	10·0
Wales	5·6
Great Britain	6·6

Some children aged under five are educated in nursery classes in primary schools. They are not included in the above figures.

43. **Ms. Primarolo:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what proportion of children under five years with working mothers received nursery education provision between 1980-81 and 1986-87; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Dunn: This information is not available.

Mrs. Clwyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science when his Department intends to update its January 1986 statistics on the provision of education for the under-fives.

Mr. Dunn: It is hoped to publish the statistical bulletin on "Pupils Under Five Years in Each Local Education Authority in England—January 1987" in April.

Teachers (Women)

31. **Mr. Frank Cook:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what is the proportion of *(a)* secondary teachers and *(b)* secondary head teachers who are women; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Rumbold: In March 1986, the latest date for which figures are available, 46·5 per cent. of full-time teachers and 16·8 per cent. of full-time head teachers in maintained secondary schools in England and Wales were women.

36. **Mr. Loyden:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what guidelines his Department issues to education authorities to encourage back into teaching those women who have taken a career break; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Rumbold: None. I am giving further con to the use of career breaks to improve the opp for women to return to teaching in consultatio Equal Opportunities Commission, Engineerin and the local authority associations. The teachi will also be consulted.

38. **Mr. Patchett:** To ask the Secretary of Education and Science whether he will give the p of *(a)* primary teachers and *(b)* primary hea who are women.

Mrs. Rumbold: In March 1986, the latest date figures are available, 78·7 per cent. of full-tim and 46·2 per cent. of full-time head teachers in n nursery and primary schools in England and W women.

40. **Mr. Boyes:** To ask the Secretary of Education and Science what proportion o qualified to teach mathematics, physics and c and technology is women; and if he will make a

Mrs. Rumbold: Information from the 19 survey of staffing in maintained secondary England indicated that of the full-time teacher post-A-level qualification in mathematics, ph CDT, the following were women:

	Percentage Women
Mathematics	34
Physics	21
CDT (design based)	8
CDT (craft based)	3

Corresponding information for primary sch currently available. Data from the primary scho survey which was carried out by the Departmen 1987 are expected to be available shortly.

Education Standards

32. **Mrs. Virginia Bottomley:** To ask the S State for Education and Science what further p to raise standards in education.

Mrs. Rumbold: All the Government's p designed to raise standards in education. In par Education Reform Bill contains provisions standards in schools, further and higher educa

Undergraduates (Female)

34. **Mr. Galbraith:** To ask the Secretary o Education and Science what proportion of undergraduates are female: and whether h proposals to seek to increase that proportion.

Mr. Jackson: In 1986-87, the latest year figures are available, about 45 per cent. of students taking first degree courses were w Government encourage all women and men t most of the extensive higher education opportu to them.

Full-time Education

35. **Mr. Battle:** To ask the Secretary of Education and Science what percentage of girls time education after the age of 16 years, by loca authority; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Dunn: The percentage of 16-year-old girls in full-time education at maintained schools and further education establishments in the academic year 1986-87 in each English local education authority was as follows:

Academic year 1986-87
16-year-old girls in full-time education
(percentage of age group)[1]

Local education authority	*per cent.*
Barking	29
Barnet	71
Bexley	49
Brent	67
Bromley	62
Croydon	53
Ealing	62
Enfield	56
Haringey	55
Harrow	81
Havering	45
Hillingdon	48
Hounslow	60
Kingston upon Thames	67
Merton	55
Newham	48
Redbridge	53
Richmond upon Thames	66
Sutton	63
Waltham Forest	47
Inner London	55
Birmingham	46
Coventry	43
Dudley	40
Sandwell	35
Solihull	52
Walsall	40
Wolverhampton	38
Knowsley	37
Liverpool	44
St. Helens	43
Sefton	56
Wirral	50
Bolton	42
Bury	54
Manchester	46
Oldham	33
Rochdale	37
Salford	41
Stockport	48
Tameside	45
Trafford	46
Wigan	47
Barnsley	39
Doncaster	34
Rotherham	44
Sheffield	40
Bradford	38
Calderdale	45
Kirklees	48
Leeds	43
Wakefield	40
Gateshead	34
Newcastle upon Tyne	38
North Tyneside	50
South Tyneside	36
Sunderland	37
Avon	48
Bedfordshire	55
Berkshire	57
Buckinghamshire	58
Cambridge	51
Cheshire	53
Cleveland	45
Cornwall[2]	56
Cumbria	47
Derbyshire	47
Devon	52
Dorset	50
Durham	42
East Sussex	58
Essex	46
Gloucestershire	49
Hampshire	57
Hereford and Worcester	55
Hertfordshire	58
Humberside	38
Isle of Wight	60
Kent	54
Lancashire	46
Leicestershire	49
Lincolnshire	49
Norfolk	48
North Yorkshire	57
Northampton	48
Northumberland	46
Nottinghamshire	41
Oxfordshire	56
Salop	54
Somerset	49
Staffordshire	45
Suffolk	43
Surrey	69
Warwickshire	58
West Sussex	56
Wiltshire	56

[1] The number of 16-year-old girls expressed as a percentage of the total number of 15-year-old girls in maintained secondary schools one year earlier.
[2] Including Isles of Scilly.

42. **Mr. Wareing:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science whether he has any plans to meet the Association of Metropolitan Authorities to discuss the staying-on rate in education at the age of 16 years; and if he will make a statement.

49. **Mr. Lofthouse:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science whether he has any plans to meet the Association of Metropolitan Authorities to discuss the staying-on rate in education at the age of 16 years; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Rumbold: My right hon. Friend has no plans at present to meet the Association of Metropolitan Authorities to discuss the staying-on rate in education at the age of 16 years. But he is always willing to receive representations from the association, whether on that or other issues.

72. **Mr. Andrew Smith:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science whether he has any plans to meet the Association of County Councils to discuss the staying-on rates in education at the age of 16 years; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Rumbold: My right hon. Friend has no plans at present to meet the Association of County Councils to discuss the staying-on rate in education at the age of 16 years. But he is always willing to receive representations from the association, whether on that or other issues.

Children (Special Education Needs)

41. **Mr. Vaz:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he has any plans to increase the level of expenditure on the teaching of children with special educational needs; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Dunn: My right hon. Friend announced last November that the Government would be providing for

local education authorities to spend nearly £13·9 billion on education in 1988-89. Within this figure some £570 million is being provided for special education. We also announced recently an increase in the amount of Government grant available to local education authorities in 1988-89 to support in-service training for teachers and others in the education service. With that support, LEAs propose to spend £9·8 million next year on training to meet the needs of pupils with disabilities of sight and of hearing and severe learning difficulties, and training for "designated" teachers to meet special educational needs in ordinary schools. The comparable figure for 1987-88 is estimated at £7·1 million.

51. **Ms. Gordon:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he has any plans to increase the level of funding for the integration of children with special educational needs into mainstream school classes; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Dunn: My right hon. Friend does not determine the level of funding for children with special educational needs who are integrated into mainstream classes. That is a matter for individual local education authorities. Where the child has a statement, the authority is under a duty to provide for all the identified educational needs of that child. In general, resource allocation is a matter for local priorities.

Schools (Ministerial Visits)

44. **Mr. Barry Jones:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science how many school visits he has made over the last 12 months; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Dunn: During 1987 my right hon. Friend visited some 44 schools, including four independent schools, in 24 local education authorities. He also saw schools in the United States of America and France. My right hon. Friend is grateful to all those who welcomed him to their schools and thus enabled him to broaden his knowledge of their work and circumstances.

Scottish Universities

47. **Mr. McLeish:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science whether he has any plans to meet the University Grants Committee to discuss the future of the Scottish universities; and if he will make a statement.

77. **Dr. Moonie:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science whether he has any plans to meet the University Grants Committee to discuss the future of the Scottish universities; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Jackson: There is no need for such a meeting. The Government fully support the University Grants Committee's more objective approach for allocating recurrent grant. The impact of standard criteria on individual universities has varied depending on their previous funding level and their research record.

Dyslexia

48. **Mr. Amess:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what resources his Department devotes to monitoring the incidence of dyslexia.

Mr. Dunn: The Department does not monitor the incidence of particular learning difficulties. It is for local education authorities to assess the needs of children in their areas who are experiencing learning difficulties and to ensure that provision is available for their educational needs.

Higher Education

52. **Mr. John Marshall:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will make a statement on information available to him on the financial position of students in higher education in *(a)* Britain and *(b)* other European Economic Community countries.

Mr. Jackson: Students in higher education in Great Britain are more dependent on maintenance grants than those in other European Community countries. But a precise comparison of financial circumstances is very difficult because of the variety of forms that student support may take. The student support review group, under my chairmanship, is examining the available evidence.

University Grants Committee

54. **Mr. Salmond:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science when he next expects to meet the chairman of the University Grants Committee; and what subjects he anticipates will be discussed.

60. **Mrs. Margaret Ewing:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science when he next expects to meet the chairman of the University Grants Committee; and what subjects he anticipates will be discussed.

61. **Mr. Andrew Welsh:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science when he next expects to meet the chairman of the University Grants Committee; and what subjects he anticipates will be discussed.

Mr. Jackson: My right hon. Friend meets the chairman of the University Grants Committee frequently in the course of normal business.

School Inspectors

55. **Mr. Jim Marshall:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science how many of Her Majesty's inspectors for schools and colleges are women; and what proportion of the total this represents.

Mrs. Rumbold: As of 1 January 1988 there were 113 women HMIs in post, representing 24 per cent. of the total.

Education Fees

56. **Mr. Turner:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he is yet in a position to make a statement on his plans to introduce the charging of fees for areas of educational provision; and if he will make a statement.

71. **Mr. Flannery:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he is yet in a position to make a statement on his plans to introduce the charging of fees for areas of educational provision; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Rumbold: We are considering the points made in response to the consultation document "Charging for

School Activities" by some 450 organisations and individuals, and will bring forward proposals as soon as possible.

Academic Staff

57. **Mr. Harry Barnes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will take steps to increase the proportion of academic staff in each of the following categories *(a)* women, *(b)* blacks, and *(c)* those from a working class background; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Jackson: The Government are not involved in the recruitment of staff. That is a matter for the employers. Between 1982 and 1986 the number of women academic staff employed full-time in universities, polytechnics and other colleges of higher and further education increased by about 20 per cent., or some 5,000 teachers. The overall proportion of full-time academic staff who were women increased during this period from 19·2 per cent. to 22·3 per cent. Statistics on the ethnic origins and social background of academic staff are not collected centrally.

Teachers (Recruitment)

63. **Mr. Evennett:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science whether he plans to introduce any initiatives to assist teacher recruitment in the Greater London area.

Mrs. Rumbold: Yes. We are planning, in conjunction with the teaching as a career unit (TASC), to mount a special careers fair to attract more people into teaching in London and the south-east, particularly in shortage areas. We are in close touch with the local authority associations and with individual LEAs involved over teacher recruitment problems in Greater London. We and TASC already have an energetic national publicity campaign, involving advertising, conferences and exhibitions to promote the attractions of teaching and to improve recruitment to initial teacher training. Its impact can be measured by the fact that recruitment to initial teacher training courses is up this academic year by 13 per cent.

Private Schools

63. **Mr. Grocott:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what is his latest estimate of the proportion of secondary children in private schools.

Mr. Dunn: The number of pupils in England aged 11 to 15 attending independent schools as a proportion of the pupils in this age group in school in January 1987 was 7·7 per cent.

Adult Education Bursary Scheme

66. **Mr. Win Griffiths:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will amend the adult education bursary scheme on mature students' additional payments to enable mature students who have been unemployed for a considerable period of time to be eligible for this payment.

Mr. Jackson: Bursaries for students resident in England and attending long-term residential colleges are made in accordance with the Education (Mandatory Awards) Regulations. Bursary-holders are therefore eligible for the older students allowance only if they satisfy the relev requirements of those regulations. The regulations reviewed annually, but I cannot yet say whether there be any change in the conditions of eligibility for the o students allowance for the next academic year.

Schoolgirls (O-levels)

69. **Mr. Sedgemore:** To ask the Secretary of State Education and Science what is the percentage of girls v received five or more O-levels, by local educat authority, at the latest date available.

Mr. Dunn: The proportion of girls leaving lo authority maintained schools with five or more hig grades at O-level or CSE are shown in the table.

Girl leavers from maintained schools
percentage achieving five or more higher grades[1]
at GCE O level or CSE
data averaged over the academic years
1983-84, 1984-85 and 1985-86

	Percentage
Barking	9·4
Barnet	42·0
Bexley	26·3
Brent	19·1
Bromley	31·1
Croydon	25·0
Ealing	19·8
Enfield	25·7
Haringey	18·9
Harrow	39·7
Havering	24·6
Hillingdon	27·7
Hounslow	20·2
Kingston-upon-Thames	38·6
Merton	25·0
Newham	12·2
Redbridge	26·1
Richmond-upon-Thames	27·2
Sutton	35·2
Waltham Forest	14·4
ILEA	17·6
Birmingham	19·3
Coventry	21·6
Dudley	23·7
Sandwell	14·9
Solihull	29·4
Walsall	19·0
Wolverhampton	17·6
Knowsley	11·0
Liverpool	19·3
St. Helens	23·1
Sefton	25·2
Wirral	25·0
Bolton	28·6
Bury	27·6
Manchester	18·6
Oldham	19·9
Rochdale	20·2
Salford	17·6
Stockport	25·5
Tameside	25·4
Trafford	34·5
Wigan	26·8
Barnsley	17·0
Doncaster	19·0
Rotherham	19·4
Sheffield	19·8
Bradford	16·8
Calderdale	22·2
Kirklees	26·2
Leeds	23·0
Wakefield	16·2
Gateshead	17·3

	Percentage
Newcastle-upon-Tyne	17·2
North Tyneside	23·1
South Tyneside	21·1
Sunderland	21·5
Avon	25·4
Bedfordshire	27·5
Berkshire	27·8
Buckinghamshire	32·9
Cambridgeshire	27·1
Cheshire	28·1
Cleveland	26·5
Cornwall	26·7
Cumbria	25·0
Derbyshire	23·2
Devon	24·4
Dorset	29·7
Durham	20·2
East Sussex	28·0
Essex	26·5
Gloucestershire	29·3
Hampshire	27·0
Hereford and Worcester	28·8
Hertfordshire	31·8
Humberside	20·8
Isle of Wight	19·3
Kent	28·3
Lancashire	25·8
Leicestershire	23·3
Lincolnshire	25·1
Norfolk	24·1
North Yorkshire	34·2
Northamptonshire	20·6
Northumberland	31·3
Nottinghamshire	19·8
Oxfordshire	28·2
Shropshire	29·6
Somerset	24·1
Staffordshire	24·6
Suffolk	22·4
Surrey	35·3
Warwickshire	27·7
West Sussex	32·9
Wiltshire	24·3
Total England	24·7

[1] Higher grades defined as O-level grades A to C and CSE grade 1.
Source: School leavers Survey—data subject to sampling error.

Teachers (Training)

70. **Mr. Nicholas Bennett:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science whether he will make a statement on the Government's policy on the initial training of teachers.

Mr. Kenneth Baker: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Wales and I recognise the importance of initial teacher training for the quality of teaching in schools. We are therefore concerned to develop a high quality, robust and cost-effective training system.

In 1984, the then Secretaries of State published detailed criteria against which initial teacher training courses would be assessed for approval, and established the Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education to review initial teacher training courses and advise on whether they met the criteria. In carrying out its task, the council is able to take into account reports of Her Majesty's inspectorate which are being made on all the initial teacher training institutions concerned.

I have recently asked the members of the council to continue to serve until the end of 1989. I shall be considering what arrangements should thereafter be made for the approval of initial teacher training courses.

My right hon. Friend and I periodically review the total numbers of students to be admitted to initial teacher training courses, and the distribution of these numbers between the university sector and the polytechnics and colleges sector, between primary and secondary courses and, within secondary courses, between different subjects taking into account inter alia the pattern of the existing teaching force and the forecast requirements of the maintained system. The most recent review covered intakes for the period 1987-89.

Target entry numbers for initial teacher training institutions in England and Wales have already been established for 1988 and 1989. For later years, my right hon. Friend and I propose that intakes for 1990 should be determined for that year alone in order to allow for the conduct of a major planning exercise to cover intakes for the three years 1991 to 1993. This arrangement will allow fuller account to be taken of the teacher requirements of the national curriculum in the light of consultation on the attainment targets and programmes of study for the core and foundation subjects which may be recommended by subject working groups as and when they are established. It will also ensure that the new Polytechnics and Colleges Funding Council and Universities Funding Council, as well as the Wales Advisory Body, will be able to play their appropriate parts.

My right hon. Friend and I plan to bring forward early next year proposals for intakes to initial teacher training for the year 1990 which will then be subject to discussion with those concerned, including teacher training institutions, the funding councils and the Wales Advisory Body as appropriate. We would expect to bring forward proposals for the three-year period 1991 to 1993 as a basis for consultation early in 1990.

Design and Technology (Girls' Schools)

73. **Mr. Madden:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what steps he will take to improve facilities for the study of design and technology in single sex girls' schools.

Mrs. Rumbold: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State announced last November a very large increase in allocations to local education authorities for capital expenditure in maintained colleges and schools—some 24 per cent. over the current year. It will be for local education authorities to decide how they will use these resources having regard to the particular needs of their area, which might include the provision of improved facilities for design and technology in single-sex schools.

School Transport

74. **Mr. Key:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science whether he will change the regulations concerning school transport; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Dunn: My right hon. Friend has no plans at present to amend the existing legislation on school transport.

Special Schools

75. **Mr. Michael McNair-Wilson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science how special schools, currently financed by the Inner London education

authority, will be controlled if the Inner London education authority's responsibilities have been transferred to other authorities.

Mr. Dunn: Under clause 114 of the Education Reform Bill, inner London boroughs applying to become LEAs will be required to demonstrate that they can secure adequate educational provision for all pupils and students in their area, including those with special educational needs. With their applications, boroughs will have to provide a list of the property they consider necessary to carry out this responsibility. This would normally include all the ILEA schools, including special schools, within the area of the borough, plus ILEA establishments elsewhere which provide a major service to residents of the borough. When an order is made transferring educational functions to a borough, the council of that borough will become the local education authority for the purposes of the Education Acts.

Departmental Staff

76. **Mr. Skinner:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what proportion of civil servants at grade 5 level and above in his Department is female.

Mrs. Rumbold: The proportion of women at grade 5 level and above, including Her Majesty's inspectorate, is approximately 13 per cent.

Schools (Opting Out)

Mr. Atkinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science how many representations he has received from local education authorities concerning his proposals for schools to opt out of local education authority control.

Mr. Dunn: My right hon. Friend has received formal responses from 70 local education authorities to his consultation paper on grant-maintained schools.

Maintained Schools

Ms. Armstrong: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science how many surplus places there are in maintained schools in the primary and secondary sectors, in each local education authority.

Mr. Dunn: The Department does not routinely collect information about the number of surplus places in individual local education authorities.

Ms. Armstrong: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will place in the Library the relevant standard number for entry into each maintained school in 1979, and the admissions limit of each maintained school for 1986-87.

Mr. Dunn: The Department does not have a central record of standard numbers or planned admissions limits for individual schools. LEAs and governors have a duty annually to publish planned admissions limits in respect of each school in their literature for parents, and some of this information is available to the Department. I would not consider it sufficiently complete to justify placing in the Library.

Children (Secondary Schools)

Ms. Armstrong: To ask the Secretary of Stat Education and Science how many children did not o their first choice of secondary schools in each of th three years, in each local education authority.

Mr. Dunn: Information is not available in the requested. From informal inquiries made of education authorities in 1983, I understand that a 10,000 parental appeals were heard against a decisio to offer a place at the school of their choice. Si inquiries conducted in 1985 suggested a figure of appeals. These figures did not however differen between appeals in respect of primary and secon school admissions. Nor did they reveal how many pa did not get their first choice for their child, but decide to appeal.

Maintained Catholic Schools

Mr. Pawsey: To ask the Secretary of State Education and Science if he will estimate the full-year to his Department of increasing the grant to mainta Catholic schools to 100 per cent.; and if he will ma statement.

Mr. Dunn: My right hon. friend pays mainten contribution to the governors of voluntary aided special agreement schools in England in respect of expenditure on both repairs to the school buildings capital projects. It is not possible to show separately contribution made to the governors of Roman Cat aided schools. Contributions are not made by my hon. Friend in respect of voluntary controlled scho these are wholly maintained by local education authori

Maintenance contribution at the rate of 85 per cen paid on governors' eligible expenditure. An increase i rate to 100 per cent. for the forthcoming financial would require provision to be increased from £74·1 mi to £87·2 million, a rise of £13·1 million.

Secondary Schools, Cumbria

Mr. Jopling: To ask the Secretary of State Education and Science if he will list all secondary sch in Cumbria, stating how many pupils are currently in school and how many empty places exist in each sch

Mr. Dunn: The local education authority informs that there are 44 maintained secondary schools Cumbria. The numbers on roll as at 1 January 1987, number of empty places and the capacities based on DES work station method were:

School name	*Number on roll as at 1 January 1987*	*Capacity*	*E places 1 Jan*
1 Alston, Samuel King's	114	177	
2 Appleby Grammar	564	540	
3 Aspatria, Beacon Hill	314	451	
4 Barrow, Alfred Barrow	663	972	
5 Barrow, Sixth Form College	485	491	
6 Barrow, Parkview	1,277	1,637	
7 Barrow, St. Bernard's	745	737	
8 Barrow, Thorncliffe	941	1,267	
9 Barrow, Walney	828	1,004	

School name	Number on roll as at 1 January 1987	Capacity	Empty places as at 1 January 1987
10 Brampton, William Howard	920	1,269	349
11 Cleator Moor, Ehenside	536	578	42
12 Carlisle, Harraby	611	1,120	509
13 Carlisle, Morton	1,286	1,467	181
14 Carlisle, Newman	609	657	48
15 Carlisle, St. Aidan's	911	1,243	332
16 Carlisle, Trinity	1,672	1,747	75
17 Cartmel Priory	379	443	64
18 Cockermouth	1,007	1,303	296
19 Coniston, John Ruskin	230	258	28
20 Dalston, Caldew	984	1,101	117
21 Dalston, Dowdales	730	821	91
22 Carlisle, Eden	295	232	−63
23 Egremont, Wyndham	1,131	1,618	487
24 Kirkbie Kendal	1,019	1,051	32
25 Kendal, Queen Katherine	1,167	1,288	121
26 Keswick	797	842	45
27 Kirkby Lonsdale Queen Elizabeth	617	721	104
28 Kirkby Stephen Grammar	408	469	61
29 Longtown, Lochinvar	289	399	110
30 Maryport, Netherhall	1,061	1,332	271
31 Millom	800	1,090	290
32 Milnthorpe, Dallam	598	1,496	898
33 Penrith, Queen Elizabeth Grammar	594	629	35
34 Penrith, Ullswater	1,290	1,364	74
35 Sedbergh, Settlebeck High	203	218	15
36 Silloth, Solway	243	335	92
37 Ulverston Victoria High	1,536	1,613	77
38 Whitehaven	1,778	2,023	245
39 Whitehaven, St. Benedict's	832	917	85
40 Windermere, The Lakes	880	922	42
41 Wigton, Nelson Thomlinson	951	1,080	129
42 Workington, St. Joseph's RC	502	589	87
43 Workington, Southfield	1,201	1,219	18
44 Workington, Stainburn	917	1,128	211
43, 44 (Workington, 6th form)	105	—	−105
Totals	35,020	41,858	6,838

Disruptive Pupils

Mr. Madel: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will list those education authorities in England which provide special schooling for disruptive pupils who have been suspended from their usual school, and those education authorities which provide no alternative to the usual school and instead suspend disruptive pupils.

Mrs. Rumbold: As local education authorities have a variety of ways in which to provide for the educational needs of disruptive pupils, I will write to my right hon. Friend explaining the position.

Primary Schools (Class Sizes)

Mrs. Clwyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will list the number of classes of 31 pupils and over in the maintained primary sector in each education authority for each year since 1979, showing what percentage such classes are of the total number of classes in each authority.

Mr. Dunn: The information requested for each local education authority in England for the years 1979, 1983 and 1987 is given in the table. Information for all of the other years could be provided only at disproportionate cost. The analyses relate to classes taught by one teacher on a selected period within the day of the census count in January of each year and may not be representative of the pattern of classes over the academic year as a whole.

Number of classes of 31 or more pupils in maintained primary schools and expressed as a percentage of all classes in these schools

January of each year	1979		1983		1987	
	Classes	Percentage	Classes	Percentage	Classes	Percentage
Barking	113	19·7	36	6·7	21	3·9
Barnet	226	25·1	78	8·9	70	8·3
Bexley	264	37·4	188	31·4	118	19·6
Brent	120	13·2	58	7·3	27	3·6
Bromley	220	24·6	151	19·8	132	18·6
Croydon	270	25·4	171	18·5	137	16·1
Ealing	190	17·5	83	8·7	89	10·5
Enfield	355	41·7	165	21·0	155	21·9
Haringey	108	14·2	6	0·9	7	1·1
Harrow	183	25·6	97	14·9	112	19·7
Havering	250	29·2	98	12·9	103	15·3
Hillingdon	193	26·3	146	21·7	93	14·3
Hounslow	157	23·5	97	15·0	96	15·6
Kingston upon Thames	105	26·9	88	24·7	82	25·1
Merton	90	25·2	57	18·1	58	19·7
Newham	95	11·3	37	4·8	18	2·6
Redbridge	215	32·9	169	29·0	224	41·3
Richmond upon Thames	100	27·2	42	11·9	40	12·0
Sutton	159	33·5	132	33·6	99	26·5
Waltham Forest	184	22·7	103	15·6	65	11·4

January of each year	1979 Classes	1979 Percentage	1983 Classes	1983 Percentage	1987 Classes
Inner London	840	11·1	199	3·0	99
Birmingham	1,496	38·6	1,242	38·0	867
Coventry	308	24·3	243	24·1	155
Dudley	497	46·5	219	21·9	215
Sandwell	457	35·9	242	21·6	196
Solihull	264	30·4	148	21·9	157
Walsall	217	19·1	73	7·1	97
Wolverhampton	217	21·0	57	5·9	86
Knowsley	224	29·5	123	20·0	59
Liverpool	335	15·6	230	12·8	186
St. Helens	259	32·6	156	22·8	112
Sefton	399	34·6	175	17·8	175
Wirral	382	29·8	268	23·0	140
Bolton	456	46·1	280	33·0	276
Bury	212	31·4	141	24·5	121
Manchester	283	15·1	274	18·7	201
Oldham	340	40·7	227	29·2	219
Rochdale	196	25·7	127	18·4	148
Salford	279	28·6	97	11·4	111
Stockport	498	50·4	194	22·1	187
Tameside	322	37·8	178	23·2	155
Trafford	193	24·3	155	25·5	164
Wigan	385	29·0	226	20·7	215
Barnsley	230	25·2	66	8·3	55
Doncaster	171	14·3	82	7·7	85
Rotherham	324	31·6	147	16·3	68
Sheffield	370	17·0	131	7·4	100
Bradford	209	14·4	121	9·9	130
Calderdale	240	30·3	99	13·4	129
Kirklees	509	36·6	300	23·9	200
Leeds	787	37·9	432	24·2	311
Wakefield	317	29·2	170	19·1	139
Gateshead	103	11·7	36	4·5	23
Newcastle-upon-Tyne	62	6·3	32	3·8	101
North Tyneside	69	10·3	39	6·5	13
South Tyneside	62	9·1	24	4·3	41
Sunderland	321	26·1	156	14·4	114
Isles of Scilly[1]	1	10·0	0	0·0	0
Avon	1,059	37·3	898	34·2	976
Bedfordshire	316	19·3	266	19·9	248
Berkshire	671	29·4	479	23·1	512
Buckinghamshire	645	28·0	598	27·8	717
Cambridgeshire	542	25·5	468	24·5	448
Cheshire	1,027	29·1	722	23·1	875
Cleveland	550	24·0	230	11·0	241
Cornwall	477	32·2	381	28·0	355
Cumbria	391	21·7	174	10·6	180
Derbyshire	1,020	30·9	642	21·8	556
Devon	923	31·5	637	23·7	526
Dorset	536	33·6	388	28·1	412
Durham	454	18·4	361	17·7	358
East Sussex	520	27·7	291	17·0	420
Essex	1,753	35·0	1,114	24·4	968
Gloucestershire	604	34·4	416	27·0	397
Hampshire	1,795	34·2	1,367	29·9	1,031
Hereford and Worcester	611	32·5	555	33·7	409
Hertfordshire	824	24·7	646	21·6	529
Humberside	544	17·6	272	9·9	309
Isle of Wight	82	32·3	44	19·5	54
Kent	1,668	34·4	1,374	33	1,234
Lancashire	1,844	37·8	1,260	29·3	1,249
Leicestershire	684	21·5	489	17·1	412
Lincolnshire	574	28·0	521	30·2	511
Norfolk	545	20·6	394	16·1	368
North Yorkshire	554	23·6	429	20·9	340
Northamptonshire	561	29·9	298	17·1	315

January of each year	1979 Classes	1979 Percentage	1983 Classes	1983 Percentage	1987 Classes	1987 Percent
Northumberland	257	31·5	193	27·2	220	3
Nottinghamshire	1,291	37·4	403	12·5	225	
Oxfordshire	394	26·2	339	26·2	251	1
Shropshire	422	30·3	203	15·5	165	1
Somerset	463	36·2	395	34·7	324	2
Staffordshire	1,017	26·5	439	13·1	523	1
Suffolk	404	22·8	205	12·6	186	1
Surrey	777	22·4	522	17·6	430	1
Warwickshire	527	26·2	412	23·6	335	2
West Sussex	660	34·4	462	25·6	366	2
Wiltshire	482	26·2	394	24·4	266	1
England	44,899	27·4	28,792	19·9	25,837	1

[1] In 1983 and 1987 there were no classes of 31 or more pupils.

Capital Expenditure Allocation (Leicestershire)

Mr. Latham: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will make a statement on the proposed capital expenditure allocation for 1988-89 for the Leicestershire local education authority, in the light of discussions on 17 November 1987 between his Department, the hon. Member for Wantage (Mr. Jackson), and representatives of the authority.

Mr. Dunn: I would refer my hon. Friend to the answer given by my right hon. Friend to my hon. Friend the Member for Skipton and Ripon (Mr. Curry) on 18 December. Leicestershire's allocation for 1988-89 is 34 per cent. higher than its initial allocation for 1987-88. Allocations in respect of prescribed expenditure are unhypothecated and it is for Leicestershire LEA to decide how to use the resources available to it for capital expenditure.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Mrs. Eugenia Lutskaya

Mr. John Marshall: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make representations to the Russians about the plight of Mrs. Eugenia Lutskaya of Leningrad, who first applied in 1973 to go to Israel, where her daughter and grandchildren live, and of her husband Mikhail, who has been told he can leave Russia but without his wife.

Mr. Mellor: We regularly make representations to the Soviet authorities on behalf of divided Soviet families. My right hon. and learned Friend last raised these issues with the Soviet Foreign Minister at Brize Norton on 7 December, when he handed over lists of cases about which representations had been made to the Government, including that of Mrs. Eugenia Lutskaya Kalendarev.

Nuclear Reprocessing Equipment and Technology

Mr. Darling: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (1) if he will make a statement on Her Majesty's Government's policy on the export of nuclear reprocessing equipment and technology;

(2) whether the Government intend to adhere to the agreements reached in the Nuclear Suppliers Group and published by the International Atomic Energy Authority as Infcirc 254; and if he will make a statement;

(3) if he will make a statement on Government poli on the export of nuclear material and equipment.

Mr. Mellor: We subscribed formally to the Nucle Suppliers Group guidelines in January 1978.

Our current policy on exports of nuclear equipmer material or technology remains as set out in the answ given on 31 March 1976 to the then hon. Member f Birmingham, Northfield (Mr. Carter), at columns 514-1 This policy is based on the Nuclear Suppliers Grou guidelines. It applies equally to nuclear reprocessi equipment and technology.

Detention Without Trial (Malaysia)

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreig and Commonwealth Affairs what representations he h made to the Government of Malaysia concerning th detention of prisoners without trial.

Mr. Eggar: I refer the hon. Member to the answer gave to the hon. Member for Norwood (Mr. Fraser) on 1 January at column *289*.

Children's Rights

Mr. Nicholas Winterton: To ask the Secretary of Stat for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (1) if he will mak a statement outlining the progress which has been mad concerning the rewording of the United Nation declaration on the rights of the child; and why such rewording is necessary;

(2) if he will make it his policy that any reworde declaration on the rights of the child should retain withi its preamble a statement on the need to provide lega protection before as well as after birth;

(3) if he will make it his policy that any reworde declaration on the rights of the child should reaffirm th principle which the current declaration contains that th best interests of the child shall be the paramoun consideration in the enactment of laws;

(4) if he will make it his policy that any reworde declaration on the rights of the child should reaffirm th principle which the current declaration contains that th child who is physically, mentally or socially handicapped shall be given the special treatment, education and car required by his particular condition;

(5) on what date the declaration on the rights of th child was ratified by Her Majesty's Government:

(6) what steps he has taken to ensure that the United Nations declaration on the rights of the child is consistent with Her Majesty's Government's policy on abortion.

Mr. Eggar: The declaration of the rights of the child was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1959. As a declaration, it is not open for signature or ratification, and there are no moves to reword or amend it. However, the UN Commission on Human Rights is currently engaged in drafting a convention on the rights of the child. This will be binding on those states which ratify it.

In our approach to the draft convention, which is still undergoing its first reading, we shall have both our national policies and the principles of the declaration firmly in mind. Much work remains to be done before negotiations can be completed.

East Timor

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make it his policy to ensure that the United Kingdom vote in the United Nations will be used to support the decision taken by the United Nations sub-commission on the prevention of discrimination to include the situation on East Timor on the Commission's agenda for its February meeting.

Mr. Eggar: We do not yet know whether member states of the United Nations Commission for Human Rights will wish to take up the sub-commission's recommendation that East Timor be included on the Commission's agenda in February. Our practice since 1982 has been to abstain on resolutions on East Timor whilst expressing support for the Secretary General's role in encouraging a settlement between the parties.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Lever Brothers

Mr. Beggs: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what contracts Her Majesty's Government have with Lever Brothers for the supply of its products in Northern Ireland; and what is his estimate of the effect on his Department's budget of the price increases recently announced by the company.

Mr. Stanley: None of the major public sector organisations in Northern Ireland has direct contracts with Lever Brothers. Where Lever Brothers products are used they are purchased through local suppliers on a competitive tender basis. If, as a result of this recent price increase, Lever Brothers products cease to be competitive, alternatives are readily available and these will be purchased. I do not therefore expect the Lever Brothers decision to have any material effect on my Department's budget.

Nuclear Explosions (Emergency Plans)

Mr. John D. Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what emergency plans exist in Northern Ireland in the event of an explosion at a nuclear installation in Great Britain; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Needham: Contingency plans provide for continuous monitoring to identify any potential hazard, to determine the appropriate remedial measur provide advice and information to the public. were reviewed following the Chernoby Improvements are being made where ne particular to effect full integration within t radiation monitoring system now being throughout the United Kingdam.

Potato Cyst Nematodes

Mr. John D. Taylor: To ask the Secretary Northern Ireland what period for consultati provided in connection with the proposed new health order in relation to potato cyst (eelworms).

Mr. Viggers: Proposals for a draft plant h were sent to interested organisations on 27 1987 with a request for comment by 22 De meeting between the Department of Agricultur organisations which have expressed reservati proposals has been arranged for 29 Jan Department will then consider the contents of t light of views expressed.

Mr. Desmond O'Hare

Mr. John D. Taylor: To ask the Secretary Northern Ireland whether he has received the bi Republic of Ireland authorities for the cost of ho for Mr. Desmond O'Hare, following his injuries of being shot by the Southern Irish police; wh Majesty's Government are responsible for the p health and hospital charges for United Kingdo wounded as a result of terrorist activity in the R Ireland; and if he will make a statement on th the Republic of Ireland that the United Kingdom to pay about £10,000 towards Mr. O'Hare's ho

Mr. Needham: A bill has not been received Republic of Ireland in respect of the recen treatment provided for Mr. O'Hare. Citizens of Kingdom are entitled under EC regulations to medical treatment in the Republic of Ireland as an accident or emergency while on a temporary

The costs incurred by each country in tr others' nationals are calculated annually on th average costs and average numbers of peopl between the two countries. A cash settlement i balance the account. The calculation of the amo paid is not based on the cost of treatment in cases.

Royal Victoria Hospital, Belfast

Mr. John D. Taylor: To ask the Secretary of Northern Ireland in which daily newspapers United Kingdom and (2) outside the United Kin vacancies for *(a)* a senior house officer in anaest *(b)* a senior house officer in accident and emerge Royal Victoria hospital, Belfast, were adverti was the reason for spending public money advertisements outside the United Kingdom; assessment was made, before advertisements we outside the United Kingdom, as to whether th shortage of qualified persons in the United Kin such posts.

Mr. Needham: In deciding the extent to which any posts should be advertised, Health and Personal Social Services employing authorities in Northern Ireland act in accordance with the Department of Health and Social Service's guidelines on recruitment advertising. These guidelines, which are similar to those which apply in the National Health Service, permit an employing authority to determine the most cost-effective way of advertising posts. The two cases referred to by the hon. Member fall within the jurisdiction of the Eastern health and social services board. I am assured that the board took full account both of responses to previous advertisements and of its knowledge of the likely availability of candidates locally in deciding to advertise these two posts. The posts were advertised in the *Belfast Telegraph*, the *British Medical Journal*, and the *Irish Times*.

Bypass (Glynn)

Mr. Beggs: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make financial provision for a bypass at Glynn, Larne, in accordance with the Department of the Environment's 1978 10-year plan for such a scheme.

Mr. Needham: The Glynn bypass was included in the East Antrim area plan 1975-95, which was adopted by the Department of the Environment for Northern Ireland in 1979. However, the intervening years have seen a reduction in the funding available for capital roads projects. It is not now anticipated that a bypass to Glynn will be constructed in the foreseeable future.

Housing Executive (Expenditure)

Mr. Jim Marshall: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will estimate the likely effect on employment levels in the Northern Ireland construction industry of the new expenditure limits set for the Northern Ireland Housing Executive.

Mr. Needham: Until the Northern Ireland Housing Executive and the other housing agencies have determined the distribution of resources available to them in 1988-89 over their capital and revenue programmes, it will not be possible to estimate the number of jobs in the construction industry being supported by the housing programme.

Harland and Wolff

Mr. Jacques Arnold: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what funds will be made available to Harland and Wolff in 1987-88.

Mr. Viggers: The Government have set the company's external financing limit for 1987-88 at £63·2 million, made up of direct cash support amounting to £58·6 million supplemented by external borrowings of up to £4·6 million to cover any work in progress costs incurred on the AOR contract.

Rating Reform

Mr. John D. Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what are the implications for ratepayers in Northern Ireland of the proposal to introduce the poll tax in Humberside.

Mr. Stanley: None. There has been no linkage between the levels of rates in Northern Ireland and Humberside since 1976-77.

Written Questions

Mr. John D. Taylor: To ask the Secretary of St Northern Ireland how many of the 12 written questi the Order Paper for Thursday 14 January for answ him on that day were answered on that date; if h distinguish between *(a)* questions for written p answer and *(b)* questions for ordinary written answe if he will further indicate how many questions re (i) holding answers and (ii) substantive answers.

Mr. Tom King: None receive a substantive a Interim replies were sent to the three questions tabl priority written answer. Substantive answers to t these were sent on 15 January and the third recei substantive answer on 18 January.

The nine questions for ordinary written answe being dealt with within the normal time scale for questions.

Elected Representatives

Mr. McNamara: To ask the Secretary of Stat Northern Ireland if he will list in the *Official Repo* individuals and organisations from which representa were received in relation to the discussion paper "El Representatives and the Democratic Process in Nor Ireland", indicating in each case whether they supp or opposed the proposal for a declaration on prosc organisations.

Mr. Needham *[holding answer 18 January 19* Reponses to the discussion paper have been received the following organisations: the Alliance part Northern Ireland, Antrim borough council, Ards bor council, the Association of Local Authorities of Nor Ireland, Ballymena borough council, Ballymoney bor council, Banbridge district council, Belfast city cou Carrickfergus borough council, Coleraine bor council, the Committee on the Administration of Ju Cookstown district council, Down district council, Grand Orange Lodge of Scotland, the Labour p Labour party 87 (Newtownabbey branch), Lima district council, Magherafelt district council, Newry Mourne district council, Newtownabbey borough cou North Down borough council, Omagh district council Presbyterian Church in Ireland, Quaker Peace and Ser the Social Democratic and Labour party, the S Antrim Unionist Association (Glengormley branch), South West Herts Labour party, the Standing Advi Commission on Human Rights, the Ulster Unionist p and the Workers' party. In addition, we have receive letters from individuals, whose names it would inappropriate to list.

A wide range of views have been offered on proposed non-violence declaration to be made by dis council candidates. Some 22 of the comments f organisations and individuals broadly support suc declaration, while 19 are broadly opposed and 11 offe clear view. We are still analysing these comments howe and no decision on the proposal has yet been reache

HOME DEPARTMENT

Criminal Injuries Compensation Board

Mr. Butler: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what action he proposes to take to reduce the backlog of applications at the Criminal Injuries Compensation Board.

Mr. John Patten: I refer my hon. Friend to the reply given to the hon. Member for Edinburgh, Central (Mr. Darling) on 20 November 1987 at columns *716-7*.

Breath Tests

Mr. Nicholas Bennett: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) if he will call for a report from each chief constable in England and Wales of *(a)* the number of breath tests administered between 20 December and 2 January, for such other dates over the Christmas period for which figures are available, *(b)* the number of such tests which proved positive, *(c)* the number of positive tests as a percentage of total tests administered and *(d)* the number of road accidents recorded in the same periods, for each of the last five years up to 1987-88; and if he will also provide this information for the Metropolitan police area;

(2) if he will call for a report from each chief constable in England and Wales of *(a)* the number of breath tests administered in each of the past five years, *(b)* the number of such tests which proved positive, *(c)* the number of positive tests as a percentage of total tests administered, *(d)* the number of road accidents recorded in these years and *(e)* the number of fatal road accidents recorded in these years; and if he will also provide this information for the Metropolitan police area;

(3) if he will call for a report from each chief constable in England and Wales as to the number of fatal road accidents in their police authority area between 20 December and 2 January, or such other dates over the Christmas period for which figures are available, for each of the last five years up to 1987-88.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: Information on breath tests required and results, by police force area, is published annually in a Home Office statistical bulletin "Statistics of Breath Tests—England and Wales", copies of which are in the Library.

Statistics on road accidents in the past 10 years are contained in the Department of Transport's publication "Road Accidents Great Britain 1986 — The Casualty Report", a copy of which is in the Library.

The official breath test and road accident statistics for 1987 will not be available until the second half of this year.

The Association of Chief Police Officers has, however, collated provisional figures for the number of positive breath tests in the Christmas period, and the number of road accidents involving death or serious injury, in each police force area. These are given in the table:

Police force area	*Number of positive breath tests (19 December to 1 January)*	*Number of road accidents involving death or injury (same period)*
Avon and Somerset	100	117
Bedfordshire	51	52
Cambridgeshire	44	56
Cheshire	88	97
City of London	19	
Cleveland	60	
Cumbria	44	
Derbyshire	63	
Devon and Cornwall	134	
Dorset	60	
Durham	57	
Dyfed-Powys	33	
Essex	149	
Gloucester	82	
GMP	303	
Gwent	50	
Hampshire	152	
Hertfordshire	72	
Humberside	95	
Kent	126	
Lancashire	155	
Leicestershire	53	
Lincolnshire	48	
Merseyside	110	
Metropolitan	1,124	
Norfolk	38	
Northamptonshire	26	
Northumbria	111	
North Wales	91	
North Yorkshire	60	
Nottinghamshire	97	
South Wales	140	
South Yorkshire	121	
Staffordshire	78	
Suffolk	45	
Surrey	86	
Sussex	148	
Thames Valley	243	
Warwick	21	
West Mercia	93	
West Midlands	268	
West Yorkshire	212	
Wiltshire	59	
Total	5,259	

[1] Accident figures for Metropolitan police no

Mr. Harry Greenway: To ask the Secr the Home Department how many breathalysed in England and Wales in *(a* to Christmas and *(b)* the week up to an year's day; how many of those tested we limit; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: I refer my hon. Fr given earlier today to the questions from t for Pembroke (Mr. Bennett).

Firemen

Mr. Barry Field: To ask the Secretary Home Department when retained fire required to train for a minimum of two

Mr. John Patten: Responsibility f nationally the hours of attendance for trai firefighters lies with the National Joint C Authorities' Fire Brigades. I understand that retained firefighters had an obligatio training and maintenance duties for an hours a week from at least the early 1960 from well before then. But the obligati

Number of road accidents involving death or injury (same period)
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43
40
81
138
36
44
40
195
80
246
20
163
102
97
154
141
68
72
141
68
53
112
45
55
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115
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74
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firefighters to attend for an average of two hours per week was, in fact, increased to three hours (though at the discretion of the fire authority) in 1987.

Mr. Barry Field: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when the training hours for retained firemen were last reviewed.

Mr. John Patten: In 1987, and by the National Joint Council for Local Authorities' Fire Brigades. The council notified fire authorities in October 1987 that the obligation of retained firefighters to attend for training and maintenance duties for an average of two hours a week had been increased by an additional hour per week on average at the discretion of the fire authority.

Mr. Barry Field: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what is the cost per hour nationally of training retained firemen.

Mr. John Patten: This information is not available centrally and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Sexual Harassment

Ms. Richardson: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what is his Department's policy on sexual harassment at work; whether guidance on reporting complaints has been issued to all staff; how many complaints have been reported in the past five years; and what disciplinary action has been taken.

Mr. Hurd: The Civil Service policy on sexual harassment is set out in the programme of action to achieve equal opportunities for women in the Civil Service which was published by the Cabinet Office (Management and Personnel Office) in 1984. Sexual harassment at work is not tolerated and is dealt with as a disciplinary matter through the usual civil service complaints procedures.

All Home Office staff have been advised that complaints should normally be made to their head of division or, where that is not appropriate, to the head of their personnel management division. Two complaints have been reported to personnel management divisions. One led to a formal reprimand and transfer to other duties, the other was found to be unsubstantiated. No central records are kept of complaints resolved by local management.

Firearms

Mr. Adley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department with which overseas Governments he has consulted on his proposals to change the law on firearms.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: None.

Police National Computer

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he expects to make an announcement about plans for a replacement police national computer; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: The outdated mainframe computers presently providing the PNC service are about to be replaced by two new processors which will run the existing applications on the basis of the existing software. This new equipment will secure the present PNC service

to the police until the work now in hand o
generation PNC has been completed. This wo
a comprehensive survey of both user require
available computer technlogy as well as the in
tion of a new packet-switched network.

Lindholme Prison

Mr. Michael Welsh: To ask the Secretary o
the Home Department whether any prisoners,
those in categories C and D, have been se
Majesty's prison, Lindholme, for training or
reasons; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: No prisoners in categ
than C and D have been sent to HMP Lindho

Police (Durham)

Mr. Cummings: To ask the Secretary of St
Home Department if he will call for a report fro
constable of Durham as to police manning le
sub-divisions of Seaham and Peterlee over the
years.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: I understand from
constable of Durham that the information requ
follows:

	Seaham		*Pete*
On 31 December	*Establishment*	*Strength*	*Establishmen*
1985	59	57	11
1986	59	56	11
1987	59	57	11

Malicious Food Contamination

Mr. Home Robertson: To ask the Secretary o
the Home Department if he will call for a repor
Metropolitan police commissioner on the p
which are followed by the Metropolitan
investigating reports of malicious contaminatio
products and for alerting other police forces a
cases.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: I understand f
Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis that
a case of malicious contamination of food p
reported to the police, it is immediately brou
attention of the Deputy Assistant Com
(Operations), specialist operations. He is respo
deciding what action should be taken, for co-o
the investigating and deciding whether other po
should be alerted.

Alcohol Misuse

Mr. Hind: To ask the Secretary of State for
Department what progress the ministerial g
alcohol misuse has made, with particular ref
young people and alcohol; and if he will make a s

Mr. John Patten: The group has agreed on a w
of measures to tackle alcohol misuse. Account
of the views of the working group on young pe
alcohol, chaired by the noble Baroness, Lady M
Ilton, which reported to the Standing Confe

Crime Prevention last November. The measures planned include legislative changes as well as steps to secure better health education and more effective local action.

The main legislative proposals are to amend the Liquor Licensing Bill to tighten the offence of selling alcohol to under-age drinkers, to increase penalties for those found guilty of doing so and to make it an offence for wholesalers to sell alcohol to people under 18. There are also plans to require both pre-packaged and dispensed drinks to be labelled with their alcoholic strength and draft regulations will be circulated shortly. The Government welcome efforts already being made to promote non-alcoholic and low-alcohol beers and wines, but will be asking the industry to do more as well as to play its part in helping people understand the relative strengths of different drinks.

The Government will be asking the IBA and the Advertising and Cinema Advertising Standards Authorities in conjunction with the industry to re-examine their codes of practice on advertising alcohol. We see no need for a voluntary ban on advertising alcohol if these codes are tightened up and more effectively applied. We shall also be asking the BBC and IBA to review the way alcohol is presented to television viewers, both in individual programmes and cumulatively.

Effective health education is a priority. The health education bodies for England, Scotland, Wales and the Department of Health and Social Security, Northern Ireland will be taking the lead on this. But other Government Departments will also be playing their part; for example, the Department of Education and Science will shortly be launching a pack to help youth workers advise young people on substance misuse, including alcohol, and, with the Health Education Authority, considering a pack for use in schools.

Another major aim is to encourage effective local action. We look to local services and organisations to work together, identifying particular problems in their area and working out a programme for dealing with them. This is not just a matter for the health services. The social services, education and youth services, police, probation and magistrates all have an interest as do local businesses, the local drinks industry and many voluntary organisations. A great deal is already being done, but there is scope for better co-ordination and targeting of resources.

Our programme includes both steps which can be taken now and longer term measures. It links in with other Government policies on health education and the health service, on crime prevention and on drinking and driving to which both the Government and the police are devoting considerable resources with encouraging results. It is also consistent with our policies that consumers should be able to have greater freedom to make informed choices about what they are buying.

Radio Broadcasting

Mr. Jack: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a further statement on the Government's plans for the future of radio broadcasting.

Mr. Hurd: In February 1987 we published a Green Paper entitled "Radio: Choices and Opportunities". It set out, as a basis for public discussion, proposals for the development of new and less-regulated radio services with the aim of broadening the range of choice for listeners. There were more than 500 responses, r members of the public. I am gratef contributed their comments and idea

The response to the Green Paper co the time is now right for major change served by radio broadcasters. Standa But we have less radio than other cou of the country listeners have no ser BBC. There are many tastes and inte services can at best satisfy only to a frequencies will soon be available for t course several hundred new stations need to have a framework in p opportunities for new and more div taken up, and existing commercial b given much greater freedom to develo

We shall accordingly bring before P proposals based on the Green Paper. alongside the existing BBC services national commercial radio and for deregulation of local radio. All these of the existing constricting statutory have applied to independent local radi be subject to light regulation desig consumer rather than direct the broad operators, at the national and the responsible for their own services, subj of accuracy, balance and decency. T stations will have to pass to obtain a l is that of widening the range of consum have to live up to their promises to the want to keep those licences. Radio st able to organise their own transmiss rather than having them provided by constraints imposed by the 1981 Act. I be required to meet certain technical s that they do not cause interference to o

At the national level, a spectrum w at least three services operating alongs service will be expected to provide a service calculated to appeal to a var interests and not limited to a single provide the BBC with the stimulus of broad range of its services. We propose should be assigned by competitive ten applicants whose programme plan authority's judgment meet the test alr envisaged in the Green Paper, a new V be available for one of these services; frequencies will need to be reassigned

So far as local and community servi deregulation will have two effect independent local radio stations will be canvassed in the Green Paper, the freed styles of broadcasting which they hav new local and community services opportunity to start broadcasting, to en programming and the diversity of con number of services, and their scale, wi demand and wishes. We want the au flexibly, encourage partnership and where this seems sensible.

Many people were disappointed last not proceed with an experiment on co advance of legislation. Our proposals no

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basis for a lively future for community radio, to strengthen that combination of local identity and cultural diversity which lies at the heart of a flourishing community.

There will be a continuing need for an authority to issue licences and supervise performance. The Green Paper identified a number of options for its constitution. After careful thought we have concluded that it would be right to establish a new Radio Authority, with radio at the centre of its attention. The IBA has earned our respect and gratitude for its development of local radio services under the duties laid upon it 15 years ago. But it has major challenges ahead of it in the field of television. We have judged that it would not be sensible to ask the IBA at the same time to take on the task of developing a new and greatly expanded radio system, operating under a new and much lighter set of rules.

The authority will be assigned frequencies suitable for sound broadcasting. On the basis of these frequencies it will invite applications for licences to broadcast at national and local levels. To ensure that that spectrum is used efficiently, and that listeners have as wide a choice as possible, stations will in general be expected to broadcast on single frequencies and use equipment which meets a good technical specification. The Radio Authority will inspect equipment as necessary.

So far as the BBC is concerned, the Green Paper proposed that the corporation should continue to decide how best to meet its public service broadcasting obligations within the resources at its disposal. I can confirm that it remains our policy. We expect that BBC services, too, will increasingly in future be broadcast on single frequencies.

Our proposals are, above all, intended to benefit the listener. It may take a little time for the public to become accustomed to new kinds of service and to single frequency broadcasting. But we believe that the expansion of radio which I have outlined can only be to the good of broadcasters and listeners alike.

Passports

Mr. Madden: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department on what date the immigration and nationality department began to issue applicants with documents confirming that their passports had been submitted to the Department and could not immediately be traced.

Mr. Renton: It has been the practice for some years to issue such a letter to an applicant whose passport cannot immediately be traced. The purpose is to help the applicant, where necessary, to obtain an emergency or replacement travel document.

Public Inquiry Office, Lunar House

Mr. Madden: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what he estimates to be the number of people who attended the public inquiry office at Lunar house in December 1987; and how many of those were seeking the return of passports sent to the immigration and nationality department.

Mr. Renton: In December last, 50,569 people attended the public inquiry office at Lunar house, Croydon. Of the 19,978 people who made inquiries about immigration matters, 2,865 sought the return of their passports for urgent travel. The remaining 30,591 made in citizenship but corresponding figures for return of passports are not available.

Registration and Naturalisatio

Mr. Madden: To ask the Secretary of Home Department how many application registration of adults, *(b)* registration of *(c)* naturalisation were (i) sent out and (ii each month of 1987 to the latest available d

Mr. Renton: Figures for issue of applicati in table 1. Monthly figures of bulk issues fr available only in respect of forms affecte December 1987 deadline. For other forms, year 1987 are given where available. Figure (registration of British Dependent Territories are not available at present.

Table 1

	Adult registration[1]		*Registration of minors*
	Form R	*Form W1*	*Form MN1*
January	4,500	1,500	
February	10,000	3,000	
March	7,000	4,000	
April	12,000	4,000	
May	30,000	10,000	
June	13,000	6,000	
July	53,000	6,000	
August	50,000	6,000	
September	25,000	17,000	
October	30,000	10,000	
November	60,000	3,000	
December	50,000	15,000	
TOTAL	344,500	85,500	29,500

[1] Form R is for registration by virtue of residence 1973; Form W1 is for registration by virtue of marri

Figures for applications received in groups are in table 2:

Table 2

	Adult registration	*Minor registration*
January	2,368	662
February	3,306	777
March	3,274	678
April	2,649	473
May	1,394	500
June	2,003	610
July	3,985	781
August	4,669	1,008
September	4,007	873
October	4,397	878
November	9,495	1,782
December	5,890	863
TOTAL	59,034	9,885

These figures do not include an estima applications received since mid-September 19 being sorted and prepared for consideration.

Mail

Mr. Madden: To ask the Secretary of S Home Department when he estimates that m by his Department in mid-December will be

Mr. Renton: The time taken to deal with dence overall in the immigration and

department varies considerably according to the nature of the subject matter. It will, however, be some time before all the very large intake of mail received by mid-December is processed.

Departmental Expenditure

Mr. Madden: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what was the budgeted expenditure on salaries for *(a)* the immigration and nationality department and *(b)* the immigration service for 1987-88; and what was the actual expenditure under both of those headings between 1 April and 31 December 1987.

Mr. Renton: The budgeted expenditure on salaries in the financial year 1987-88 for the immigration and nationality department as a whole, and for the immigration service, and actual expenditure from 1 April 1987 to 31 December 1987, are set out in the table:

Salaries expenditure in the immigration and nationality department 1987-88

(£000)

	Immigration and nationality department	*Immigration service*
Budget	42,791	30,629
Outturn to 31 December 1987	32,222	23,113

Incoming Mail, Lunar House

Mr. Madden: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what is the procedure for dealing with and recording incoming mail at Lunar house; and at what stage applications for British citizenship are separated from applications for variation of immigration leave.

Mr. Renton: On receipt at Lunar house the IND post room separates the mail by appearance and form of address into broad categories of general letters, applications for variation of leave, and applications for citizenship. Mail sent by recorded delivery or registered post is recorded on receipt; other mail is recorded when opened and separated into categories.

Mr. Madden: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many staff, of what grade and at what salary, were employed at Lunar house to deal with incoming mail on *(a)* 1 June 1987 and *(b)* 1 December 1987; how many extra staff were employed for this purpose between 1 June and 31 December 1987; on which date and at what grades.

Mr. Renton: Separate information about staff in the immigration nationality department post room dealing with incoming mail is not readily available. The number, grading and salaries of staff involved in all aspects of mail handling was:

	Number	*Salary Range £*
1 June 1987		
Executive Officer	1	5,550-9,854
Administrative Officer	3	3,664-7,091
Administrative Assistant	31	3,314-5,799
Senior Paperkeeper	1	5,747-6,590
Paperkeeper	5	5,832-6,141
Total	41	
1 December 1987		
Executive Officer	1	5,820-10,100
Administrative Officer	3	3,664- 7,247
Adminstrative Assistant	42	No change
Senior Paperkeeper	1	6,047- 6,890
Paperkeeper	5	No change
Total	52	

Mr. Madden: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what is his estimate of the number of letters which had been received but not opened at Lunar house on *(a)* 1 November 1987, *(b)* 1 December 1987 and *(c)* 21 December 1987; what is his estimate of how many such letters are applications for variation of leave; what was the date of receipt of mail being dealt with at Lunar house on 21 December 1987; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Renton: The estimated number unopened items of mail is as follows. The estimated number of such letters which relate to applications for variations of leave is shown in brackets.

1 November 1987: 65,500 (16,000)
1 December 1987: 92,500 (24,000)
21 December 1987: 145,000 (30,500)

The date of receipt of mail being dealt with on 21 December by the immigration and nationality department post room varied, according to the nature of the correspondence, between the end of September and early December.

NATIONAL FINANCE

Developing Countries (Loans)

Mr. Steel: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will extend the repayment period on official loans to developing countries from 10 years to 20 years.

Mr. Lawson: The United Kingdom has almost completed its programme of converting old aid loans into grants to the least developed countries. To date seven sub-Saharan African countries have been granted repayment periods of between 15 and 20 years on their officially guaranteed debts when rescheduling through the Paris club.

VAT (Education)

Mr. Michael Marshall: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how the value of staff time or secondments to either a city technology college or local education authority school is calculated for value added tax purposes.

Mr. Lilley: A taxable person who supplies such services free of charge and without conditions or contractual obligations is supplying free services which are outside the scope of the tax. If the recipient educational establishment pays for the services, the value for tax is the monetary consideration. If there were any form of obligation on the recipient (whether or not there were also a monetary consideration), this would be seen as a non-monetary consideration whose value for tax purposes would be the open market value of the services.

Mr. Michael Marshall: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how the value of donation of computer

equipment by the manufacturer or user to either a city technology college or local education authority school is calculated for value added tax purposes.

Mr. Lilley: If a taxable person donates equipment without conditions or contractual obligations, the value for tax is the cost of the equipment—that is, either the price at which the donor bought it or the full cost of its manufacture by him. If, however, there were any form of obligation on the recipient of the donated equipment, this would be seen as a non-monetary consideration and the value for tax would be the open market value of the equipment.

Mr. Michael Marshall: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how the value of donation of computer software by the author or user to either a city technology college or local education authority school is calculated for value added tax purposes.

Mr. Lilley: A taxable person who donates, without conditions or contractual obligations, computer software which has been individually commissioned by the recipient educational establishment is supplying free services which are outside the scope of the tax. The donation of other software is a supply, the value of which for tax purposes is the cost—that is, either the price at which the donor bought the software or the full cost of its production by him.

If, however, there were any form of obligation on the recipient of the donated software (whether the latter were individually commissioned or not) this would be seen as a non-monetary consideration and the value for tax would be the open market value of the goods or services involved.

Overseas Debt

Mr. Corbyn: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what have been the levels of repayment of debt to British *(a)* Government and *(b)* non-Government institutions for Ethiopia, Sudan, Somalia, and Chad, by each year since 1979.

Mr. Lilley: The amounts paid directly to the United Kingdom Government by Ethiopia, Sudan, Somalia and Chad for aid loans made by the Overseas Development Administration are listed in the table. Information on amounts paid to non-Government institutions is not available.

Repayment of Overseas Development Administration Loans 1979-86

	Ethiopia £	*Sudan*	*Somalia*	*Chad*
1979-80	35,625	—	—	—
1980-81	71,250	—	—	—
1981-82	90,247	—	—	—
1982-83	90,250	—	—	—
1983-84	90,250	—	—	—
1984-85	9,500	—	—	—
1985-86	—	—	—	—

Share Schemes

Mr. Grylls: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many independent unquoted companies, which are not subsidiaries of public limited companies, have introduced Finance Act 1978 or 1984 share schemes.

Mr. Norman Lamont: One hundred and fifty one unquoted companies which are not subsidiaries of public limited companies have introduced share schemes approved under the Finance Act 1978. I regret that this information is not readily available in relation to Finance Act 1984 schemes.

United States Dollar

Mr. Allen: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what further measures he will be prepared to take if the actions already taken fail to reduce the decline of the US dollar.

Mr. Peter Lilley: Since the beginning of the year, the dollar has risen against all the major currencies, including sterling.

Civil Servants (Merit Payments)

Mr. John Marshall: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement on the number of civil servants receiving merit payments in 1986-87.

Mr. Brooke: A total of 3,828 civil servants received merit payments in the financial year 1986-87 under the performance bonus experiment.

This scheme was introduced for grades 3-7 in 1985 as a three-year experiment. It has already been partly replaced by newly developed performance related pay arrangements for grades 2 and 3 and an interim scheme for grades 4-7.

We believe that the link between pay and performance in the Civil Service should be strengthened. When the flexible pay system for scientific, professional and technical grades comes into effect this year over 80,000 staff will be covered by performance-related pay arrangements. We hope that it will be possible to bring other groups into such schemes in due course.

Building Societies Commission

Mr. Sean Hughes: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what since its inception has been the total cost of administering the Building Societies Commission.

Mr. Lilley: Between 25 September 1986, when the Building Societies Commission was constituted, and 31 March 1988, it is estimated that gross expenditure by the Commission will be about £3 million. This cost is met by a general charge levied on building societies together with fees for specific activities.

Business Expansion Scheme

Mr. Chris Smith: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if, pursuant to his reply of 18 December 1987, *Official Report*, column *847*, he will indicate the grounds on which the names of companies obtaining assistance under the business expansion scheme are regarded as being confidential; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Norman Lamont: The Inland Revenue has a statutory duty not to disclose any information concerning the affairs of a taxpayer. It is for this reason that I am unable to identify the companies which have obtained assistance under the business expansion scheme.

Value Added Tax

Mr. Ieuan Wyn Jones: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will estimate the change in Treasury

income during the 1988-89 financial year resulting from raising value added tax to *(a)* 16 per cent. and *(b)* 20 per cent.

Mr. Lilley: The estimated net additional revenue in 1988-89 would be:

Rate of value-added tax Per cent.	*£ million*
16	945
20	4,560

Mr. Ieuan Wyn Jones: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is his estimate of the revenue during the 1988-89 financial year which would result from imposing value added tax on *(a)* new building work and *(b)* publications, other than books, where the use of new paper is greater than 80 per cent.

Mr. Lilley: *(a)* It is estimated that the net additional revenue in a full year at 1988-89 prices from the imposition of value added tax at the standard rate on new building work would be £1,250 million. Because of the uncertainties involved in estimating the effects of such a change on the construction sector, this estimate should be taken as no more than an indicator of the order of magnitude.

(b) I regret the information is not available.

Mr. Bermingham: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if, in the light of the recent pronouncement by Lord Cockfield regarding proposed European Commission measures for the completion of the internal market in the EEC, he will make a statement on his policy towards imposing value added tax on books, newspapers and periodicals.

Mr. Lilley: *[holding answer 18 January 1988]* Decisions on changes in value added tax are a matter fo my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer Budget judgment. My right hon. Friend the Prim Minister has already made it clear that the Unite Kingdom will not accept proposals which restrict our rig to apply zero-rating.

Sporting Rights (Revaluation)

Mr. Onslow: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequ what is his estimate of the likely cost to public funds of th current revaluation of sporting rights in England an Wales; and what proportion of this is attributable to th revaluation of riparian rights.

Mr. Norman Lamont: The information available a present is not sufficient for an estimate to be made of th likely costs of revaluing either sporting or riparian right

Tobacco (Taxation and Pricing)

Mr. Sims: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer o what basis he has agreed to meet representatives of th tobacco industry to discuss tobacco taxation and pricin policy; and why he refused to meet representatives of th medical profession to discuss the same issue.

Mr. Lilley: Treasury Ministers generally meet a numbe of representative bodies to discuss their representations i the run-up to the Budget, including one representing th tobacco industry. I am to meet representatives from th British Medical Association shortly.

Oil Prices

Mr. Darling: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) if he will indicate the effect on projected Government oil revenue resulting from a fluctuation in oil prices per barrel of *(a)* 5 cents, *(b)* 15 cents, *(c)* 50 cents, *(d)* $1 and *(e)* $5 above and below a price of $18 per barrel;

(2) if he will indicate the effect on projected Government oil revenues resulting from a fluctuation in the price of the United States dollar against the £ sterling by *(a)* 1 cent, *(b)* 5 cents, *(c)* 15 cents and *(d)* 50 cents above and below the exchange rate assumed in his Autumn Statement of 3 November 1987.

Mr. Lilley *[holding answer 18 January 1988]:* The effects on oil tax revenues of different oil prices and dollar exchange rates are subject to wide margins of error. On the basis of forecasts prepared for the 1987 Autumn Statement, a sustained change of $1 a barrel with a constant exchange rate would lead to a change of about £0·3 billion in North sea tax revenues for 1988-89. A 10 per cent. change in the exchange rate with a constant dollar oil price would give a change of about £0·5 billion. Smaller changes in prices or exchange rates would lead to approximately pro rata effects, but the results of larger changes would depend on their effect on other factors such as oil companies' exploration and investment decisions.

Taxes (European Community)

Mr. Steen: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what information he has as to the standard rate of income tax in each of the 12 European Community countries and as to the corporation tax rate in each of the 12 European Community countries.

Mr. Norman Lamont *[holding answer 18 January 1988]:* A standard or basic rate of income tax is found only in the Republic of Ireland and the United Kingdom, where the rates are 35 per cent. and 27 per cent respectively. In the other European Community countries the scales of income tax rates do not include a standard or basic rate. The current ranges of nominal income tax rates are set out in Table 1:

Table 1
Range of nominal income tax rates

	percentage
Belgium	24-71
Denmark	22-40
France	5-57
Germany	22-56
Greece	10-63
Italy	12-62
Luxembourg	10-56
Netherlands	14-72
Portugal	6-58
Spain	25-56

Notes:

1 These rates are from the central government income tax scales on employment income.

2 There are also local income taxes on individuals in Belgium and Denmark.

3 The rates shown are the latest enacted rates.

Table 2 sets out the corporation tax rates in each of the 12 European Community countries.

Table 2
Corporation tax rate

	Percentage
Belgium	43
Denmark	50
France	42
Germany	56
Greece	49
Ireland	50
Italy	36
Luxembourg	36
Netherlands	42
Portugal	35
Spain	35
United Kingdom	35

Notes:

1. Some countries, such as the United Kingdom, have lower rates or special reliefs for smaller companies.
2. There are also local income taxes on companies in Germany, Italy and Luxembourg.
3. The following countries have different rates for distributed profits: Germany (36 per cent.); Greece (Nil); Portugal (35 per cent.).
4. Ireland has a 10 per cent. rate for manufacturing companies.
5. Greece has a 44 per cent. rate for industrial companies.
6. The rates shown are the latest enacted rates.

National Insurance

Mr. Gordon Brown: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is the estimated full-year revenue effect in 1987-88 and 1988-89 of *(a)* abolishing the upper earnings limit for employees' national insurance contributions, *(b)* allowing personal allowances against such contributions and *(c)* *(a)* and *(b)* together.

Mr. Norman Lamont *[holding answer 17 December 1987]:* Estimates given in the table are based on projections of the 1984-85 survey of personal incomes and are therefore provisional.

Full Year Reduction (−)—Increase (+) in Yield from Employees National Insurance Contributions (£ million)

	At income levels of 1987-88	*1988-89*
(a) Abolition of upper earnings limit	1,200	1,400
(b) Charge contributions above personal allowances only	−4,100	−4,400
(c) *(a)* and *(b)* together	−2,900	−3,000

These estimates make no allowance for behavioural or other changes.

Exchange Rate

Mr. Darling: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what dollar—£ sterling exchange rate he assumed when making his Autumn Statement of 3 November 1987.

Mr. Lilley *[holding answer 18 January 1988]:* The Autumn Statement forecast assumed that sterling would remain close to its then recent levels.

SCOTLAND

NHS (Administration)

Mr. Butler: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will give the percentage change in the number of administrative staff in the National Health Service in Scotland since 1979; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: The information held centrally is not in precisely the form requested. Data on administrative and clerical staff are subdivided by pay scale, which does not coincide in all cases with grade. The available information is published in "Scottish Health Statistics", copies of which are held in the Library.

Prison Population

Mr. Worthington: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what percentage of the rise in prison population which took place between 1980 and 1987 was the result of increases in the number of prisoners on remand.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: Prison population figures for 1987 are not yet available. Figures for earlier years are given in the Scottish Home and Health Department statistical bulletins "Prison Statistics Scotland", copies of which are in the Library.

Rating Reform

Mr. Worthington: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what specific factors or formulae he has decided to use in order to calculate the amount of revenue support grant to be paid to particular local authorities when the poll tax is introduced in Scotland.

Mr. Lang: The Government have proposed to the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities that the distribution of revenue support grant should be based on the client group assessments of relative expenditure need, which are presently used for rate support grant distribution, estimates of authorities' non-domestic rate income and estimates of adult population. It is also proposed to have grant safety nets to phase in gradually some of the changes in the distribution of grant which may arise from the move to the new grant system. The details of these arrangements are subject to the outcome of discussions with COSLA, which are continuing.

Fines

Mr. Worthington: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what consideration he has given to the implementation of the recommendations contained within the Association of Directors of Social Work report on fines and fine default, with particular reference to *(a)* the introduction in Scotland of a day fines system and *(b)* the provision of alternative means of enforcement of payment of fines.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: I refer the hon. Member to the answer which I gave him on 11 January 1988, at column *149*.

Sentencing Statistics

Mr. Worthington: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what percentage of those remanded in custody by Scottish courts in 1986 subsequently received a custodial sentence.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: This information is not available.

Mental Health (Scotland) Act 1984

Mr. Worthington: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland when he expects to issue a code of practice relating to the Mental Health (Scotland) Act 1984.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: My right hon. and learned F appointed a working group last year to produce a code of practice. I expect to receive it shortly and be issued for comment in due course.

Operating Theatres

Mr. Worthington: To ask the Secretary of Sta Scotland (1) what percentage of operating theatre ti a weekday basis is used in each health board in Sco and what proposals he has for improvement on this f

(2) what estimates are available to him on the ext which full use of operating theatres in National H Service hospitals is inhibited by lack of properly qu nursing staff and the money to pay for them;

(3) if he will take steps to increase the number o and staff in National Health Service hospitals to in operating theatre utilisation and throughput;

(4) what estimates are available to him as to the to which loss of operating theatre time in Scotland to *(a)* lack of surgeons, *(b)* lack of anaesthetists, *(c* of operating theatre staff, *(d)* lack of beds, *(e)* restrictions on health boards and *(f)* other causes;

(5) if he will take steps to reduce the power or infl of consultants in the use of operating theatre ti Scotland.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: Information about t utilisation and the causes of any underutilisation held centrally. Efficiency in the use of clinical reso including theatres is a matter for individual health b and their staff. The output of the acute hospital se has increased markedly in recent years and lev efficiency are now much greater. The recent report the National Audit Office on the use of operating th in the NHS in England indicates, however, that signi improvements could be made. I shall continu encourage health boards in Scotland to further effo

Remand Statistics

Mr. Worthington: To ask the Secretary of Sta Scotland if he will list, for each sheriff court distr Scotland, the percentage of those remanded by the s who are remanded on bail, excluding motoring offe

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: This information available.

Garnock Valley

Mr. Wilson: To ask the Secretary of State for Sco if he or any of his ministerial colleagues have any pla visit the Garnock Valley.

Mr. Lang: Neither my right hon. and learned Fr nor I, nor any other of our ministerial colleagues plans for such a visit at present, although I hope to the Garnock Valley development executive later i year.

Farm Incomes

Mr. Wilson: To ask the Secretary of State for Sco if he will give *(a)* the total income of Scottish farm each of the past five years and *(b)* the equivalent in which would have been achieved in the event of the pound being brought to parity.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: Information about the total incomes of Scottish farmers, including income from non-agricultural activities is not available for this period. However, the aggregate net agricultural income of Scottish farmers between 1982 and 1986 was as follows:

	£ million
1982	140
1983	96
1984	186
1985	36
1986	91

An estimate for 1987 and possible revisions to 1986 and 1985 will emerge from this winter's annual review of agriculture, which is now in its late stages.

The effect of the green pound on farmer's incomes is to a large extent indirect and no estimates are available of the effects of different rates on income levels for the five-year period, during which time sterling's green rate has been both above and below its market rate.

Mr. Ieuan Wyn Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what was the percentage change in farm incomes in Scotland for the most recent 12-month period for which information is available; and what were the corresponding figures for each year since 1979.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: Farm income figures are published in the form of aggregate net agricultural income, excluding income from non-agricultural activities. The following are the percentage changes in aggregate net agricultural income in Scotland between calendar years from 1979 to 1986. An estimate for 1987 will emerge from this winter's annual review of agriculture, which is in its late stages.

	Percentage
1979 to 1980	−61
1980 to 1981	+185
1981 to 1982	+65
1982 to 1983	−31
1983 to 1984	+93
1984 to 1985	−80
1985 to 1986	+152

Sexual Harassment

Ms. Richardson: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what is his Department's policy on sexual harassment at work; whether guidance on reporting complaints has been issued to all staff; how many complaints have been reported in the past five years; and what disciplinary action has been taken.

Mr. Rifkind: The Civil Service policy on sexual harassment is set out in the programme of action to achieve equal opportunities for women in the Civil Service which was published by the Cabinet Office (Management and Personnel Office) in 1984. Sexual harassment at work is not tolerated and is dealt with as a disciplinary matter through the usual Civil Service complaints procedures. My Department's staff have been informed of this and also about how to make complaints of sexual harassment.

In the past five years seven complaints have been reported in my Department. Where the complaint has been substantiated, disciplinary action has ranged from a formal warning to forfeiture of pay.

Salmon

Mr. Macdonald: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will describe the formula used to assess those rating values which are based upon the annual statistical returns on Scottish salmon and sea trout catches.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: Determination of rateable values is the statutory responsibility of assessors who operate independently of central and local government and who must be prepared to justify the valuations they make before the courts. Information about individual valuations is not held centrally.

Mr. Macdonald: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he has any plans to check the accuracy in the annual statistical returns on Scottish salmon and sea trout catches prior to their being used to assess future rating values; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: Forms are checked to ensure that relevant parts have been completed and that there are no inconsistencies in the entries, for example between numbers and weights of fish reported as caught. As the statistics are published by salmon fishery region and statistical district it is unlikely that the information could be used by assessors to assist in the determination of the rateable value of individual fisheries.

Mr. Macdonald: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he has any information which might explain the annual variations in statistical returns on salmon catches over the past five years in the Scottish salmon fishery statistical districts of *(a)* the Isle of Lewis, *(b)* Harris and *(c)* the Uists; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: The information available to the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries for Scotland is not sufficient to give specific reasons for the variations in the salmon catches for the salmon fishery statistical districts specified. Fluctuations in reported annual salmon catches can occur for a number of reasons. These include variations in the abundance of salmon, salmon runs not conforming with the fishing seasons, variations in the fishing effort throughout the fishing season or from one fishing season to another, changes in climatic conditions and variations in completeness of reported catch statistics.

Free Milk

Mr. Tom Clarke: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many children under five years of age and cared for by recognised childminders are currently in receipt of free milk; and how many childminders are involved.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: The information available for the quarter August to October 1987 is as follows:
Number of children in Scotland under five years of age receiving free milk while cared for by a childminder: 576.
Number of registered childminders in Scotland claiming reimbursement for cost of milk supplied: 232.

Midwifery Students

Mr. Alexander: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many intakes of midwifery students were cancelled in Scotland in each year ended 30 September in 1985, 1986 and 1987; and what are the most recently available staffing figures.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: In the years mentioned only one course, at Glasgow Northern College of Nursing and Midwifery in August 1987, was cancelled. That was because of a lack of numbers The number of qualified midwives, including community midwives and community nurses with combined duties, in the NHS in Scotland at 30 September 1987 (provisional figure) was 4,115 (3,504 whole-time equivalent) and the number of student midwives was 988.

Rural Transport

Mr. Home Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will make a statement on the uptake of rural transport innovation grants, showing the number of applications, the number and value of grants paid, and the reasons for any refusals, in each region; how much of his budget for this scheme has not been used; and if he has any plans to promote public transport in rural Scotland.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: The information about the uptake of rural transport innovation grant is set out in the table. Grant totalling £39,601 was approved on rural transport schemes in 1986-87 and a further £41,099 has been approved in the current financial year to date. Provision of £170,000 has been available in both 1986-87 and 1987-88.

Since the scheme began in June 1986, 10 applications for grant assistance have been rejected because they did not meet the criteria. Applications were mainly rejected because the service was already operating, or duplicated an existing service, or was not in a rural area.

In an effort to encourage further interest in the scheme a publicity leaflet/poster was widely distributed in August 1987 to regional and islands councils, district and community councils and to various voluntary organisations. Further promotion of the scheme will be considered as appropriate.

Regional/Islands Council	*No. of applications received*[1]	*No. of Grants Approved*	*Value of Grants Approved* £
Borders	1	1	2,000
Central	—	—	—
Dumfries and Galloway	5	3	32,330
Fife	—	—	—
Grampian	—	—	—
Highland	3	—	—
Lothian	1	—	—
Strathclyde	5	1	12,250
Tayside	3	2	32,000
Orkney	—	—	—
Shetland	—	—	—
Western Isles	2	1	2,120

[1] Includes two applications (one in Strathclyde, one in Western Isles) which are under consideration.

Written Questions

Mr. John D. Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many of the 20 written questions on the Order paper for Thursday 14 January for answer by him on that date were answered on that date; if he will distinguish between *(a)* questions for written priority answer and *(b)* questions for ordinary written answer; and if he will further indicate how many questions received (i) holding answers and (ii) substantive answers.

Mr. Malcolm Rifkind: Of the 20 written quest answer by me on the Order Paper for Thurs January, 16 questions for written priority answ answered on that day. Ten of these received sub replies and six holding replies were issued. Four q for ordinary written answer were not answe addition, a question for ordinary written answer Secretary of State for the Environment was answ my hon. Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secre State with responsibility for home affairs a environment.

Rescue Archaeology

Mr. Macdonald: To ask the Secretary of S Scotland what percentage of Government expendi rescue archaeology over the past five years has bee on the Western Isles; and if he will make a state

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: Figures are a only from 1984-85. Since then, and including es expenditure in 1987-88, 3·6 per cent. of Scottish expenditure on rescue archaeology has been on pro the Western Isles.

Mr. Macdonald: To ask the Secretary of S Scotland how much has been spent from Gove funds on rescue archaeology in *(a)* the Orkne *(b)* the Western Isles over the last five years.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: Figures are a only from 1984-85. Since then, and including es expenditure in 1987-88, Scottish Office expendi rescue archaeology projects has been £573,000 (O and £109,000 (the Western Isles).

Catering and Domestic Service Contractors (M

Mr. Galbraith: To ask the Secretary of St Scotland if he will place in the Library a copy minutes of the meeting held on 2 October 1987, a by representatives of the trade associations for c and domestic services contractors and by health chairmen and general managers, referred to in par 1 of the letter issued by the Scottish Home and Department to health board general managers un signature of Hugh Morrision, dated December 19

Mr. Michael Forsyth: The meeting on 2 Octobe which I inaugurated, was a seminar of which no minutes were made. The subsequent discussion seminar was reported to me by my officials.

Mr. Galbraith: To ask the Secretary of St Scotland which companies and health board represented, and by whom, at the meeting on 2 O 1987 attended by representatives of the trade assoc for catering and domestic services contractors health board chairmen and general managers.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: All Scottish health boar the Common Services Agency were represented b chairmen and general managers or other senior board managers. Presentations were made by th associations representing the catering and do services sectors and by Grant Thorton Mana Consultants.

Mr. Galbraith: To ask the Secretary of St Scotland what information he has as to who cal

meeting on 2 October 1987, attended by representatives of the trade associations for catering and domestic services contractors and by health board chairmen and general managers.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: The seminar held on 2 October 1987 was organised by the Scottish Home and Health Department.

Health Board General Managers (Correspondence)

Mr. Galbraith: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what is the intended status of the letter from his Department to health board general managers, dated 10 December 1987, and issued over the signature of Hugh Morrison.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: The letter of 11 December 1987 conveyed to boards and the Common Services Agency the action which boards are required to take to invite competitive tender for certain NHS support services. The letter makes it abundantly clear that boards are to comply with its terms.

Nurses

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what conveniently available figures he has for the shortage of paediatric intensive care nurses in Scotland.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: No information is routinely collected centrally on paediatric intensive care nurses as a separate group. There is no evidence from health boards of any shortage.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Rolls-Royce (Seminar)

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if he will provide a list of personnel from his Department attending the lunch and cocktail party and winter seminar organised by Rolls-Royce plc on 13 January; and what was the purpose of their attendance.

Mr. Butcher: Two officials from the Department attended the winter seminar as part of their responsibilities for maintaining contacts with companies in the aerospace sector.

Yorkshire and Humberside (Aid)

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what was the total expenditure on *(a)* regional development grant and *(b)* selective assistance to *(a)* Grimsby travel-to-work area, *(b)* county Humberside and *(c)* Yorkshire and Humberside, in each year from 1978-79.

Mr. Atkins: Expenditure under the regional development grant and regional selective assistance schemes was as follows:

Regional development grant (RDG)[1]

£ million

	Grimsby[2][3] *travel-to-work-area (TTWA)*	*Humberside*[2] *county*	*Yorkshire and Humberside*
1978-79	1·9	11·3	30·2
1979-80	1·3	6·3	21·5
1980-81	2·1	10·3	38
1981-82	3·3	18·1	47
1982-83	2·3	20·0	36
1983-84	2·5	16·5	23
1984-85	3·8	16·2	26
1985-86	1·2	9·4	24
1986-87	4·1	15·4	27

[1] Consists of the original RDG scheme and the revised scheme introduced in November 1984.

[2] The original RDG scheme element of these data includes only individual payments of over £25,000: payments below this size cannot be attributed to geographical areas smaller than planning regions.

[3] Data for the original scheme only. Grimsby TTWA was downgraded from Development Area to Intermediate Area in November, 1984 and thus there have been no payments to this area under the revised RDG scheme.

Regional selective assistance[1]

£ millio

	Grimsby travel-to-work-area (TTWA)	*Humberside county*	*Yorkshire and Humberside*
1978-79	0·1	0·7	5·
1979-80	0·2	0·8	6·
1980-81	0·3	0·8	6·
1981-82	0·1	0·7	7·
1982-83	0·1	1·0	10·
1983-84	0·2	1·8	8·
1984-85	0·2	3·0	9·
1985-86	0·2	2·7	8·
1986-87	2·2	3·7	10·

[1] Industrial and training grants only. Details of expenditure under the business improvement services and exchange risk guarantee schemes are not available at TTWA, county or regional level.

Corby (Grants)

Mr. William Powell: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what are the total payments made on regional development grants (new scheme) in each year since 1980 to companies in the Corby travel-to-work area.

Mr. Atkins: Payments made to applicants in the Corby travel-to-work area under the regional development grant scheme introduced in November 1984 were as follows:

	£ million
1985	0·8
1986	4·7
1987	5·7

The 1987 figure is provisional.

Mr. William Powell: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what are the total payments made on regional development grants (old scheme) in each year since 1980 to companies in the Corby travel-to-work area.

Mr. Atkins: Payments made to applicants in the Corby travel-to-work area under the original regional development grant scheme in each year since 1980 were as follows:

	£ million
1980	—
1981	2·4
1982	6·1
1983	6·5

	£ million
1984	3·3
1985	1·8
1986	3·3
1987	0·6

The figures quoted are the totals of individual payments of over £25,000 since payments below this size cannot be attributed to a geographical area smaller than a planning region. The 1987 figure is provisional.

Mr. William Powell: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster (1) what are the total payments made under the investment support scheme for microelectronics each year since 1980 within the Corby travel-to-work area;

(2) what are the total payments made under the investment support for microelectronics 2 scheme in the Corby development area in each year since 1980.

Mr. Atkins: No such payments have been made in the period since 1980.

Mr. William Powell: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what were the total payments made of assistance under section 8 of the Industrial Development Act 1982 in each year to companies in the Corby travel-to-work area.

Mr. Atkins: Such information is available for assistance under section 8 of the Industry Act 1972 and section 8 of the Industrial Development Act 1982 through support for major projects; investment support for fibre optics and opto-electronics; investment support for microelectronics; support for advanced manufacturing project planning and implementation; the microelectronics industry support scheme; computer aided design and test equipment support for the innovation-linked investment scheme.

Payments in respect of projects located in the Corby travel-to-work area were:

	£
1984	39,317
1986	20,320
1987	2,835

Mr. William Powell: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what are the total payments made of selective financial assistance under section 7 of the Industrial Development Act 1982 in each year to companies in the Corby travel-to-work area.

Mr. Atkins: Payments of regional selective assistance under section 7 of the Industrial Development Act 1982 (and previously under section 7 of the Industry Act 1972) in the Corby travel-to-work area have been as follows:

	£ million
1980	—
1981	0·3
1982	1·7
1983	6·3
1984	7·0
1985	3·3
1986	2·2
[1]1987	2·0

[1] Provisional.

Notes:

1. The figures comprise industrial grant payments and expenditure under the business improvement services scheme.

2. The figures exclude expenditure on the exchange r scheme as it is not possible to provide details on a travel basis.

Mr. William Powell: To ask the Chance Duchy of Lancaster what are the total payn under parts I, II and III of the Industrial Devel 1982 and parts I(2) and II of the Industry Act 1 year since 1980 to recipients in the Corby tra area.

Mr. Atkins: Total payments made under t schemes in the Corby travel-to-work area wer

	£ million
1980	—
1981	2·7
1982	7·8
1983	12·8
1984	10·3
1985	5·9
1986	10·2
1987	[1]8·4

[1] Provisional.

Mr. William Powell: To ask the Chance Duchy of Lancaster what are the total payn under the innovation-linked investment sch Corby development area in each year since 19

Mr. Atkins: There have been no such payn

Private Mines (Durham)

Mr. Cummings: To ask the Chancellor of th Lancaster what regional development grants a selective assistance grants have been made to o licensed mines and private opencast site opera county of Durham over the last three years; a indicate to whom the grants have been pa location of the private mines and opencast sit

Mr. Atkins: Mining is not a qualifying reginal development grant. One offer of regio assistance has been made to the mining se county of Durham over the past three years: £940,000 to Weardale Holdings. In addi payments have been made in this period as offers made in earlier years.

Durham (Regional Aid)

Mr. Cummings: To ask the Chancellor of th Lancaster if he will indicate the amount development grants and regional selective grants made in *(a)* the county of Durham, *(* town industrial estate of Peterlee and *(c)* the district council area over the last five years.

Mr. Atkins: The amount of regional sup available in county Durham, Peterlee and between January 1983 and December 1987 is

	County Durham	*Peterlee*
Regional Selective Assistance offered	26·1	6·3

	County Durham	Peterlee	Easington
Payments under original Regional Development Grant Scheme (RDGI)	22·1	10·2	—
Approvals under revised Regional Development Grant Scheme	32·4	6·5	8·1

The RDG I figures relate to published information for employment office areas and identify individual payments in excess of £25,000. The Department does not maintain more detailed statistics. Since Easington falls within the Sunderland employment office area a breakdown of RDG I is not available. Likewise specific records are not available on the industrial estate mentioned and therefore the figures quoted relate to Peterlee new town.

British Steel Corporation

Mr. Allan Stewart: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster (1) if he will list the intended capital expenditure of the British Steel Corporation by plant over each of the next three years;

(2) if he will list the following figures for the British Steel Corporation's financial performance for each year since 1978-79 in turnover, net profit or loss, liquid production, numbers employed, productivity in ter man hours per tonne and capital expenditure;

(3) if he will detail capital expenditure in each British Steel Corporation's integrated steel plants in year since 1978-79;

(4) if he will list the following figures for each British Steel Corporation's integrated plants for each since 1978-79 in turnover, net profit or loss, liquid production, number employed, productivity in ter man hours per tonne and capital expenditure.

Mr. Atkins: BSC publishes capital expenditure performance figures for the corporation as a who more detailed breakdown by plant is unavailable sinc information is commercially confidential. The same i of plans for future capital expenditure at individual p The table gives the figures since 1978-79 for corporation as published in the report and account 1986-87:

	1979-80	1980-81	1981-82	1982-83	1983-84	1984-85	1985-86	19
Turnover £ million	3,105	2,954	3,443	3,231	3,358	3,736	3,735	
Net profit (loss) £ million	(1,784)	(1,020)	(504)	(869)	(256)	(383)	38	
Liquid steel production (million tonnes)	14·1	11·9	14·1	11·7	13·4	13·0	14·0	
Number of United Kingdom employees at year end (000's)	166·4	120·9	103·7	81·1	71·1	64·5	54·2	
Productivity (man hours per tonne liquid steel)	13·2	14·5	9·4	9·3	7·1	7·0	6·3	
Capital expenditure £ million	261	148	164	122	164	210	220	

Further to the above table, on 3 December 1987 BSC announced a half-year profit for 1987-88 of £190 million. The corporation is currently planning capital expenditure of £256 million in 1988-89, £274 million in 1989-90 and £288 million in 1990-91.

Easington

Mr. Cummings: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what proposals he has to encourage the development of high technology industry in the district of Easington following the winding-up of the Peterlee and Aycliffe development corporation.

Mr. Butcher: Industry in Easington will be greatly encouraged by the enterprise initiative, with major new inititatives on design, marketing, quality, manufacturing technology, business planning, business information systems, exports, research and technology and business education backed up by investment and innovation grants for small firms (with fewer than 25 employees) and regional selective assistance where clearly necessary to bring about good projects.

Mr. Cummings: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if he will visit Easington to meet those industrialists whose firms have benefited from regional development grants.

Mr. Atkins: I shall be pleased if it proves possibl me to revisit Easington, where industrialists retain a to regional selective assistance, where clearly necessar bring about good projects.

Libya

Mr. Cummings: To ask the Chancellor of the Duch Lancaster what was the value of exports to Libya fro United Kingdom during 1985-86, 1986-87 and 198 date.

Mr. Alan Clark: United Kingdom exports to Liby 1985, 1986 and 1987 are £237·2 million, £260·5 million £202·8 million respectively.

Higher Educational Establishments (Equipment)

Sir Fergus Montgomery: To ask the Chancellor o Duchy of Lancaster what steps have been take encourage companies to donate equipment to hi educational establishments; and if he will mak statement.

Mr. Butcher: The Government look to hi educational establishments to increase their links companies and encourages industry to further those l and donate cash, equipment or staff time. There a

number of tax incentives available to encourage company donations, including donations of equipment, to higher education.

BSC (Land Holdings)

Mr. Gow: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster how much land surplus to operational requirements is owned, whether freehold or leasehold, by the British Steel Corporation.

Mr. Atkins: At the end of December 1987, the British Steel Corporation owned 1,200 acres of land which were recorded as unused or underused under part X of the Local Government, Planning and Land Act 1980.

Regional Selective Assistance

Mr. Blair: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if Her Majesty's Government's provision for regional selective assistance paid from 31 March onwards includes any assessment in respect of money obtained from the EEC European regional development fund.

Mr. Atkins: In setting the levels of public expenditure on regional selective assistance, Her Majesty's Government take into account the amount of support expected from the European regional development fund. The Supply Estimates to be published in March will give details of the receipts forecast from the fund in 1988-89.

Mr. Blair: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if he will give the forecast for regional selective assistance for the years 1988-89 and 1989-90, and the latest forecast outturn for 1987-88.

Mr. Atkins: Expected expenditure by my Department on regional selective assistance in 1988-89 and 1989-90 is £161·5 million and £147·6 million, respectively. The decline between the two years is mainly due to an expected reduction in expenditure on the temporary scheme of assistance for small and medium-sized firms and on the exchange risk guarantee scheme. Provision for expenditure on RSA in 1987-88 currently stands at £121·6 million.

Notes:

(1) All figures are not of recoveries and domestic receipts but gross of expected EC receipts.

(2) The following items are included in RSA for the purpose of departmental expenditure estimates:
- — project and training grants.
- — assistance for small and medium-sized enterprises in certain areas affected by rundown in steel, shipbuilding, textile fisheries and tin mining.
- — guarantees for loans from the European Investment Bank and European Coal and Steel Community.

Mr. Blair: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if he will publish the criteria under which assessments for regional selective assistance *(a)* are, and *(b)* will be, made.

Mr. Atkins: The criteria against which applications are appraised are set out in my Department's booklet "The Regional Initiative: Guide to Regional Selective Assistance", copies of which have been placed in the Library of the House.

Mr. Blair: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster whether any account of the size of an applicant firm will be taken in assessing eligibility for regional selective assistance.

Mr. Atkins: Applications from firms considered against the same criteria procedures apply to grants of £25,000 an

Mr. Blair: To ask the Chancellor of Lancaster (1) what percentage of decisio for regional selective assistance it is conte based on advice from *(a)* private *(b)* Department of Trade and Industry o

(2) whether he will list the types of organisations that will be eligible to receiv in order to give advice on eligibility for re assistance.

Mr. Atkins: There are no present p applications to private consultants for ad proposed offers of £100,000 and over ar advice to the relevant regional industri board or to the industrial development which consist of people from the privi relevant experience. Large applications a the Department's industrial developme consists mainly of private sector secondee

Mr. Blair: To ask the Chancellor of Lancaster whether he will make an e proportion of regional selective assistance Inland Revenue as taxable profits.

Mr. Atkins: No. This will depend on t of companies in receipt of regional selec which is likely to vary widely.

Mr. Blair: To ask the Chancellor of Lancaster how many successful applicatio selective assistance were made in the Unit each year from 1979-80 to 1986-87; and forecast for 1987-88.

Mr. Atkins: The number of successful regional selective assistance in Great Brit year from 1979-80 was as follows:

	Nu
1979-80	
1980-81	
1981-82	
1982-83	
1983-84	
1984-85	
1985-86	
1986-87	

Note: These figures are for successful applications training grants only.

The number in 1987-88 is expected to b

Mr. Blair: To ask the Chancellor of Lancaster how many of the successful a regional selective assistance in 1986-87 we excess of £100,000.

Mr. Atkins: A total of 303 successful ap during 1986-87 in Great Britain received of selective assistane of over £100,000.

Mr. Lofthouse: To ask the Chancellor o Lancaster if he will list the total valu assistance given to companies in the Castl work area for each year since 1979.

Mr. Atkins: Payments of grant under the regional selective assistance and original regional development grant schemes to companies in the Castleford and Pontefract travel-to-work area since 1979 were:

	£'000
1979	275
1980	1,173
1981	534
1982	423
1983	43
1984	139
1985	17
1986	12
1987	—

Notes:

1. The regional development grant element of these data is comprised of individual payments of over £25,000; payments of smaller amounts cannot be attributed to a geographical area smaller than a planning region.
2. Castleford and Pontefract ceased to be an assisted area in 1982.

Mr. Alan Williams: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what checks will be made under his proposed new regional investment grant to ensure that firms achieve the promised number of jobs; and how this system of monitoring will compare with the existing procedures for monitoring regional selective assistance.

Mr. Atkins: The creation of jobs will not be a condition of the new regional investment grant but the scheme is expected to have a beneficial effect on employment and we shall be setting up arrangements to evaluate this on a sampling basis.

Under regional selective assistance companies in receipt of offers of assistance are required to submit annual audited reports on the progress of the project and to inform the Department if they fail to reach or maintain the level of jobs specified in the offer. Projects benefiting from regional selective assistance are normally visited at least once during the period in which these conditions apply.

Mr. Alan Williams: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster how many posts at each regional office in England, Scotland and Wales will be redundant as a result of the recently announced changes in regional policy.

Mr. Atkins: The number of posts devoted to the administration of the revised regional development grant scheme in my Department's regional offices is approximately 160. The need for work on regional development grants will gradually cease over a number of years. Depending on their terms and conditions of employment, staff will either be redeployed, where possible, or found alternative posts.

The administration of the scheme in Scotland and Wales is the responsibility of the Secretaries of State for Scotland and Wales respectively.

Pens (Safety)

Mr. Janner: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster (1) whether he will introduce legislation to ban pen tops of the type that caused the death of Billie Walker of Braunstone, Leicester;

(2) whether he will institute research into the safety of pens available to schoolchildren;

(3) whether he will consult Biro Bic Ltd. to ... voluntary withdrawal by it from the market of p... the type of tops which caused the death of Billie ... of Braunstone, Leicester.

Mr. Maude *[pursuant to his reply, 13 January ... 318]:* Following the completion, in September ... research initiated by my Department which conclu... the risk of asphyxiation of children due to the in... of pen tops could be reduced by a design modi... officials met representatives of the major pen m... turers and other interested organisations. The fin... the report were discussed and details of the type o... identified as safer were made available. It is enco... that some manufacturers have already modifi... products and that the others intend to do so when ... generation of pens is introduced. My Departm... taken the opportunity recently to remind su... through the relevant trade associations, o... responsibilities under the general safety requireme... Consumer Protection Act 1987.

As manufacturers appear to be acting voluntar... not consider further action is necessary at this st... research findings have also been made available ... authorities concerned with consumer product saf... number of overseas countries.

Mr. Hicks: To ask the Chancellor of the D... Lancaster if he will list the criteria that co... identifiable and significant benefits for eligibi... regional selective aid as from April; and if he will ... statement.

Mr. Atkins *[holding answer 18 January 1988]:* ... to qualify for regional selective assistance projec... create or safeguard employment in the assisted are... should have good prospects of achieving com... viability so that the employment benefits are durab... should also strengthen the regional and national ec... for example by improving productivity, increasing ... or introducing new technology. Any adverse im... employment in other firms is taken into account. ... sector projects which serve only a local market ... generally qualify for RSA.

The full list of criteria is set out in the Depar... booklet "The Regional Initiative: Guide to ... selective assistance" and in the guidance notes issu... the application form. The RSA scheme has o... successfully against these requirements for a nu... years.

National Girobank

Mr. Harry Ewing: To ask the Chancellor of the ... of Lancaster in what form he proposes t... parliamentary approval for any change in the st... ownership of national Girobank.

Mr. Butcher *[holding answer 18 January 1988]:* ... naturally expect to inform Parliament of any dec... change the status or ownership of Gi... Parliamentary approval would be sought if requi...

Regional Policy

Mr. Hicks: To ask the Chancellor of the D... Lancaster if he will list, for development and inter... areas, the various schemes that will apply as from A...

the promotion of regional policy and the encouragement of business enterprise, together with details of the level of financial assistance and any associated conditions.

Mr. Atkins *[holding answer 18 January 1988]:* From April 1988 the following schemes of assistance will apply under the DTI regional initiative:

Regional Selective Assistance, available in development and intermediate areas:

(a) Project grants based on the fixed capital costs of a project and the number of jobs expected to be created or safeguarded. The level of grant is negotiated, within certain EC and national limits, as the minimum necessary for the project to proceed.

(b) Training grants at up to 80 per cent. of eligible costs.

To be eligible for assistance projects should be viable, create or safeguard employment, offer regional and national economic benefits, and need assistance to go ahead.

Consultancy Assistance

(a) A free 2-day Business Review.

(b) Assistance for consultancy projects of 5-15 man days on:

marketing
design
quality
manufacturing strategy and systems
business planning
financial and information systems.

Assistance is normally at the rate of half of the agreed consultancy cost. But in the development and intermediate areas, and in urban programme areas, the assistance is at the rate of two thirds of the agreed consultancy cost to reflect the particular need to stimulate increased use of consultancy in those areas. This assistance is available to independent firms or groups with fewer than 500 employees.

Investment grants of 15 per cent. of the cost of fixed assets up to a maximum grant of £15,000, and innovation grants of 50 per cent. of the agreed project cost up to a maximum grant of £25,000, will be available to independent firms with fewer than 25 employees in development areas. These two schemes are being targeted at the development areas in recognition of the particular difficulties in those areas in raising finance for business development and stimulating innovation. Further details of these two new grants will be published nearer the date of their introduction on 1 April.

In certain parts of the assisted areas (and some non-assisted areas) the following are also available:

(a) Exchange risk cover on foreign currency reconversion loans from the European Coal and Steel Community up to a maximum of £500,000 per project; and

(b) Temporarily, business improvement service grants to help support the development of small firms.

Mr. Teddy Taylor: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if the reforms of regional policy which he announced on 12 January require the prior approval of the European Commission before they are implemented; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Atkins *[holding answer 18 January 1988]:* The regional policy changes which were announced on 12 January included plans to grant or alter state aid, of which the European Commission must be informed in accordance with article 93(3) of the EC treaty. The Commission has been informed of these plans and has decided to raise no objections to them.

Regional Assistance (Sun

Mr. Mullin: To ask the Chancello Lancaster if he will list the total assistance given to companies in Sunde since 1979.

Mr. Atkins *[holding answer 18 Janu* value of regional assistance given Sunderland for each year since 1979 i

	RSA offered	*RDG I*
1979	1·1	
1980	3·6	
1981	2·2	
1982	1·8	
1983	2·5	
1984	38·0	
1985	1·6	
1986	2·5	
1987	3·3	

The RSA figure for 1984 include offered in respect of the Nissan project. relate to published information fo employment office area and identify in in excess of £25,000. The Department more detailed statistics. The RDG II s in November 1984 and there were no

SOCIAL SERVICE

British Paediatric Associ

Mr. Sheerman: To ask the Secretary Services if his Department has conside for an exhibition relating to the Association to be displayed in the Upp

Mrs. Currie: I understand that, agreed by the Services Committee, a been made with the authorities of th exhibition to be held in the Upper Waiti week commencing 22 February.

Registration of Death

Mr. Barry Field: To ask the Secretary Services if he has any plans to introd permit registration of death to be made of death or at the place of normal reside make a statement.

Mrs. Currie: At present, infor registration of a death may be given on of the sub-district in which the event oc

A change similar to the one which seeking has been considered on a num most recently in the efficiency scrutiny in of births, marriages and deaths in En which reported in 1985. The scruti introduction of a system which would England or Wales to be notified to any in those countries, provided that certain changes affecting death registration and deaths to a coroner could also be made.

As my noble Friend the Parliamentary of State announced in the other place on

—*Official Report, House of Lords*, column 1230—the Government intend to legislate along the lines of the scrutiny proposals in the present Parliament should a suitable opportunity occur. To that end, consultations have been opened on the scrutiny recommendations including those on death registration. It is as yet too early to predict the outcome of those consultations.

Hip Replacement Operations (Barnet)

Mr. John Marshall: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services how many hip replacement operations have been carried out in the Barnet health authority since 1978.

Mrs. Currie: I regret that this information can be produced centrally only at disproportionate cost. My hon. Friend may wish to write to the chairman of the health authority for the information he requires.

Obstetric Units

Mr. Gareth Wardell: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) if he will publish in the *Official Report* a list of each obstetric unit for each health authority in England and if he will indicate for each unit *(a)* whether there is a designated consultant anaesthetist whose duties include the organisation of an obstetric anaesthetic service and ensuring that the health authority is fully aware of any deficiencies in this service, *(b)* whether there is a consultant anaesthetist on call and readily available on a 24 hour, seven day a week basis, *(c)* whether suitable facilities for the storage of blood exists, *(d)* whether a quantity of Group O Rh-ve blood is held, *(e)* whether there exists a 24 hour on-request epidural service, *(f)* whether an anaesthetic audit is undertaken; and *(g)* whether the equipment required in the labour suite and the obstetric theatre include an emergency electricity supply;

(2) if he will indicate for each obstetric unit in England whether the anaesthetic equipment includes *(a)* an anaesthetic machine, *(b)* difficult intubation kit, *(c)* a DC defibrillator, *(d)* anaesthetic gas scavenging facilities, *(e)* an automatic pulmonary ventilator with disconnect alarm and *(f)* refrigerator for the storage of drugs;

(3) if he will indicate for each obstetric unit in England whether there is *(a)* an ECG monitor with recorder, *(b)* an inspired oxygen concentration meter, *(c)* an automatic blood pressure measuring device, *(d)* an end tidal carbon dioxide meter, *(e)* a peripheral nerve stimulator, *(f)* apparatus for measuring central venous pressure, *(g)* pulse aximeter, *(h)* blood storage refrigerator, *(i)* pressure infusion bags, *(j)* a blood warming device, *(k)* blood filters, *(l)* neonatal resuscitation equipment that includes a temperature measuring device; and *(m)* neonatal equipment for maintaining the temperature of the neonate.

Mrs. Currie: The information requested is not collected centrally and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost. The Maternity Services Advisory Committee in 1984 provided guidance to health authorities on the equipment to be included in new delivery suites and in the upgrading of existing buildings. This guidance, which has been commended to health authorities, is followed wherever possible. The functioning of obstetrics departments is a matter for the health authority concerned.

Hospital Broadcasting Services

Mrs. Golding: To ask the Secretary of Sta Services whether he will meet the chairma Telecom to discuss the threat to hospital b services from substantial increases in British T charges.

Mrs. Currie: No. The organisation broadcasting services is for local decision. I there have been no significant changes in Brit charges likely to affect hospital broadcasting s November 1986.

Lloyd George Stationery

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State Services if his Department has reviewed the u availability of Lloyd George stationery fo medical histories by family practitioners; an make a statement.

Mrs. Currie: In 1974 a joint working p Health Departments for England, Wales an health authorities and general medical p recommended the replacement of the A5 s record envelope (familiarly known as the "Ll envelope") in general practice by an A4 size f then some practices have converted their rec size. Supplies of the A5 envelope continue to to practices which have not converted their re

Medical Professionals

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State Services if he will review the current level of int medical professionals into the general m system; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Newton: We have no plans to carry ou A considerable number of medical staff ha general managers and we welcome the contribu they are making to the Health Service.

Consultants

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State Services what guidance is issued to employing regarding the negotiation of contracts with co

Mr. Newton: Guidance on the contracts of is contained in "Personnel Memorandum PM copy of which has been placed in the Library.

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State Services what is his policy on the payment of diff to consultants employed by the National Hea in different geographical areas.

Mr. Newton: Consultants working in the Lo receive London weighting. Apart from this, all c are paid on a single national scale, which is the a recommendation by the Review Body on Do Dentists' Remuneration.

Supplementary Benefit

Mr. Rogers: To ask the Secretary of State Services how many people claimed supplement in Rhondda constituency in *(a)* 1979 and *(b)* 1

percentage change that represents; and what was the percentage change in (i) staff handling supplementary benefit and (ii) all staff at local offices of his Department for the same period.

Mr. Portillo: Information is not available in the precise form requested. The Rhondda constituency is served by Porth and Rhondda, West local offices of the Department, although the boundaries are not conterminous.

The number of people in receipt of supplementary benefit, and the percentage increase between the years requested, is as follows:

	Porth	*Rhondda West*	*Totals*	*Percentage increase*
1979	2,984	5,150	8,134	—
1985	4,227	7,825	12,052	48

Source: 100 per cent. count of cases in action in May of each year.

The staffing figures for 1979 are no longer available. Details of the percentage change in staffing cannot therefore be supplied.

Severe Weather Payments

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services, pursuant to his answer of 18 December 1987, *Official Report*, column *935*, if he will publish a similar table of severe weather payments which includes figures for the Castle Gate office of his Department in proportion to its Nottingham, North constituency clients.

Mr. Scott: The total and weekly number of exceptionally cold weather payments made by the Castlegate office last winter is as follows. Information on what proportion of those payments was made to claimants in the Nottingham, North consituency is not available but is likely to be very small, since only a small part of that constituency lies within the area covered by the Castlegate office.

The figures given are for the statitical weeks ending on the dates specified. I regret that my reply on 18 December, at column *935*, in relation to the local offices which cover most of the Nottingham, North constituency, wrongly stated that the figures were for the weeks commencing on those dates.

Number of exceptionally cold weather payments made by Nottingham Castlegate office by week of payment in the winter of 1986-87

Payment made in week ending	*Number of £5 weekly payments made*
20 January 1987	200
27 January 1987	1,957
3 February 1987	1,115
10 February 1987	363
17 February 1987	252
24 February 1987	137
3 March 1987	139
10 March 1987	46
17 March 1987	64
24 March 1987	22
31 March 1987	—
7 April 1987	20
14 April 1987	18
21 April 1987	—
28 April 1987	8
5 May 1987	6
19 May 1987	—
26 May 1987	—
2 June 1987	4
TOTAL	4,351

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services, pursuant to his answer of 18 December 1987, *Official Report*, column *935*, which were the two weeks for which help in the form of severe weather payments was available in the Nottingham area.

Mr. Scott: Exceptionally cold weather payments were available in the Nottingham area for the weeks commencing 12 and 19 January 1987.

Nurses

Mr. Sayeed: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will list those *(a)* health authorities and *(b)* teaching hospitals which are running courses designed to retrain and possibly re-employ previously qualified nurses who wish to return to the nursing profession, giving in each case the number of places and applicants for each year since such courses have been in operation, and the steps taken to advertise the availability of the courses.

Mr. Newton: The information is not available centrally.

It rests with health authorities to match the provision of courses for those wishing to return to nursing with the service need. Every encouragement is given to health authorities to attract qualified nurses to return. Planning and organisation of these courses is a matter for individual health authorities, depending on their staffing needs.

Such courses are usually publicised within the community.

Social Fund

Mr. Worthington: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services on what principles area allocations of money to the social fund were decided; and for what reasons some areas have received smaller allocations than are being disbursed at the present time.

Mr. Scott: An explanation of the basis of social fund allocations to local offices for 1988-89 is available in the Library.

Mentally Handicapped People (Board and Lodging)

Mr. Steel: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will make it his policy to make the levels of board and lodging allowance for the mentally handicapped more flexible to take account of the variety of support needs of the mentally handicapped: and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Scott: Supplementary benefit assistance with residential care and nursing home fees does not, and was never intended to, provide help with all levels of needs. It is not the only source of support for mentally handicapped people. Health and local authorities have powers and duties to help where particular needs arise.

Sir Roy Griffiths has been asked to conduct an overview of community care and to make recommendations on the most effective use of public resources. His conclusions are expected shortly.

Mr. Steel: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will make it his policy to ensure that the growth in board and lodging allowances for the mentally handicapped will allow for inflation; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Scott: People in homes for the mentally handicapped who are entitled to supplementary benefit (from next April income support) can receive help in full with any increase in charges, subject to national limits on the overall weekly charge which can be met, which from next April will be £200 per week (nursing homes) and £160 per week (residential care homes). This represents increases of 14 per cent. and 19 per cent. respectively since April 1985 when the present system was introduced, reflecting the fact that we already take movements in homes' costs and charges into account when setting limits. The increase in the retail prices index since April 1985 has been 9 per cent.

Prescriptions (Cost of Items)

Mr. Fearn: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he has any plans to introduce legislation to make it a requirement for pharmacists to inform patients when an item ordered by prescription is cheaper when bought over the counter.

Mr. Newton: We have no plans to do so.

General Practice Finance Corporation

Mrs. Rosie Barnes: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what discussions he has had with the general medical services committee of the British Medical Association, and the General Practice Finance Corporation, about changing the constitution of the General Practice Finance Corporation to allow the maximum use of private sector funds; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Tony Newton: In the past year, I have met representatives of the General Medical Services Committee of the British Medical Association (GMSC) on three occasions and representatives of the General Practice Finance Corporation (GPFC) on five occasions, which included two meetings jointly with the GMSC, to discuss changing the constitution of the GPFC to allow the maximum use of private sector funds. As I said in reply to my hon. Friend the Member for Kingswood (Mr. Hayward) on 25 November 1987, at columns *248-49*, we shall be carrying forward this proposal in further discussion with the GPFC and the GMSC. Powers to enable such a change to take place are included in clauses 1 to 3 of the Health and Medicines Bill.

Mr. Wareing: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services on what date he received the annual report of the General Practice Finance Corporation; and why it has not yet been laid before Parliament.

Mrs. Currie: A copy of the corporation's annual report was received on 1 December. The report is being studied prior to arranging for it to be laid before Parliament.

Invalid Care Allowance (Seaham and Peterlee)

Mr. Cummings: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will indicate the number of people within the area covered by his Department's Peterlee office and Seaham office who are in receipt of invalid care allowance.

Mr. Scott: I regret that the information requested is not available.

Emphysema

Mr. Lofthouse: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he has now received the Industrial Injuries Advisory Council's report on its investigation into the cause of emphysema among coal miners; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Scott: We have not yet received this report. I am advised that it will now be submitted in February. Careful consideration will then be given to its recommendations.

NHS Funding (Yorkshire)

Mr. Lofthouse: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will list the amount of Government funding for each year since 1979 to *(a)* Pontefract district health authority and *(b)* the Yorkshire regional health authority, based on (i) actual amounts, (ii) in real terms at the current year's prices and (iii) in real terms at the current year's prices based on information he may have for National Health Service inflation costs.

Mrs. Currie: The available information is shown in the table. Information is not available on a district basis for the years prior to the 1982 reorganisation of the National Health Service. Comparable information for 1987-88 will not be available until after the end of the financial year.

It is inappropriate to revalue district health authority expenditure by reference to centrally assessed movements in hospital and community health services pay and prices as the local composition of that expenditure can differ significantly from the national average.

	Yorkshire Region Net revenue expenditure[1] (£ thousands)			*Pontefract District Net revenue expenditure[1] (£ thousands)*	
		1986-87 prices			*1986-87 prices*
	Cash	*Using gross domestic product deflator*	*Using HCHS pay and price deflator*	*Cash*	*Using gross domestic product deflator*
1978-79	311,657	606,348	692,814	..	—
1979-80	377,972	629,188	696,980	..	—
1980-81	490,154	688,216	706,312	..	—
1981-82	542,779	694,082	722,982	..	—
1982-83	578,533	690,126	723,166	20,046	23,913
1983-84	613,596	699,773	730,179	21,299	24,290

	Yorkshire Region Net revenue expenditure[1] (£ thousands)			Pontefract District Net revenue expenditure[1] (£ thousands)	
		1986-87 prices			1986-87 prices
	Cash	Using gross domestic product deflator	Using HCHS pay and price deflator	Cash	Using gross domestic product deflator
1984-85	651,050	711,173	732,431	22,644	24,735
1985-86	694,253	715,172	742,156	24,249	24,980
1986-87	742,884	742,884	742,884	26,375	26,375

[1] As shown in health authorities' summarised accounts.
.. Not available.

Mr. Lofthouse: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what is the sum to be allocated to the Yorkshire regional health authority out of the additional funds made available in the financial year 1987-88; and how much of that sum is to be allocated to the Pontefract district health authority.

Mrs. Currie: Yorkshire regional health authority has been allocated £4·7 million from the additional £75 million available this year. It is for the region to decide how to distribute these funds amongst its districts.

Pontefract Health Authority

Mr. Lofthouse: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what information he has received from the Pontefract district health authority about its projected deficits from 1987-88 and 1988-89; and what action he proposes to take in response.

Mrs. Currie: I am fully aware of Pontefract's financial position. I am sure the hon. Member will have welcomed my right hon. Friend the Minister for Health's announcement on 16 December of an additional £75 million for health authorities in England for this financial year. £4·7 million of this has been allocated to Yorkshire regional health authority. Distribution of this money and of the annual allocation for 1988-89 to district health authorities in Yorkshire are matters for the regional health authority. The hon. Member may therefore wish to approach the chairman of Yorkshire regional health authority for further information.

Ambulances

Mr. Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services how many ambulances of the London ambulance service, per sector, were available for emergency duty on 31 December 1987, 1 January 1988 and each subsequent day until 7 January.

Mrs. Currie: The information requested is as follows:

Manned Vehicles

Shift period	Division North East	North West	South East	South West	Regional training centre	Total London ambulance service
Early						
31 December 1987	44	44	31	34	6	169
1 January 1988	40	45	29	33	6	162
2 January 1988	38	39	28	31	6	142
3 January 1988	36	37	23	30	3	129
4 January 1988	45	47	32	37	6	167
5 January 1988	44	45	29	36	6	160
6 January 1988	44	46	31	37	6	164
7 January 1988	43	46	32	37	8	164
Late						
31 December 1987	32	40	23	31	6	132
1 January 1988	38	44	29	31	6	148
2 January 1988	38	43	23	31	6	141
3 January 1988	29	39	23	28	3	122
4 January 1988	40	44	27	30	6	147
5 January 1988	41	44	29	32	6	152
6 January 1988	41	43	29	32	8	151
7 January 1988	37	42	30	30	6	146
Night						
31 December 1987	25	21	12	14	6	[1]78
1 January 1988	23	26	15	13	6	89
2 January 1988	25	24	14	12	6	81
3 January 1988	25	26	16	15	6	88
4 January 1988	23	26	17	16	6	88
5 January 1988	22	26	17	17	6	88
6 January 1988	23	27	17	16	6	89
7 January 1988	24	26	17	17	6	90

[1] Plus preplanned support of 20 ambulances provided by St. John Ambulance Association giving a total of 98.

Social Security Reform

Mr. Wareing: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services which voluntary organisations he intends to consult about the need to assist those severely disabled people who will receive reduced benefit from April 1988; what he will be asking them to do; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Scott: I have had a number of informal and exploratory talks. Those who gave me their views did so in confidence. I shall make a further announcement when the details of the scheme have been decided.

Cleveland County Council (Letters)

Mr. Frank Cook: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services when his housing benefit department at New court, Carey street, will be able to reply to the letters from Cleveland county council welfare rights department dated 8 May 1987, 3 July 1987, 15 July 1987 and 4 November 1987, all of which related to housing benefit circulars.

Mr. Portillo: A reply has now been sent to Cleveland county council welfare rights department in response to its letters about housing benefit circulars.

AIDS

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services when he will respond to the Advisory Council on Drug Abuse's report on drug addiction and AIDS.

Mr. Newton: We have very recently received the first report of the Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs on drug misuse and AIDS. We expect to respond shortly, after appropriate consideration.

Efficiency

Mr. Barry Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) when he will publish the statistics comparing efficiency and performance between hospitals and health authorities;

(2) if he will list the top 10 health districts in the United Kingdom for efficiency in ear, nose and throat surgery.

Mr. Newton *[holding answer 14 January 1988]:* The Department will publish the annual set of performance indicators based on 1986-87 data in February 1988. This set, like those for earlier years, will be available in the Library. Performance indicators address some but not all aspects of efficiency. Since there is no one measure of the efficiency of a service, it is not therefore possible to publish a ranking list. Efficiency can be characterised only by analysis of a range of local data such as cost per case; manpower, capital and bed utilisation; percentage of day cases. Of these data only a few, for example bed utilisation and day cases, are available nationally at the ear, nose and throat specialty level, and these form part of the performance indicator set.

Children in Care

Ms. Harman: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services how many children were in care by local authority area in 1986, or the most recent year available; how many of these children are available for adoption; and how many children in care were adopted in each of the last five years.

Mrs. Currie *[holding answer 15 January 1988]:* The information available is given in the tables. Information is not collected centrally on the number of children in care available for adoption.

Table 1
Children in care of local authorities in England by local authority area, at 31 March 1986

	[3]Number
England[1]	66,700
Cleveland	979
Cumbria	493
Durham	894
Northumberland	325
Gateshead	338
Newcastle Upon Tyne	826
North Tyneside	372
South Tyneside	332
Sunderland	389
Humberside	1,348
North Yorkshire	755
Barnsley	273
Doncaster	272
Rotherham	255
Sheffield[2]	820
Bradford	948
Calderdale	357
Kirklees	541
Leeds	1,453
Wakefield	389
Cheshire	1,017
Lancashire	2,328
Bolton	395
Bury	271
Manchester	1,555
Oldham	321
Rochdale	495
Salford	534
Stockport	352
Tameside	309
Trafford	298
Wigan	333
Knowsley	383
Liverpool	1,281
Sefton	406
St. Helens	284
Wirral	503
Hereford and Worcester	674
Shropshire	569
Staffordshire	1,199
Warwickshire	535
Birmingham	2,218
Coventry	578
Dudley	296
Sandwell	463
Solihull	262
Walsall	393
Wolverhampton	585
Derbyshire	1,174
Leicestershire	1,050
Lincolnshire	832
Northamptonshire	796
Nottinghamshire	1,821
Bedfordshire	787
Berkshire	794
Buckinghamshire	613
Cambridgeshire	852
Essex	1,189
Hertfordshire	892
Norfolk	795
Oxfordshire	572
Suffolk	507
Camden	344

	[3]Number
Greenwich	383
Hackney	755
Hammersmith	404
Islington[2]	769
Kensington	278
Lambeth	810
Lewisham[2]	587
Southwark	643
Tower Hamlets[2]	915
Wandsworth	572
Westminster	260
City of London	5
Barking	228
Barnet	132
Bexley	196
Brent	355
Bromley	245
Croydon	456
Ealing	363
Enfield	254
Haringey	411
Harrow	91
Havering	176
Hillingdon	166
Hounslow	289
Kingston upon Thames	143
Merton	175
Newham	438
Redbridge	256
Richmond upon Thames	103
Sutton	185
Waltham Forest	320
Dorset	631
Hampshire	2,270
Isle of Wight	124
Kent[2]	1,681
Surrey	797
East Sussex	790
West Sussex	776
Wiltshire	694
Avon	1,172
Cornwall	357
Devon[2]	897
Gloucestershire	521
Somerset	445

[1] Figures are provisional and subject to revision.
[2] Figures estimated using returns for earlier years.
[3] Rounded to nearest hundred.

Table 2
Children in care in England who were adopted during the year ended 31 March, 1982-1986

Year	Number
1982	1,828
1983	2,044
1984	1,912
1985	1,905
[1]1986	1,916

[1] The figure for 1986 is provisional and subject to revision.

Central Nottinghamshire Health Authority

Mr. Meale: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will itemise all closures of all National Health Service psychiatric establishments from 1979 to 1987, inclusive, in both the Central Nottinghamshire area health authority and Trent regional health authority areas.

Mrs. Currie *[holding answer 15 January 1988]:* The information requested is given in the table. There were no closures of psychiatric hospitals in Central Nottinghamshire.

Mental Illness hospitals closed since 1979 in Trent Regional Health Authority

District and Hospital	Date of Cl
Southern Derbyshire	
Blakely	
Rykneld	
Grange Childrens Unit	
Etwall	
North Lincolnshire	
Lawn	
Nottingham	
Coppice	
Rotherham	
Swallow Nest	

Mentally Handicapped People

Mr. Meale: To ask the Secretary of State for So Services if he will give the levels of mentally handicap patients registered in the Central Nottinghamshire he authority area for each year 1979 to 1987, inclusive.

Mrs. Currie *[holding answer 15 January 1988]:* numbers of people in National Health Service me handicapped hospitals and units in the Cen Nottinghamshire health authority on 31 December given in the table. The people concerned are not regist and may not have been resident in the area of the he authority before their admission as patients. Figures 1987 are not yet available.

Numbers of people in mental handicapped hospitals and units Central Nottinghamshire Health Authority at 31 December

Year	Number
1979	497
1980	463
1981	451
1982	426
1983	418
1984	390
1985	377
1986	362

Efficiency Savings

Mr. Spearing: To ask the Secretary of State for So Services if he will tabulate in the *Official Report* respective sums for each financial year since 198 described, or having effect, as efficiency savings for regional health authority in England and Wales, toge with the respective regional and global totals expresse actual money terms and in 1988 purchasing po respectively.

Mr. Newton *[holding answer 18 January 1988]:* tables show for each regional health authority in Engl the totals of achieved efficiency savings and cash-relea cost improvements expressed both in cash terms an 1986-87 price levels (the latest available) for each from 1981-82. Figures for 1980-81 are not avail centrally. Information on the savings achieved in 198 will be available later this year. The information for W is a matter for my right hon. Friend the Secretary of S for Wales.

Efficiency savings and cash releasing cost improvements at cash prices

£ million

Region	[1]1981-82	[1]1982-83	[2]1983-84	[1]1984-85	[1]1985-86	[1]1986-87
Northern	1·20	2·10	2·70	4·00	5·20	8·90
Yorkshire	0·60	2·00	3·10	7·10	10·00	11·80
Trent	1·50	2·10	3·70	8·00	13·20	12·10
East Anglian	0·80	0·60	1·60	3·30	2·90	4·50
North West Thames	1·20	1·80	3·30	10·60	14·30	15·80
North East Thames	1·50	4·10	4·20	11·70	17·10	16·40
South East Thames	2·10	3·00	3·60	14·00	14·30	12·70
South West Thames	1·20	1·20	2·80	6·90	8·50	10·90
Wessex	0·20	1·30	2·20	4·20	4·70	8·50
Oxford	0·20	0·60	1·80	3·70	4·80	4·60
South Western	1·00	1·00	2·70	4·70	6·20	6·60
West Midlands	1·30	1·40	4·20	13·50	12·00	13·70
Mersey	1·10	2·00	2·30	6·00	8·40	10·70
North Western	1·30	2·30	3·80	7·50	13·60	14·10
Total new savings (in cash terms)	15·20	25·50	42·00	105·20	135·20	151·30
Cumulative savings (in cash terms)	—	40·70	82·70	187·90	323·10	474·40

[1] Cash savings reported by regions.
[2] In 1983-84, regional health authorities were expected to achieve the efficiency savings shown, equivalent to some 0·5 per cent. of their cash allocations, but detailed returns were not requested.

Efficiency savings and cash releasing cost improvements at constant prices

£ million

Region	[1]1981-82	[1]1982-83	[2]1983-84	[1]1984-85	[1]1985-86	[1]1986-87
Northern	1·60	2·63	3·21	4·50	5·56	8·90
Yorkshire	0·80	2·50	3·69	7·99	10·69	11·80
Trent	2·00	2·63	4·40	9·00	14·11	12·10
East Anglian	1·07	0·75	1·90	3·71	3·10	4·50
North West Thames	1·60	2·25	3·93	11·93	15·29	15·80
North East Thames	2·00	5·13	5·00	13·16	18·28	16·40
South East Thames	2·80	3·75	4·28	15·75	15·29	12·70
South West Thames	1·60	1·50	3·33	7·76	9·09	10·90
Wessex	0·27	1·63	2·62	4·73	5·02	8·50
Oxford	0·27	0·75	2·14	4·16	5·13	4·60
South Western	1·33	1·25	3·21	5·29	6·63	6·60
West Midlands	1·73	1·75	5·00	15·19	12·83	13·70
Mersey	1·47	2·50	2·74	6·75	8·98	10·70
North Western	1·73	2·88	4·52	8·44	14·54	14·10
Total	20·25	31·88	49·98	118·35	144·53	151·30
Cumulative savings (constant prices)	—	52·12	102·10	220·45	364·98	516·28

[1] Cash savings reported by regions.
[2] In 1983-84, regional health authorities were expected to achieve the efficiency savings shown, equivalent to some 0·5 per cent. of their cash allocations, but detailed returns were not requested.

Mr. B. Ingram, South Tyrone Hospital

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services for what reason he has not replied to the letter of 7 July 1987 addressed to the Parliamentary Secretary on medical laboratory scientific officers from the Chief Medical Laboratory Scientific Officer, Mr. B. Ingram, of South Tyrone hospital.

Mrs. Currie *[holding answer 18 January 1988]:* Mr. Ingram's letter was one of 620 received as part of a co-ordinated campaign during the period of the medical laboratory scientific officers' pay negotiations in 1987. Ministers were fully aware of the issues involved and official replies to those letters were sent out on their behalf. The response to Mr. Ingram was sent by an executive officer in the health authority personnel division in July 1987 and Mr. Ingram responded to such a reply in a further letter dated 31 July 1987.

Chorion Villus Sampling

Ms. Richardson: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) how many district health authorities in England provide chorion villus sampling to pregnant women; and under what circumstances;

(2) what information on chorion villus sampling and amniocentesis is available for pregnant women who wish to have screening; and through what channels the information is made available.

Mrs. Currie *[holding answer 18 January 1988]:* The information requested is not held centrally. Facilities for amniocentesis testing are available through all consultant

units. The decision to offer chorion villus sampling and aminiocentesis to a pregnant woman is a matter of clinical judgment, and will depend on the risk in her particular case of the foetus having a detectable abnormality. The Medical Research Council, which receives its grant from the DES, is conducting a randomised controlled trial comparing amniocentesis with chorionic villus sampling; twenty-three centres in the United Kingdom are participating. An information booklet is available to participants and I will arrange for a copy to be sent to the hon. Member. The Department's view is that the procedures and their implications should be fully explained to the mother to enable her to make an informed decision. She should also be told who will give her the results and when she can expect to be notified.

Day Nurseries

Mrs. Clwyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what information he has as to the percentage of *(a)* three-year-olds and *(b)* four-year-olds who have places in local authority day nurseries.

Mrs. Currie *[holding answer 18 January 1988]:* Information is not collected centrally on the individual age of children using local authority day nurseries. Over the period 1982-86, the number of children on the registers of local authority day nurseries increased from 31,700 to 34,900 an increase from 1·1 per cent. to 1·2 per cent. of the population aged under five years.

Nurses, Midwives and Health Visitors (Review Body Membership)

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will list the current membership of the Independent Review Body for Nursing Staff, Midwives and Health Visitors, showing the nominating or originating body and period of tenure in each case.

Mr. Newton: Members of the Independent Review Body for Nursing Staff, Midwives and Health Visitors are appointed by my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister. The current membership of the review body is shown in the table:

Name	*Appointed*	*Appointment Ends*
Sir James Cleminson, MC, DL, (Chairman)	1987	1989
Sir John Herbecq, KCB, (Deputy Chairman)	1983	1990
Miss Beryl Cooper, QC	1983	1990
Mrs. Suzette Harold	1983	1988
Principal Graham Hills	1983	1988
Mrs. Jennifer Hughes	1983	1988
Mr. Ian Phillips, F. Eng	1983	1990
Professor George Thomason, CBE	1983	1988

Nurses (Overtime)

Mr. Wareing: To ask the Secretary of State fo Services what he estimates to be *(a)* the perce nurses working overtime, and *(b)* the cost of this the National Health Service.

Mr. Newton *[pursuant to his reply 16 Decemb c. 598]:* Nurses who are graded up to and includi nurse 7 are entitled to recompense for overtime Of these nurses, 38 per cent. received at least one during the year 1986-87 at a total estimated co National Health Service in Great Britain of £47·1

Benefits (Rhondda)

Mr. Rogers: To ask the Secretary of State fo Services how many people claimed supplementar in Rhondda constituency in *(a)* 1979 and *(b)* 198 percentage change that represents; and what percentage change in (i) staff handling supple benefit and (ii) all staff at local offices of his Dep for the same period.

Mr. Portillo: Information is not available in th form requested. The Rhondda constituency is s Porth and Rhondda West local offices of the Dep although the boundaries are not conterminous.

The number of people in receipt of supple benefit, and the percentage increase between t requested, is as follows:

	Porth	*Rhondda West*	*Totals*	
1979	2,984	5,150	8,134	
1985	4,227	7,825	12,052	

Source: 100 per cent. count of cases in action in May of

The staffing figures for 1979 are no longer a Details of the percentage change in staffing, therefore be supplied.

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Parliamentary Salaries

Mr. Dykes: To ask the hon. Member for Berwic Tweed, as representing the House of C Commission, if he will give figures and grades, t ranks for all Officers of the House of Common salaries are *(a)* higher and *(b)* lower than those Members.

Mr. Beith: The information requested is set o following table:

Grade	*Number of staff*	*Civil Service equivalent*	*Salary range £*
Above £22,548·00			
Clerk of the House	1	Grade 1	65,000
Clerk Assistant	1	Grade 2	43,500-45,500
Clerk of Committees	1	Grade 2	43,500-45,500
Speaker's Counsel	2	Grade 3	34,000-37,000
Principal Clerks (I)	7	Grade 3	34,000-37,000
Serjeant at Arms	1	Grade 3	34,000-37,000
Librarian	1	Grade 3	34,000-37,000

Grade	Number of staff	Civil Service equivalent	Salary range £
Head of Administration	1	Grade 3	34,000-37,000
Principal Clerks (II)	2	Grade 4	30,344-31,844
Accountant	1	Grade 4	30,344-31,844
Editor	1	Grade 4	30,344-31,844
Deputy Principal Clerks	16	Grade 5	24,765-28,215
Deputy Serjeant at Arms	1	Grade 5	24,765-28,215
Deputy Librarian	1	Grade 5	24,765-28,215
Assistant Librarian	2	Grade 5	24,765-28,215
Head of Establishments Office	1	Grade 5	24,765-28,215
Deputy Accountant	1	Grade 5	24,765-28,215
Speaker's Secretary	1	Grade 5	24,765-28,215
Computer Officer	1	Grade 5	24,765-28,215
Below £22,548·00			
Deputy Assistant Librarian	9	Grade 6	18,786-25,335
Deliverer of the Vote	1	Grade 6	18,786-25,335
Deputy Head of Establishments Office	1	Grade 6	18,786-25,335
Senior Assistant Accountant	1	Grade 6	18,786-25,335
General Manager RD	1	Grade 6	18,786-25,335
Deputy Editor	1	Grade 6	18,786-25,335
Assistant Serjeant at Arms	1	95 per cent. Grade 6	17,847-24,068
Principal Assistant Editors	4	93 per cent. Grade 6	17,471-23,562
Assistant Editors	4	83 per cent. Grade 6	15,592-21,028
Senior Clerks	22	Grade 7	15,030-20,292
Deputy Assistant Serjeant at Arms	2	Grade 7	15,030-20,292
Senior Library Clerks	12	Grade 7	15,030-20,292
Assistant Accountants	4	Grade 7	15,030-20,292
Internal Auditor	1	Grade 7	15,030-20,292
Staff Inspector	1	Grade 7	15,030-20,292
Deputy General Manager RD	1	Grade 7	15,030-20,292
Catering Accountant RD	1	Grade 7	15,030-20,292
Deputy Deliverer of the Vote	1	90 per cent. Grade 7	13,527-18,263
Assistant Clerks (A)	7	HEO (D)	10,900-13,900
Assistant Library Clerks	4	HEO (D)	10,900-13,900
Assistant Clerk (T)	1	AT	8,000-10,150
Assistant Library Clerk (T)	3	AT	8,000-10,150
Speaker's Chaplain	1	SEO (9¼ hours)	3,656

Notes:

1. The above salaries which were effective from 1 April 1987, do not include Inner London Weighting (£1,527 per annum).
2. Where the mean of the salary scale quoted above is greater than £22,548 (basic salary of a Member) the recipient is deemed to have a higher salary than that of a Member. If the mean of the scale is less than £22,548 the recipient is deemed to be paid less than a Member.

TRANSPORT

Sexual Harassment

Ms. Richardson: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what is his Department's policy on sexual harassment at work; whether guidance on reporting complaints has been issued to all staff; how many complaints have been reported in the past five years; and what disciplinary action has been taken.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: The Civil Service policy on sexual harassment is set out in the programme of action to achieve equal opportunities for women in the Civil Service which was published by the Cabinet Office, Management and Personnel Office, in 1984.

Sexual harassment at work is not tolerated and is dealt with as a disciplinary matter through departmental complaints procedures. Guidance on reporting complaints has been issued to all staff. I am arranging for a copy of the Department's guidance to be placed in the Library. No central record of complaints was kept until mid-1986. Since then there has been one complaint which has been fully investigated.

It is not the Department's practice to publish the disciplinary action taken in individual cases.

National Dock Labour Scheme

Mr. Nicholas Bennett: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will give the number of ports in the national dock labour scheme in 1958, 1968, 1978 and each year since 1983, and the percentage of all United Kingdom ports those figures represent in each of these years.

Mr. David Mitchell: The scheme, when first made in 1947, listed 80 ports in Great Britain to which it applied. One port has been added to the list and one deleted from it. Over time several of the other listed ports have fallen into disuse, have ceased to handle cargo, or have been amalgamated. There are now about 60 ports within the scheme. In total there are around 300 harbours or ports in Great Britain. Cargo is handled at about one third of them.

Mr. Nicholas Bennett: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) if he will list by each port in the United Kingdom *(a)* the total value of imports; *(b)* the total value of exports; *(c)* the total tonnage of imports and

(d) the total tonnage of exports, in 1958, 1968, 1978 and for the latest available date; and if he will sub-divide the list into those parts within the national dock labour scheme and those outside it and show the total figures for each category in each of the above years in each sub-division;

(2) if he will give the percentage of traffic handled by *(a)* national dock labour scheme ports and *(b)* non-national dock labour scheme ports, as a percentage of total British foreign trade in 1958, 1968, 1978 and each year since 1983.

Mr. David Mitchell: Information on value is available only for Her Majesty's Customs and Excise trade ports which in many cases include both national dock labour scheme and non-scheme components.

Tonnages of export, import and coastal traffic are published annually, for each port in Great Britain with significant freight traffic, in "Port Statistics", copies of which are in the Library. In the latest volume, table 1.3 gives the total traffic through each port for 1965, 1970, 1975 and 1980 to 1986. Table 1.6 provides the import and export detail for the latest year.

Details for earlier years, and for the intervening years of table 1.3, can be found in earlier editions. Prior to 1980, corresponding information was published by the National Ports Council in the "Annual Digest of Port Statistics", but there are no data prior to 1965. In these tables the following are scheme ports:

London
Medway
Whitstable
Southampton
Poole
Plymouth
Fowey
Par
Falmouth
Bristol
Gloucester and Sharpness
Newport
Cardiff
Penarth
Barry
Port Talbot
Swansea
Liverpool
Garston
Manchester
Fleetwood
Barrow
Whitehaven
Workington
Silloth
Ayr
Clyde (including Ardrossan and Greenoc
Aberdeen
Dundee
Forth
Blyth
Tyne
Sunderland
Seaham
Tees and Hartlepool
Hull
Goole
Grimsby and Immingham
Boston
Wisbech
Kings Lynn
Great Yarmouth
Lowestoft
Ipswich

The percentage of all non-fuel seaport tra coastal) tonnage handled by the ports listed 1968, 1978 and 1986 was 92, 89, 77 and respectively.

Carlisle to Settle Railway

Mr. Tom Arnold: To ask the Secretary Transport when he expects to complete his Carlisle to Settle railway line.

Mr. David Mitchell: As soon as we are cl extent of any local authority and private s that may be offered to help with the cost of Ribblehead viaduct or revenue support for s line.

Passenger Miles (Greater Lond

Mr. Spearing: To ask the Secretary Transport if he will tabulate in the *Offici* official estimate of the numbers of pa travelled within the Greater London area f principal modes of private and public trans of the years since 1980, showing for each t variation from that or other convenient ba

Mr. Peter Bottomley: The information r follows:

Passenger Mileage on Public Transport within London and the South East

	LRT Tube		*LRT Bus*		*BR NSE*	
	bn miles	*Percentage increase over 1980*	*bn miles*	*Percentage increase over 1980*	*bn miles*	*Perce increas*
1980	2·6		2·6		8·1	
1981	2·5	−4	2·5	−4	8·0	
1982	2·3	−12	2·3	−12	7·0	
1983	2·7	4	2·4	−8	7·8	
1984						
1984-85	3·3	27	2·6	—	7·5	
1985						
1985-86	3·7	42	2·6	—	7·8	
1986						
1986-87	3·9	50	2·6	—	8·3	

Reliable estimates of overall traffic levels in London are not currently available. What evidence there is suggests that car passenger mileage has changed little since 1980.

Air Traffic (London)

Mr. Spearing: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what information he, or the Civil Aviation Authority, possesses concerning the amount, categories and general monitoring of all air traffic in uncontrolled air space below and surrounding the London terminal control area.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: Civil aviation safety regulation is wholly the responsibility of the Civil Aviation Authority. There is no requirement for pilots of aircraft flying in uncontrolled air space to inform air traffic services units of their presence or of their intended routings. I understand that the authority has no comprehensive information of the amount and categories of aircraft flying in the uncontrolled air space below and surrounding the London terminal control area, but that the authority monitors air traffic in uncontrolled air space on a sample basis so as to establish requirements for specific air traffic services.

Civil Aviation Authority (Air Traffic Control Services)

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he is advised by the Civil Aviation Authority of the scale of charges for air traffic control services provided by them; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: My right hon. Friend promulgates the Civil Aviation Authority's charges by statutory instrument for the following air traffic control services:

1. En-route navigation services.
2. Shanwick oceanic control area navigation services.
3. Navigation services for helicopter flights from any place in the United Kingdom to offshore installations in the North sea area.
4. Aerodrome navigation services at BAA plc airports.

At other airports where the Civil Aviation Authority provides air traffic control services under contract, the charges are covered by contracts and are confidential to the airports and the authority.

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what is the current annual value of contracted air traffic approach control services provided by the Civil Aviation Authority.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: I refer the hon. Gentlen table 5.1 in the Civil Aviation Authority's annual and accounts for 1986-87.

London City Airport

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of Sta Transport how much was paid and by whom, for th upon which the London City airport was construct

Mr. Peter Bottomley: London City airport is pri owned. The terms on which the land was made ava are a commercial matter between the airport an landowners.

Road Dressing

Mr. Latham: To ask the Secretary of Stat Transport what investigations have been undertak his Department into alternative methods of s dressing of roads, so as to minimise or avoid inconve to road users caused by flying chippings; and with result.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: Research into road s dressing has been carried out by the Departm Transport and Road Research Laboratory. The resul incorporated into Road Note 39 "Recommendatio Road Surface Dressing". Trials of new technique materials are continuing and the recommenda contained in the above document may be reviewed light of the results obtained.

Severn Bridge

Mr. Adley: To ask the Secretary of State for Tran what will be the effect on the traffic capacity of the S bridge of the strengthening work thereon.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: Completion of the strength work will permit the removal of the traffic restriction had to be imposed on the crossing. For example, s lane operation in the eastbound direction in the mornings will no longer be necessary. As a result ther be some increase in the traffic capacity.

Mr. Adley: To ask the Secretary of State for Tran what are the statistics for traffic utilisation of the S bridge, for each of the last five years.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: The traffic figures on the S crossing for the last five years are as follows:

	Motor Cycles	*Heavy Goods and Public Service Vehicles*	*Cars and Light Goods Vehicles*	*Total*
1983	93,132	2,182,551	10,303,544	12,579,227
1984	96,365	2,240,980	10,641,587	12,978,932
1985	90,212	2,270,545	10,928,451	13,286,208
1986	72,575	2,383,008	12,017,349	14,472,932
1987	55,712	2,633,202	12,954,154	15,643,068

Note: The above figures are based on toll records: the statistics for 1983 and 1985 include estimated figures for the days on which tolls not collected.

Belfast Pilotage Authority

Mr. Beggs: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what information he has as to the state of working arrangements between pilots and the Belfast Pilotage Authority.

Mr. David Mitchell: I understand that there has been disagreement between the Belfast Pilotage Authority and the pilots about the extent to which standby time should be reflected in pilots' earnings and about rota arrangements.

Mr. Beggs: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) what steps he intends to take to ensure that the Belfast Pilotage Authority promotes appropriate byelaws under section 16 of the Pilotage Act 1983 for duty requirements for pilots;

(2) if he will exercise his powers under section 16(2)*(b)* of the Pilotage Act 1983 to direct the Belfast Pilotage Authority to submit appropriate byelaws to formalise its requirements for pilots in respect of hours of duty and terms of service.

Mr. David Mitchell: Section 16 of the Pilotage Act 1983 empowers the Secretary of State to direct a pilotage authority to submit a byelaw to him for confirmation only where a body or persons set out in section 16(1) of the Act have made representation to him that such a byelaw should be brought into force. The Secretary of State has received no such representation for a byelaw to define terms of service, hours of duty or other duty requirements for Belfast pilots.

Belfast Harbour

Mr. Beggs: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what representations he has received concerning the proposal of the competent harbour authority in Belfast to move the boarding and landing station from its present location to a position in the main navigation channel; and if he will take steps to ensure that the competent harbour authority consults all interested parties before any action is taken.

Mr. David Mitchell: I have received no representations on this matter. Following implementation of the Pilotage Act 1987, the location of boarding and landing stations, and the extent to which there should be consultation on the matter, will be for the competent harbour authority to decide, subject only, where boarding and landing requirements are to be contained in a pilotage direction concerning compulsory pilotage, to the statutory obligation on the authority to consult shipowners and any other local harbour operators before giving such a direction.

British Rail (Surplus Land)

Mr. Gow: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how much land, surplus to operational requirements, was owned by British Rail on 30 September 1987; and what discussions he has had with the chairman of British Rail concerning progress in selling such land.

Mr. David Mitchell: I understand from the BR Property Board that the total was some 17,300 acres. We have asked British Rail to dispose of all its surplus land and property as rapidly as possible. I discussed a variety of matters with the chairman of the BR Property Bo including progress in this area. I will Friend with further information.

Heavy Lorries

Dr. Marek: To ask the Secretary of S if he will estimate the total amount o collected from operators of all heavy go 3·5 tonne gross vehicle weight for e 1984-85, 1985-86 and 1986-87; and the excise duty collected from operators of v and 38 tonnes for each of these years.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: Following is t the United Kingdom:

Motoring taxes on licensed heavy go

	Fuel tax (on derv) on goods vehicle over 3·5 tonnes gvw
1984-85	816
1985-86	866
1986-87	959

Dr. Marek: To ask the Secretary of S if he will estimate the cost of the addition damage which will occur in a year as a r of the gross weight limit for two-axled r 16·26 tonnes to 17·00 tonnes.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: This change comes into effect on 1 April 1988. The e and tear will depend on the number of v for use at the higher weight, their mileag Department will be monitoring this. Th become available in due course.

Dr. Marek: To ask the Secretary of S if he will publish in the *Official Re* convenient groups, the total amount of collected for lorries exceeding 3·5 tonnes years for which the information is avail

Mr. Peter Bottomley: Following is t the United Kingdom:

Vehicle excise duty on lorries over 3·5

	Rigid lorries
1984-85	188
1985-86	220
1986-87	223

Rural Transport Developme

Dr. Marek: To ask the Secretary of S how many inquiries from prospective op received in respect of grants from th development fund; how many applic made, how many grants have been gi amounts.

Dr. David Mitchell: Since the fund w the Development Commission, which behalf of the Department of Transport, inquiries and 187 applications. A total o been approved, of which 95 have been

average grant approved for 81 scheduled services, mainly by minibuses and taxis, is about £8,500. Additionally, 18 county transport advisers have been appointed with help from the fund at an average grant of £6,250 pa for up to three years, and 11 other projects, such as publicity and surveys, have been approved at an average of £4,000. The commission has made grants of £650,000 so far, but has a total commitment of over £1 million.

Roads Maintenance (Statistics)

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will provide statistics of the total cost of motorway and other roads repairs and maintenance during the years 1981 to 1986 with estimates of the percentage of roads deterioration attributable to *(a)* wear and tear, *(b)* damage caused by lorries, *(c)* damage caused by cars and light vehicles and *(d)* damage caused by other transport modes.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: Expenditure on carriageway maintenance in recent years has been as follows:

£ millions, at 1985-86 prices (England only)

	National roads (motorway and trunk)	*Other roads*
1981-82	[1]	390
1982-83	147	412
1983-84	125	386
1984-85	149	370
1985-86	123	379

[1] Not available.

The percentages of road deterioration due to weathering and traffic wear (or "damage") are not known.

Traffic wear is due mostly to vehicles with high axle loadings. These are mostly heavy goods vehicles, but also include some public service vehicles. On trunk roads the heaviest vehicles with four or more axles are responsible for three quarters of the damage. On principal proportion is about one half, and on other ro one third.

Traffic Statistics

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for T if he will provide details of the increased total traffic in the years from 1981 to 1986 for *(a)* *(b)* cars and *(c)* other transport modes and hi of the likely future trends in increased traffic fo five years.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: The information request obtained from table 2.1 and table 2.42 of "T Statistics Great Britain 1976-86", a copy of which placed in the House of Commons Library.

Traffic (Damage)

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for T if he will provide details of recent assessment damage caused to the environment by the i various modes of transport, lorries, cars and ot users.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: The information is no available. A further response will be provided sh

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for T what are the most recent estimates of the cost of to sewers and other underground services cause impact of various transport modes, specifying s lorries and cars and other road users.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: No estimates have yet be of this. It is difficult to assess the contributio lorries make to the failure of underground Evidence to date suggests that this occu exceptionally and where apparatus is in a poor co A research project is in preparation to establish a significant relationship exists between failure r levels of traffic.

Written Answers to Questions

Wednesday 20 January 1988

ATTORNEY-GENERAL

"British and American Approaches to Intelligence"

Mr. Campbell-Savours: To ask the Attorney-General (1) whether he intends to seek an injunction against Macmillans to prevent the distribution of the book "British and American Approaches to Intelligence";

(2) why he has failed to prosecute under section 2 of the Official Secrets Act Mr. Robert Cecil for providing information for inclusion in the book published by Macmillans, "British and American Approaches to Intelligence";

(3) why he has failed to prosecute under section 2 of the Official Secrets Act Mr. John Bruce Lockhart for providing information for inclusion in the book published by Macmillans, "British and American Approaches to Intelligence";

(4) whether the Government have approved for publication the book "British and American Approaches to Intelligence";

(5) whether he intends to prosecute Mr. Ken Robertson, editor of the book "British and American Approaches to Intelligence", under section 2 of the Official Secrets Act for securing the publication of information, knowing it to have been provided by persons subject to a duty of confidentiality to the Crown.

The Attorney-General: The contributions of Mr. Robert Cecil and Mr. John Bruce Lockhart were published with authority.

RUSI Publications

Mr. Campbell-Savours: To ask the Attorney-General whether he will list those publications by the Royal United Services Institute which have been approved for publication by Her Majesty's Government since 1979.

The Attorney-General: This matter is not for me but for my ministerial colleagues in those fields for which they have responsibility.

Deputy Judges

Mr. Adley: To ask the Attorney-General (1) what steps he takes to ensure that deputy judges appointed to hear cases in the High Court do not have, or may not shortly have, direct financial or pecuniary interests in companies with cases which the said deputy judge is appointed to hear in the High Court;

(2) what steps he takes to ensure that deputy judges appointed to handle individual cases are not in any way connected financially with companies, organisations or individuals who are parties in such cases;

(3) if he will take steps to change the rules to ensure that Queen's counsel appointed to act as deputy judges divest themselves of all pecuniary interests which could in any way be connected with any cases on which they may adjudicate.

The Attorney-General: It is not neces Chancellor to take any such steps. It i principle of English law that no man can own cause. It is well established that any that he has a financial or other personal in which he is to try shall declare it forthwi no further part in the proceedings with agreement of all parties. If a judge acts in which he has a financial interest, his set aside unless the parties knew of accepted him as judge in that knowledge

Mr. Adley: To ask the Attorney-Gene those Queen's counsel who are eligible for deputy judges.

The Attorney-General: By virtue of se Supreme Court Act 1981 all barriste standing or more are eligible to sit as dep High Court, whether or not they are Qu

Mr. Adley: To ask the Attorney-Ge institute measures to ensure that all Q eligible to act as deputy judges declare financial interests and such interests as t be in a position to declare.

The Attorney-General: No; it wou appropriate nor practical for the Lord Ch such a declaration.

PRIME MINISTER

AIDS

Mr. Kirkwood: To ask the Prime Mini is yet in a position to nominate a succ Whitelaw as chairman of the Int Committee on AIDS.

The Prime Minister: I have nothing answer I gave to the hon. Member for Grea Mitchell) on 9 July 1987, at column 207.

ENERGY

Radioactive Material (Sellafi

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of Sta he will explain the circumstances in whic radioactive material was removed from Se reprocessing plant in Cumbria; what sec exist to stop the removal from the plant of and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Michael Spicer: The security measu nuclear installations are the responsibility o concerned. I understand from BNFL that which was removed was a very small amou low radioactivity which is freely available fr suppliers.

Nuclear Power Stations

Mr. John D. Taylor: To ask the Secreta Energy what is his policy on the siting of stations in or near large metropolitan area

Mr. Michael Spicer: The siting of each station is considered by the Health and Safe

Nuclear Installations Inspectorate against the background which is set out in chapter 5 of the booklet titled "The Work of HM Nuclear Installations Inspectorate", a copy of which is in the Library of the House.

Mr. David Nicholson: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy how many nuclear reactors will be in operation or under construction in Avon, Somerset and Dorset by 1995 under the Central Electricity Generating Board's proposals for the next power station development.

Mr. Michael Spicer: This is a matter for the Central Electricity Generating Board. I have asked the chairman to write to my hon. Friend.

Fuel Disconnections

Mr. Geraint Howells: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy if he has received any report of the Gas Consumers Council on disconnection.

Mr. Peter Morrison: I understand that the Gas Consumers' Council is preparing for publication a report on disconnections, but that it is not yet finalised.

Energy Saving

Mr. Baldry: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what energy savings have been achieved by Government programmes in each of the last five years.

Mr. Peter Morrison: It is estimated that gross annual energy savings of about £700 million can be attributed to the Government's programmes covering the industrial, commercial and domestic sectors.

EDUCATION AND SCIENCE

Universities (Computer Contracts)

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science, pursuant to his reply of 14 December 1987, *Official Report*, column *341*, on what occasions in the last two years his Department has allowed a single tender to be submitted for the supply of computers or communications equipment to a British university; what were the names of tenderers involved; and which of them was foreign owned.

Mr. Jackson: In the last two years single tender action has been agreed for the following university computer procurements involving capital grants of £100,000 or more:

Birmingham University	DEC VAX 8700
Edinburgh University	Meiko
Glasgow University	ICL 3980
Kent University	Meiko
Nottingham University	ICL 3980
Open University	SUN workstations
Queen Mary College, London	AMT DAP
South West Universities Regional Centre	ICL 3980
Strathclyde University	DEC VAX 8600
University College Cardiff	DEC VAX 8530

Two single tender orders costing £100,000 or more have been agreed in the last two years for communications equipment. One was placed with GEC Computers Ltd for enhancement of packet-switching exchanges and the other was placed with CAMTEC Electronics Ltd for upgrading packet assemblers/disassemblers and gateways for the joint academic network (JANET).

In addition, IBM donated computer systems to the University of Glasgow and the Manchester business school. No DES capital grants were involved in these procurements.

Of the suppliers of equipment listed below, the parent companies of Digital Equipment Company Ltd (DEC), SUN Microsystems (UK) Ltd, and IBM United Kingdom Ltd (IBM) are based in the United States; in the case of Active Memory Technology (AMT), International Computers Ltd (ICL), Meiko Ltd, GEC Computers Ltd and CAMTEC Electronics Ltd, central control and management are exercised in the United Kingdom.

Goldsmiths' College

Mr. Maples: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will make a statement about the funding of Goldsmiths' college in the light of the resolution passed by the senate of London university to admit the college as a school of the university from 1 August.

Mr. Kenneth Baker: Goldsmiths' college is currently funded direct by the Department. In the light of its new status from 1 August, I have today written to the vice-chancellor of London University, the chairman of the University Grants Committee and the warden of Goldsmiths' college agreeing that, from that date, funding for Goldsmiths' should be added to the funding for London university which is paid from the universities vote on the advice of the UGC. Subject to parliamentary approval, the appropriate transfer will be made to the universities vote. This includes an addition of £800,000 for 1988-89 to meet the necessary transitional costs of Goldsmiths' new status.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Political Asylum

Mr. Dicks: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many applications for political asylum were received during 1987; and if he will list the countries of origin of the applicants.

Mr. Renton: Information for 1987 is not yet fully available. It is hoped to publish the figures, by nationality, in a Home Office statistical bulletin by the end of May. Figures for 1986 were published in table 7 of Home Office statistical bulletin "Refugee Statistics, United Kingdom, 1986" (issue 13/87), copies of which are in the Library.

Prisons (Drugs)

Mr. Butler: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) if he will construct a table showing the average number of doses of drugs administered per inmate in each of Her Majesty's penal establishments in the latest available year;

(2) what were *(a)* the categories and *(b)* the numbers of individual doses of drugs administered to inmates at (i) Her Majesty's prison, Liverpool and (ii) Her Majesty's prison, Manchester.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: The following table provides the available information in respect of the financial year 1986-87 for establishments served by more than one medical officer. Establishments in which medical services

were largely provided by a single doctor are omitted in keeping with the long established policy of not publishing information relating to the prescribing practice of individual doctors.

Number of Doses of Medicine Administered to Inmates in Prison Service Establishments in England and Wales 1 April 1986 to 31 March 1987

Establishment	*Medicines available without prescription in the community*	*Prescription only Medicines*			*Other drugs and medicines*
		Psychotropic drugs (ie antidepressants, sedatives and tranquillisers)	*Hypnotic drugs*	*Drugs acting on the central nervous system other than those shown in cols. (2) and (3)*	
	(1)	*(2)*	*(3)*	*(4)*	*(5)*
HMP Birmingham	153,859	23,051	3,830	25,715	96,048
HMP Bristol	84,805	15,900	690	8,702	57,465
HMP Brixton	208,806	64,118	12,312	41,576	179,814
HMP Canterbury	16,986	11,329	5,484	13,313	24,783
HMP Cardiff	73,504	7,031	1,040	7,031	58,118
HMP Dartmoor	99,262	25,792	3,501	33,621	37,734
HMP Durham	90,120	13,308	2,471	25,386	61,269
HMP Gartree	53,393	16,396	9,880	3,813	30,813
HMYCC Glen Parva	33,486	10,272	3,603	13,206	74,974
HMP Grendon	96,237	17,954	3,090	18,009	40,718
HMP Holloway	120,884	77,841	21,911	28,237	132,079
HMP Hull	61,705	6,728	820	6,655	45,006
HMP Leeds	139,070	20,629	655	68,628	79,843
HMP Leicester	57,556	18,638	1,694	6,828	27,658
HMP Lincoln	41,456	13,162	700	11,906	30,795
HMP Liverpool	100,419	23,951	2,624	39,767	78,557
HMP Maidstone	99,680	16,220	3,200	44,080	49,580
HMP Manchester	109,087	19,023	1,858	30,409	60,317
HMP Norwich[1]	100,564	20,540	3,268	21,320	68,608
HMP Parkhurst	76,846	44,974	6,258	33,994	37,107
HMP Pentonville	112,801	20,863	1,504	20,185	90,583
HMRC Risley	162,100	24,814	9,223	22,667	68,345
HMP Wakefield	304,861	72,897	18,379	82,566	478,876
HMP Wandsworth	248,160	39,364	3,324	30,504	110,899
HMP Winchester	112,587	22,410	2,798	44,206	55,351

[1]*Footnote:* The figures for HMP Norwich are estimated as the returns from this establishment are incomplete.
No information is available for HM Remand Centre Ashford, HM Youth Custody Centre Feltham, or HM Prisons Long Lartin and Wormwood Scrubs.

Magistrates' Courts (Press Information)

Mr. Watts: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he will issue fresh guidance to magistrates' courts on the provision of information to the press.

Mr. John Patten: Individual clerks to justices are responsible for the day-to-day running of courts and it is open to newspaper editors to seek to make suitable local arrangements with them.

DNA Tests

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) whether the Government's trial to test the acceptability and feasibility of the DNA technique for immigration work has been completed; and if he will make a statement;

(2) what is his provisional timetable for DNA tests to be available for all seeking right of entry to Britain at United Kingdom embassies and commissions on the Indian subcontinent; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Renton: The Government's pilot trial is in its final stages. A report is being prepared, and a copy will be placed in the Library. No decisions have been taken yet on the policy arising out of DNA testing, but meanwhile facilities are available at British diplomatic posts in Dhaka and Islamabad for blood samples to be taken and transported to the United Kingdom in connection with commercial DNA tests in immigration cases.

Firearms

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) what arrangements are in force to require each police force to keep a detailed inventory of its firearms; and if he will make a statement;

(2) what arrangements are in force to require each police force to ensure that, following operations involving firearms, the same number of weapons are returned as were issued; and if he will make a statement;

(3) what arrangements are in force to require each police force to ensure that its supply of firearms does not fall into non-authorised hands; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: Every police force armoury is required to keep a detailed inventory of all weapons held within that force. When firearms are issued for police operations, they are issued only to those officers who produce a current authorisation certificate.

All forces maintain a separate record which details the type of weapon issued, its serial number, the name of the officer to whom it is issued and the number of rounds of ammunition issued. Each entry is signed and countersigned. Upon return of the weapon, the issuing entry is

checked and a separate entry is made showing the number of rounds returned or used. If any rounds are used a report is completed by the firearms officer. Again, each entry is signed and counter-signed.

As part of its annual inspection of police forces, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary examines closely both force policy and the administrative arrangements relating to the storage, issue and use of police firearms.

Immigration

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will now arrange for the reasons, in summarised form, for refusal of entry to those in possession of valid entry clearance to be kept centrally; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Renton: No. It would not be right to increase the amount of centrally collected information for this or any other group without a strong, continuing purpose.

Central Mobilising Project

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what is the estimated date by which the central mobilising project being produced by Marconi will be operating on behalf of the London fire and civil defence authority; on what date it was initially planned to be introduced; whether the authority will insist upon the fixed price; at what cost other United Kingdom fire brigades have purchased other systems because of the delay; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. John Patten: We are informed by the authority that it is hoped that the new central mobilising system will be operational by the end of 1988. The contractual date for completion was 1985 which would have led to an in-service date of late 1985 to early 1986.

We are informed that the question of the price of the system is a matter of contract between Marconi and the authority, and the contract is not for a fixed price.

Neither we nor the authority are aware of any impact on other United Kingdom fire brigades resulting directly or indirectly from the delay in this case.

Police National Computer

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many cases there have been, of which he is aware, over the past two years involving abuse of the police national computer; what was the nature of the abuse in each case; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: We have not been informed of any such cases.

Video Films

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will provide a detailed list in the Library of all video films which the British Board of Film Classification has so far refused to classify or has censored in some way, together with a summary of the reason for so doing in each case.

Mr. Renton: Arrangements have been made to have placed in the Library a consolidated list published last year by the board of decisions made under the Video Recordings Act in 1985 and 1986. The board is at present preparing a further consolidated list which will, addition, record decisions made in 1987, and a copy of t will be placed in the Library when it is available. The l shows those works in respect of which the board decid not to issue a classification certificate and those whi were given a certificate only after cuts had been made. does not record the reasons in each case, but the boar annual report for 1986, copies of which are in the Libra explains the main grounds on which the board refuse classification certificate or cuts works before classificatio If the hon. Member wishes to know the reasons in a particular instance, I am sure the board would be glad explain them to him.

Citizenship

Mr. John D. Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State f the Home Department how many citizens of the Repub of Ireland applied for British citizenship in 1987.

Mr. Renton: This information is not yet available.

Night Patrols (Prisons)

Mr. Hanley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Hon Department what training is given to civilianised nig patrol guards before they first go on duty in Her Majesty prisons.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: Night patrol officers receive the induction training at the prison to which they a recruited. It includes security, the purpose of the regim statutory obligations and emergency arrangements.

Dangerous Driving Offences

Dr. Glyn: To ask the Secretary of State for the Hon Department if he will bring forward legislation to enab a charge of manslaughter to be brought against perso alleged to have caused death by dangerous driving or oth motoring offences.

Mr. John Patten: The law already permits a person wh kills another when driving recklessly to be charged wi manslaughter. It is for the prosecution to decide on whic charge to proceed in any particular case. This area of t criminal law is being examined by the road traffic la review, and we shall consider any proposals for chan which may be made in its report.

Law and Order (Grants)

Mr. Forman: To ask the Secretary of State for t Home Department what proposals he has for changes the arrangements for the payment of grants made by h Department to support law and order services.

Mr. Hurd: As part of the preparation for the new loc government finance arrangements proposed by my rig hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment, have been reviewing the role of specific grants paid to loc authorities to support the law and order services. W intend to retain the grants paid in respect of the poli service, the civil defence service, the magistrates' cour service and the probation service. Such grants wi continue to be paid to the authorities responsible f meeting the expenditure, not into the proposed communi charge fund.

I shall, however, consult the Commissioner of Police the Metropolis and the local authority organisatio

concerned about changes to the present arrangements for the imperial and national services grant and other minor direct payments presently made to the Metropolitan police fund, including their possible integration into the main police grant.

I also intend to consult the local authorities and the services concerned about the scope for modifying the magistrates' courts and probation service grant arrangements so that the amount paid out by central Government to support these services is known before the beginning of the financial year, and is distributed on an equitable basis to local authorities.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Regional Aid

Mr. Barry Field: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster whether, as a rural development area, the Isle of Wight will qualify for the new incentives to be introduced in April in development areas announced in the White Paper entitled "DTI — the department for Enterprise"; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Atkins: The investment and innovation grants to be introduced from April 1988 will be available only in the development areas as designated in the Assisted Areas Order 1984. The Isle of Wight travel-to-work area (TTWA) is not so designated and the new incentives will not, therefore, be available in the TTWA.

Exports

Mr. David Martin: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if he will estimate what proportion of British goods has an export value tied to the United States dollar, what to the pound sterling and what to the deutschmark.

Mr. Alan Clark: The percentage of United Kingdom exports tied to the United States dollar, pound sterling and deutschmark in 1986 was 18, 56 and 4, respectively. These percentages are based on results of surveys to identify currencies used for invoicing.

Arbitration Law

Mr. Pawsey: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if he will publish the conclusions of his Department's Advisory Committee on Arbitration Law on the issues raised by the Consumer Arbitration Agreements Bill, introduced by the hon. Member for Rugby and Kenilworth.

Mr. Maude: I have placed a copy of the committee's report in the Library today. Copies may be obtained from the secretary of the committee on (01) 215 3481.

Trade Barriers

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, pursuant to his reply of 16 December 1987, *Official Report*, column *540*, how many staff are employed by the overseas trade divisions to examine and advise on hidden trade barriers; how many cases they have investigated in the last 12 months; and what has been the result of these investigations.

Mr. Alan Clark: In my Department's overseas trade divisions some 57 staff years were spent dealing with trade relations, including examining and giving advice on barriers to United Kingdom exports, during 1987. A considerable number of cases were the subject of representations to overseas Governments either bilaterally or through the European Commission, who have competence for external trade issues, and progress has been made in some areas.

WALES

Hospital Closures

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales when he last met officers of the Welsh health authorities to discuss proposed hospital closures.

Mr. Grist: My right hon. Friend has not met officers of all Welsh health authorities to discuss proposed hospital closures. Officials of the NHS directorate are in regular contact with health authority officers and keep my right hon. Friend and me informed of developments, including both the many new capital programmes as well as closures.

NHS (Theft and Malicious Damage)

Mr. Butler: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what was the value of items stolen or maliciously destroyed in the National Health Service in Wales in each of the last five years.

Mr. Grist: The information is not available in the form requested.

The following table shows the value of losses of equipment, property and cash in the NHS in Wales due to theft, fraud or arson, neglect of duty or gross carelessness. The figures also include losses due to malicious damage.

	£
1982-83	26,743
1983-84	35,039
1984-85	39,207
1985-86	57,606
1986-87	90,292

Source: White Paper Accounts.

Battery Hens

Mr. Livsey: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales (1) what is his estimate of, and basis of calculation for, the cost to the Welsh egg industry of adapting to EEC legislation on battery cages;

(2) what is his estimate of, and basis of calculation for, the recurring costs of compliance with the additional requirements for three, two and one birds under the Welfare of Battery Hens Regulations 1987 for egg producers in Wales.

Mr. Peter Walker: EC directive 86/113 places inescapable obligations on all member states. The cost of compliance will vary from producer to producer according to the type of cage in use, its age, and how the space allowance and other requirements contained in the directive are to be met. No estimate of the aggregate cost to Welsh producers is available.

The same consideration will largely apply in the context of the allowances for three, two and one birds specified in the Welfare of Battery Hens Regulations 1987.

Mr. Livsey: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what estimate he has made of the effect on the numbers

of Welsh egg producers of compliance with the additional requirements for three, two and one birds contained in the Welfare of Battery Hens Regulations 1987.

Mr. Peter Walker: No information is available on the numbers of egg producers who may cease production, if any.

Mr. Livsey: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what steps he proposes to take to ensure that Welsh egg farmers are not put at a competitive disadvantage with their European counterparts in the implementation of the provisions of EEC directive 86/113.

Mr. Peter Walker: EEC directive 86/113 lays down minimum standards. Other than in situations where fewer than four birds are housed in a cage, these minimum standards will apply in the United Kingdom. In the majority of cases, therefore, Welsh farmers will be in an identical situation to most of their European counterparts, though it is worth pointing out that in Denmark and in West Germany national rules will be somewhat stricter than the directive. We shall be keeping the matter under review.

Agency Staff

Mr. Nicholas Bennett: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if, further to his reply to the hon. Member for Holborn and St. Pancras (Mr. Dobson) of 7 December 1987, *Official Report*, columns *25-28*, he will give the actual costs to each district health authority of employing agency staff after taking account of the rates of pay which would have been expended had the posts for which agency staff were used been filled.

Mr. Grist: The information requested cannot be provided as the Department does not receive details of all posts filled by agency staff in the respective authorities.

Nature Conservancy Council

Mr. Gareth Wardell: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what are his responsibilities in respect of the Nature Conservancy Council in Wales.

Mr. Wyn Roberts: The Nature Conservancy Council is my right hon. Friend's statutory adviser on nature conservation in Wales. His main responsibilities include confirming appointments to the council's advisory committee for Wales, making nature conservation orders and designating marine nature reserves. In addition, my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment consults the Department in exercising his responsibilities in respect of Nature Conservancy Council matters which affect Wales.

Departmental Costs

Mr. Raffan: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales whether there is to be any change in his Department's provision for running costs in this current financial year.

Mr. Peter Walker: My Department's running costs limit is to be increased by £750,000 to £38,516,000. The increase is to be fully offset through reductions in capital expenditure within my Department's Central Administration Vote (class XVII, vote 9).

Milk Quotas

Mr. Ieuan Wyn Jones: To ask the Secretary of State f Wales (1) whether he will introduce legislation to allow h Department to purchase milk quota which comes on t market for redistribution to new milk producers a young farmers in Wales; and if he will make a statemen

(2) whether he will introduce legislation to prevent lo of milk production to Wales through sales of milk quot

Mr. Peter Walker *[holding answers 19 January 1988]* No.

Mr. Ieuan Wyn Jones: To ask the Secretary of State f Wales if he will make a statement on the implementatio in Wales of the European Commission's 435 million ec scheme to meet management costs of dealing with ext beef during the two years following the implementation further milk quota cuts, agreed by the Council Agriculture Ministers in December 1986.

Mr. Peter Walker *[holding answer 19 January 1988]* The Commission recognised that measures taken in th milk sector would have an impact on beef producers. 43 million ecu was its estimate of extra expenditure on aid for private storage and export refunds which would ari in 1987 and 1988 as a result of the extra cow beef comin onto the market. The level of refund and the introductio of private storage schemes are decided by managemen committee, but we are ready to press the Commission t ensure that the market is supported if there is any undu weakness.

Farm Incomes

Mr. Ieuan Wyn Jones: To ask the Secretary of State fo Wales what was the percentage change in farm incomes i Wales for the most recent 12-month period for whic information is available; and what were the correspondin figures for each year since 1979.

Mr. Peter Walker *[holding answer 19 January 1988]* Based on the aggregate income calculation for Wels agriculture, farm incomes in Wales rose by 57 per cent. i 1986. In each of the preceding seven years to 1979 th percentage change in incomes was as follows:

Year	*Percentage change*
1985	−49
1984	45
1983	−49
1982	31
1981	41
1980	8
1979	−50

River Teifi

Mr. Geraint Howells: To ask the Secretary of State fo Wales what has been the total expenditure on clearin debris from the River Teifi between Cardigan an Llechryd, during the last 10 years; and if he will make statement.

Mr. Grist *[holding answer 19 January 1988]:* This is matter for the Welsh water authority.

Labour Statistics

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many people are at present employed in agriculture in Wales; and what are the corresponding figures for 1978, 1968 and 1958

Mr. Peter Walker *[holding answer 19 January 1988]:* The numbers employed in agriculture in Wales are given in the following table:

	1958	*1968*	[2]*1978*	[2]*1987*
Agricultural workers	39,323	23,124	23,026	19,965
Farmers, partners and directors and their spouses	[1]—	[1]—	45,687	45,666
Total labour force	—	—	68,713	65,631

[1] Not collected until 1970.
[2] Figures include estimates for minor holdings.

Patients (Conveyance)

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales under what circumstances each of the Welsh health authorities expect patients to attend hospital by public transport rather than ambulance.

Mr. Grist *[holding answer 19 January 1988]:* All health authorities in Wales apply the guidance issued in Welsh health circular (77)4. Ambulance transport is provided for patients medically unfit to travel by other means. Patients not in medical need are expected to travel by private or public transport. Individual cases of difficulty are treated sympathetically.

SCOTLAND

Forestry

Mr. Ron Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what steps the Forestry Commission is presently taking to review its broadleaves policy; and if he will make a statement.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: A review of the Government's broadleaves policy will be put in hand this autumn.

Meningitis

Mr. Kirkwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what steps he is taking to prevent, contain and treat outbreaks of meningitis in Scotland.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: The evidence at present is that meningitis in Scotland is confined to sporadic cases with no significant upsurge in numbers beyond anticipated variation. We are, however, keeping the situation under close review.

Mr. Kirkwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what research is being undertaken to deal with outbreaks of meningitis in Scotland.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: The Scottish Home and Health Department is not at present funding any research projects relating to meningitis but assistance has been offered by the Scottish Hospital Endowments Research Trust for one such project.

Mr. Kirkwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what consultation has taken place with health authorities south of the border to learn lessons from recent meningitis outbreaks in England.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: My officials are in regular contact with their counterparts in England and are being kept fully informed on the recent outbreaks of meningtis there.

Battered Wives

Mr. Kirkwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what research is being undertaken into the incidence of battered wives in Scotland; and what steps he proposes to take to deal with the problems.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: Recently completed research commissioned by the Scottish Home and Health Department into the working of the Matrimonial Homes (Family Protection) (Scotland) Act 1981 examined, among other matters, the influence of the Act on the incidence of domestic violence. I hope soon to publish the report of this research.

The provision of services for the victims of domestic violence is the responsibility of local authorities, which are assisted by Scottish Women's Aid, a voluntary organisation which receives grant assistance from my right hon. and learned Friend.

Nature Reserves

Mr. Kirkwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will list in the *Official Report* those nature reserves situated in Scotland presently in public ownership.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: National nature reserves as at 31 March 1987 are listed, with details of the type of tenure in each case, in the Nature Conservancy Council's annual report 1986-87, a copy of which has been laid before Parliament. Since that date the following national reserves have been declared in Scotland:

Reserve	*Region*	*Hectares*	*Tenure*
New reserves			
Mealdarroch, Strathclyde region	South-West	205	Owned by Nature Conservancy Council

Reserve	Region	Hectares	Tenure
Moine Mhor, Strathclyde region	South-West	493	Owned by Nature Conservancy Council
Adjustments to existing reserves			
Clyde Valley Woodlands (extension)	South-West	[1]28	Owned by Nature Conservancy Council
Loch Lomond (extension)	South-West	[1]12	Owned by Nature Conservancy Council/ Nature reserve agreement
Kirkconnel Flow (adjustment of boundaries)	South-West	143	Leased to Nature Conservancy Council
Ben Wyvis (extension)	North-West	[1]2,339	Owned by Nature Conservancy Council

[1] Area of extension only.

One national nature reserve, Haaf Gruney, Shetland, has been de-declared since 31 March 1987.

Comprehensive information on the ownership of local nature reserves, which are declared by local authorities, is not readily available.

Roxburgh District Council (Computer System)

Mr. Kirkwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will publish in the *Official Report* the findings of the Scottish Audit Commission's special investigation into Roxburgh district council's decision to replace its computer system; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Lang: The Secretary of State has not received any report on this matter from the Commission for Local Authority Accounts in Scotland.

Energy Conservation

Mr. Kirkwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will list in the *Official Report* the measures taken since 1979 to improve energy conservation in commercial and industrial undertakings, local authorities and domestic households in Scotland and indicate how much was spent promoting the schemes and the estimated benefits in energy conservation which accrued.

Mr. Lang: The Government have achieved considerable success in encouraging the efficient use of energy in all sectors in Scotland through their ongoing energy efficiency campaign.

I regret that I am unable to provide a detailed breakdown of Government measures, expenditure and estimated benefits in the way suggested by the hon. Member, but I can say that there are now over 1,000 energy managers in Scotland. Commercial and industrial organisations and local authorities have, since the inception of the energy efficiency survey scheme in 1984, received Government grants amounting to £600,000 for energy surveys. These have identified potential estimated savings of £18 million per annum. In addition, since 1979, through the energy efficiency demonstration scheme £1·9 million has been provided to test new energy-saving technologies in working situations; and in the domestic sector almost 140,000 grants totalling £9·1 million have been provided through the homes insulation scheme to improve home comfort levels and provide lower fuel bills.

Trunk Roads

Mr. Kirkwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland by how much capital spending on trunk roads in Scotland has increased since 1978-79.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: Net capital expenditure on trunk roads in Scotland has increased by £30 million from £65 million in 1987-79 to £95 million in 1986-87, t latest year for which final figures are available. N outturn expenditure in 1987-88 is expected to be of t order of £110 million—a further increase of £15 millio

Local Authorities (Archeological Advice)

Mr. Kirkwood: To ask the Secretary of State f Scotland what consideration has been given to t importance of local authorities having advice from exp archaeologists.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: Local authorities c play an important part in heritage conservation, and this end may wish to have professional advice. It however, for authorities themselves to decide whether not to employ archaeologists.

Local Government Archaeological Services

Mr. Kirkwood: To ask the Secretary of State f Scotland what steps he proposes to take to improve loc government archaeological services in Scotland.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: It is for loc authorities themselves to determine, in the light of th local circumstances and priorities, the nature and exte of their archaeological services.

Sites of Archaeological Interest

Mr. Kirkwood: To ask the Secretary of State f Scotland what steps he is taking to extend the number sites preserved under the terms of the Archaeologic Areas and Ancient Monuments Act 1979.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: Increased effort is no being directed to the scheduling of sites, and the annu rate is between 150 and 200.

School Computers

Mr. Kirkwood: To ask the Secretary of State f Scotland what advice is being provided by the Scottis Education Department to local education authorities o the characteristics of school computers to be purchase when they come to replace the current BBC models.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: We have no plans to issue advic direct to education authorities in Scotland. One of th functions of the Scottish Council for Education Technology is to advise on computers in schools. I discharge of that it is in regular and continuing discussio with education authorities about the specification and th facilities which are desirable in school computer hardwar

Councillors (Remunerated)

Mr. Kirkwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what plans he has to implement the Widdicombe committee recommendation on reform of the way local authority councillors are remunerated.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: The Government are giving careful consideration to all the recommendations made by the Widdicombe committee and the many comments made by all those who responded to consultation. Conclusions will be announced as soon as this consideration has been completed.

Public Inquiries

Mr. Andrew Welsh: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what is the average time taken to reach a decision on public inquiry reports submitted to him.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: There were 38 decisions made in 1987 following public inquiries into town and country planning matters. The average time taken was 23 weeks.

Mr. Andrew Welsh: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many public inquiry decisions are outstanding in Angus district; what were the dates of conclusion of the public hearings; and when the final decision will be announced in each case.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: I assume that the hon. Member has planning decisions in mind. The only outstanding decision is in relation to planning proposals for housing development at Small Glebe, Newtyle, which were the subject of a public local inquiry in March 1987. My right hon. and learned Friend will issue his decision on this case shortly.

Maternity Units

Mr. Buchanan-Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many small maternity units, particularly in rural areas, have been closed in each of the past five years; if he will list these by health board area; and what was the total number of maternity beds, affected in each year, also by health board area.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: Only one maternity hospital has been closed in the past five years, Buckreddan maternity hospital, Kilwinning. The 26 beds were transferred to the Ayrshire central hospital when accommodation became available there, on transfer of services to the New Crosshouse hospital.

Details are held centrally only for complete hospital closures. Records on partial closures of hospitals, or where there has been a change of use, are not available.

Mr. Buchanan-Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many small maternity units, particularly in rural areas, are currently subject to formal health board proposals for closure; and if he will list these numbers by health board area and indicate the number of maternity beds involved in each area.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: My right hon. and learned Friend is involved in hospital closures or major changes of use only when health boards submit formal applications to him. At present no such applications are outstanding.

Housing (Basic Facilities)

Mr. Hood: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many houses in Scotland lack at present basic facilities such as hot water, electricity and inside lavatories; and how many of these are in rural areas.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: The available information is set out in the following table, which gives the numbers of dwellings below the statutory tolerable standard and, of those, the numbers lacking one or more of the standard amenities (sink, hot water and inside WC). It also shows the numbers lacking a fixed bath or shower.

Dwellings below tolerable standard at 31 March 1987[1]

	Number of dwellings below tolerable standard	*Lacking one or more standard amenity* [2 3]	*Lacking a fixed bath or shower* [2 3]
Scotland	54,791	31,389	29,406
of which in districts classified as Rural[4]	24,786	10,994	9,125

[1] Including most recent years' figures for those local authorities which have not submitted returns for 1987.
[2] Some local authorities were unable to provide information on dwellings in this category.
[3] A dwelling may be recorded in both of these columns and there is therefore an element of double counting.
[4] As defined in table 16 of Scottish Office central research unit paper "A Study of Multiply Deprived Households in Scotland", comprising Borders, Dumfries and Galloway, Grampian (excluding Aberdeen district), Highland and Tayside (excluding Dundee district) regions; Islands areas; and north-east Fife, East Lothian, Argyll and Bute, Clydesdale and Cumnock and Doon Valley districts.

Greenland White-fronted Geese (Islay)

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he has issued licences to permit the shooting of Greenland white-fronted geese on Islay; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Morley: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland for what reason permission was given to allow the shooting of white-fronted geese on Islay; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: Licences have been granted under powers contained in the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 to two farmers on Islay to shoot white-fronted geese. This step has had to be taken because substantial increases in the numbers of such geese on the island have led to serious damage being caused to grassland. The very limited issue of licences is intended to enhance the effectiveness of the scaring programme recently introduced with the aim of restricting the geese to the sanctuary areas. The effects will be closely monitored.

Caledonian MacBrayne Ltd.

Mrs. Ray Michie: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what plans he has to privatise Caledonian MacBrayne Ltd.; and if he will make a statement.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave to the hon. Member for Cunninghame, North (Mr. Wilson) on 3 December 1987 at column *669*.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Sudan (Plutonium)

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if, pursuant to his reply, *Official Report*, 30 November 1987, column *372*, to the hon. Member for Meirionydd Nant Conwy (Dr. Thomas) on alleged black market sales of plutonium in Sudan, this issue has been raised elsewhere within the structures of the EEC.

Mr. Mellor: The matter has been discussed in political co-operation but these discussions produced no evidence of a black market in nuclear weapons material in Khartoum.

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he has received representations and a transcript from the "20-20 Vision" television programme regarding allegations of a black market in plutonium in the Sudan; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Mellor: My right hon. and learned Friend has received representations from "20-20 Vision" television, which he is considering. We have a transcript of the programme in question, but no evidence to support allegations that weapons-grade nuclear material has been on sale in Sudan.

International Atomic Energy Agency

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what response has been made by Her Majesty's Government to the recent suggestion by Dr. Blix, director general of the International Atomic Energy Agency, that the agency's expertise in safeguarding nuclear materials should be used in future verification of nuclear disarmament treaties.

Mr. Mellor: Dr. Blix has made no approach to us. In our view, treaty verification is a matter for the parties to each treaty. But if they needed to seek assistance from an international organisation to enhance verification the International Atomic Energy Agency's experience could be valuable.

Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what initiatives he intends to take to encourage the nuclear weapons threshold nuclear states such as India, Pakistan, Israel, South Africa, Argentina and Brazil to sign the nuclear non-proliferation treaty.

Mr. Mellor: We take every opportunity to impress upon the threshold states the importance we attach to their signature of the non-proliferation treaty.

Nuclear Test Ban Treaty

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he has had any recent opportunity with *(a)* NATO allies and *(b)* officials from the Soviet Foreign Ministry to discuss progress in technical verification towards the completion of a comprehensive nuclear test ban treaty.

Mr. Mellor: The technical aspects of a comprehensive nuclear test ban treaty are regularly discussed in the conference on disarmament's ad hoc group of experts to consider international measures to de identify seismic events. Its next meeting is plann to 18 March. Representatives of the Soviet Un some NATO allies participate.

Sophie Desta

Mr. David Nicholson: To ask the Secretary of Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what inform has on the living condition of Sophie Desta and he of the family of the late Emperor of Ethiopi representations have been made to the E Government regarding the imprisonment of these and what response was obtained.

Mrs. Chalker: We understand that the seve prisoners belonging to the family of the former E royal family are held in a cell approximately 20 ft in an Addis Ababa prison. We have made n representations to the Ethiopian authorities on t these and the many other political prisoners in E My hon. Friend the Minister for Overseas Deve took the matter up during a visit to Ethiopia ea month. The Ethiopian Deputy Prime Minister re that the release of the prisoners was being consi the context of the new Ethiopian constitution.

TRANSPORT

British Rail (Trespass)

Mr. Hinchliffe: To ask the Secretary of S Transport (1) how many legal actions for trespa initiated by British Transport police during 1986 a and what were the results of the actions;

(2) what are the criteria employed in deciding or not legal action is initiated for trespass on Brit property;

(3) who makes the decision whether or not to legal proceedings for trespass on British Rail pro

Mr. David Mitchell: I understand that the Transport police initiated legal action for tres follows:

Year	*Number of offences*
1986	2,353
[1]1987	1,363

[1] First nine months.

Details of the results of the actions are not available. The Railways Board has also consider proceedings in a relatively small number of cases.

Decisions on offences investigated by the Transport police are made by BTP senior office take into account the Attorney-General's guideli other relevant factors as set out in Home Office ci For civil cases involving British Rail operational understand that decisions are normally taken manager level; for non-operational land, decisi taken by the British Rail Property Board. They ta account whether BR's operational activities an local landowners or residents are adversely affect

BR (Public Holiday Services)

Mr. David Martin: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) if he will discuss with the chairman of British Rail the case for providing at least some Sunday services on Network SouthEast serving the Portsmouth area on Boxing day 1988;

(2) if he will raise with the chairman of British Rail the case for providing some rail services on Boxing day 1988.

Mr. David Mitchell: This is entirely a matter for British Rail, who are responsible for the detailed management of the railway system.

Departmental Responsibilities

Mr. Kirkwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will list in the *Official Report* those areas of his departmental responsibility which extend to Scotland.

Mr. Channon *[holding answer 18 December 1987]:* The Secretary of State has the following responsibilities in Scotland:

Railways
Overall policy towards the railway network, statutory case work, and railway safety.

Ports
All ports matters, other than marine works.

Marine
The safety of merchant ships and fishing vessels; the prevention of marine pollution by ships and arrangements for cleaning up in the event of a serious pollution incident; the work of Her Majesty's Coastguard; marine pilotage; civil hydrography; oversight of the Northern Lighthouse Board.

Shipping
Most aspects of shipping policy, including sponsorship of the shipping industry and defence and emergencies planning.

Aviation
Policy towards the civil aviation industry; airports policy; sponsorship of the Civil Aviation Authority; policy on aircraft noise and security; accident investigations.

Road traffic and licensing
Road traffic law and the Highway Code. The registration, licensing, construction, safety and testing of road vehicles; the licensing and testing of drivers; and related enforcement, including vehicle excise duty.

Road haulage and bus services
The licensing of goods and PSV vehicle operators; the issue of international permits to road haulage operators; the registration of local bus services; fuel duty rebate; and the carriage of radioactive materials and dangerous goods.

Research
Government-sponsored transport research (the Scottish Office undertakes additional research for local purposes).

International
The conduct of transport international relations and negotiations, including aviation, shipping and road freight, either bilaterally or in international organisations such as the EC and ECMT.

Plutonium

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what consultations have taken place between his Department and British Nuclear Fuels plc concerning the transport of plutonium by aircraft; and what were the results.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: There is no need for consultation between this Department and British Nuclear Fuels on this issue until it submits a package design for competent authority approval.

Manchester Airport

Mr. Alfred Morris: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he intends to consider and take any action in regard to the Civil Aviation Authority's draft charging proposals for Manchester airport and their implications for the gateway international airport status of Manchester for the Government's national aviation policy objectives and for the future economic progress of the north-west region; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: Under the provisions of part IV of the Airports Act 1986, the charging proposals are now a matter for the CAA alone. The authority is fully aware of the Government's published aviation policy, including its policy on the gateway status and development of Manchester airport.

NATIONAL FINANCE

BP Shares

Mr. Boswell: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many ordinary shares in BP plc are held by the Bank of England on account of Her Majesty's Government following the recent buy-back offer; what proportion of the total they represent; and what plans he has for their disposal.

Mr. Norman Lamont: I refer my hon. Friend to my answers of 14 January at columns *384-5* to the hon. Members for Redcar (Miss Mowlam) and for Easington (Mr. Cummings).

Mr. Chris Smith: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what financial consequences there have been for the Exchequer as a result of the rights issue of 459 million BP shares occurring simultaneously with the sale of the Treasury's holding.

Mr. Norman Lamont: The Goverment agreed to subscribe for the issue of BP shares on a fully-paid basis and immediately to sell the shares together with the Government's existing shares. The cost of this subscription (£1·5 billion) was more than offset by the proceeds of the first of three instalments from the combined offer (£2·5 billion).

Personal Borrowing

Mr. Chris Smith: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will indicate the source and the breakdown of the figures he gave to the Treasury and Civil Service Committee on 9 December 1987, HC 197, Q.152, for the levels of personal sector borrowing other than mortgage borrowing in 1979-80 and 1986-87.

Mr. Lilley: The figures quoted to the Committee were for borrowing by the private, not the personal, sector. The same definition was used for chart 2·4 of the 1987 Financial Statement and Budget Report and the supplementary note by the Treasury published as an appendix in the Select Committee's report on the 1987 Budget, although there have been some subsequent minor

revisions to the figures. The latter gives the sources of the figures quoted. The private sector includes both the personal sector and industrial and commercial companies. The most recent figures for consumer credit and other personal sector borrowing are contained in table 9·3 of the December 1987 edition of "Financial Statistics". The figures were correctly ascribed to the private sector in the oral evidence. Unfortunately, the reference to the personal sector arose as the result of a later transcription error, of which the Committee has now been informed.

Tax Fraud

Mr. Gordon Brown: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will list for 1979 and 1986-87 the number of cases of tax fraud detected for which the amount recovered exceeded *(a)* £100,000, *(b)* £500,000 and *(c)* £1 million.

Mr. Norman Lamont: The Inland Revenue do not keep records of the number of investigations opened in any particular year, but the information for the number of investigations settled is as follows:

Year ended 31 March	*1979*	*1987*
£100,000 to £499,999	53	229
£500,000 to £999,999	—	13
Over £1,000,000	—	6

The amounts shown are total amounts recovered including, where appropriate, interest and penalties as well as tax.

Unpaid Tax

Mr. Gordon Brown: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how much tax was remitted or written off as irrecoverable in 1979 and 1986 and what was the number of tax payers for whom the ground for non-payment was *(a)* that they had gone abroad or were untraceable, *(b)* insolvency and *(c)* hardship.

Mr. Norman Lamont: The tax remitted or written off as irrecoverable amounted to £60·3 million in 1979 and £299·8 million in 1986. The number of taxpayers for whom the ground for non-payment was *(a)* that they had gone abroad or were untraceable, *(b)* insolvency and *(c)* hardship is as follows:

	1979	*1986*
(a)	26,171	51,304
(b)	23,032	56,693
(c)	7,988	5,349

Tax Investigations

Mr. Gordon Brown: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many tax office and inquiry branch investigations there have been where additional tax has become due in 1987, broken down by those paying tax at a top rate of *(a)* 60 per cent., *(b)* 55 per cent., *(c)* 50 per cent., *(d)* 45 per cent., *(e)* 40 per cent. and *(f)* 27 per cent.

Mr. Norman Lamont: In the year to 31 March 1987, a total of 61,656 tax office and inquiry branch investigations were settled in which additional tax became due. I regret that this total cannot be broken down in the way requested except at disproportionate cost.

Value Added Tax

Mr. Wigley To ask the Chancellor of what was the total value of undeclared discovered and recouped by his Departm since 1979.

Mr. Lilley: The total value of unde added tax discovered each year since 19 (figures relate to the financial year ending

	£ m
1979	
1980	
1981	
1982	
1983	
1984	
1985	
1986	
1987	

Information on the amount of underdecla recouped is not available. However, appro cent. of all declared and assessed tax is c

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Chancellor of what has been the percentage rise in the declarations of value added tax discovered tax control officer since *(a)* 1979 and *(b)*

Mr. Lilley: The figures are as follows:
(a) The percentage rise since 1 April 19 for inflation is 368 per cent.
(b) The percentage rise since 1 April 19 for inflation is 37 per cent.

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Chancellor of how many value added tax control officer employed in the United Kingdom; and corresponding figures for each year since

Mr. Lilley: The number of value add officers employed in the United Kingdom year ending 31 March 1987 was 4,330. The year since 1979 are as follows:

	Nu
1979	
1980	
1981	
1982	
1983	
1984	
1985	
1986	

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Chancellor of what has been the average increase in the declarations of value added tax discovered tax control officer in each year since 1979

Mr. Lilley: The increases year by year value of underdeclarations discovered by e tax control officer are as follows (figure financial year ending 31 March):

1980	+
1981	+1
1982	+
1983	+3

	£
1984	+4,830
1985	+12,800
1986	+22,300
1987	+15,100

Mr. Wigley To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is his estimate of the ratio of current employment costs of the value added tax control officers to undeclared value added tax discovered and recouped; and what are the figures for each year since 1979.

Mr. Lilley: The ratio of current employment costs of value added tax control officers to underdeclared value added tax discovered is 1:7·5. The figure is for the financial year ending 31 March 1987. The corresponding figures for each financial year ending 31 March since 1979 are as follows:

	Ratio
1979	1:1·4
1980	1:1·7
1981	1:2·8
1982	1:2·9
1983	1:5·1
1984	1:5·4
1985	1:6·0
1986	1:6·9

Information on the amount of underdeclared tax actually recouped is not available. However, approximately 99 per cent. of all declared and assessed tax is collected.

Relocation

Mr. Kirkwood: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) if he will list in the *Official Report* those members of staff or Departments which are currently under consideration for relocation to sites outside London;

(2) whether there are any plans to relocate civil service staff or Departments to Scotland;

(3) whether he will now consider sites in Scotland for dispersal of civil servants or Departments being moved out of London;

(4) if he will list all examples of decentralisation of civil service staff which moved staff or Departments to offices in Scotland since 1979.

Mr. Brooke: Since 1979, some 5,560 Civil Service posts have been dispersed from London under the Government's dispersal programme including 1,930 posts to Scotland. The Scottish posts were in the Ministry of Defence, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and the Overseas Development Administration. Further moves to Scotland of at least 125 posts are planned under this programme.

For the future, Departments will be encouraged to consider all suitable locations, including those in Scotland, on the basis mentioned in my answer of 18 January to the hon. Member for East Kilbride (Mr. Ingram) at columns *475-6*. Any specific plans will be announced as and when they are prepared.

Regional Selective Assistance

Mr. Blair: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is the practice of the Inland Revenue as regards the treatment of regional selective assistance for the purpose of assessment of pre-tax profits.

Mr. Lamont *[holding answer 19 January 198*
precise tax treatment will depend on the facts of e
but, in general, regional selective assistance is ta
account in determining the taxable profits of a b

EC Budget

Mr. Teddy Taylor: To ask the Chancellor Exchequer what progress has been made in reso budgetary crisis of the EEC; and what is the polic Majesty's Government towards approving in prin creation of a fourth resource for the EEC b national gross national products.

Mr. Brooke *[holding answer 19 January 198*
Budget Council has met four times in an effort to a draft budget for 1988, but has failed on each to reach agreement. It will renew its discussions in of the outcome of the European Council o February.

The fourth resource proposed by the Com would link budget contribution shares more cl shares in Community GNP, and hence to prosperity. It is worthy of further consideration.

EMPLOYMENT

Benefits

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of St Employment what was the total value of un benefits claims discovered and recouped Department in each year since 1979.

Mr. Lee: My Department's fraud investigatio was reorganised in 1984 and comparable figures fo years are not available.

The estimated value of benefit saved by investigation work in the Department for each ye follows:

	£ million gross
1984-85	19·2
1985-86	33·8
1986-87	54·9

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of Sta Employment what has been the percentage change value of unentitled benefits recouped per Departm Employment investigating officer since *(a)* 197 *(b)* since 1984.

Mr. Lee: My Department's fraud investigation was recognised in 1984 and comparable figures for years are not available. There has been a 67·5 pe increase in the estimated value of benefit saved pe investigator between 1984 and 1987.

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of Sta Employment what has been the average change value of unentitled benefits recouped per Departm Employment investigating officer in each year since

Mr. Lee: The estimated value of benefit saved pe investigator in each year since 1984-85 is as follow

Year	£
1984-85	49,450
1985-86	73,015
1986-87	82,860

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what is his estimate of the ratio of current costs of his Department's investigation into fraud to the benefits recouped; and what are the figures for each year since 1984.

Mr. Lee: The ratios between costs and estimated benefit saved are as follows:

	ratio
1984-85	1:2·4
1985-86	1:2·9
1986-87	1:3·7
[1]1987-88	1:4·4

[1] First half year.

Benefits (Fraud Investigating Officers)

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how many officers are employed in England and Wales by his Department in investigating fraud; and what are the corresponding figures for each year since 1979.

Mr. Lee: My Department's fraud investigation work was reorganised in 1984 and comparable figures for earlier years are not available. The number of fraud investigators employed by my Department in each year since 1984 (excluding those employed in Scotland) is as follows:

	Number
1984-85	396
1985-86	590
1986-87	651

In addition a number of other staff are engaged, on either a part or full-time basis, as support staff to these investigators.

Community Programme

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment, pursuant to the reply of 11 January, what plans he has to change the nature of the community programme so that it qualifies as suitable employment within the meaning of section 20(1)*(b)* of the Social Security Act 1975.

Mr. Cope: None. The community programme is already covered by section 20(1)*(b)* of the Social Security Act 1975.

Restart Programme

Mr. Nigel Griffiths: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will give for each month the spending on advertising for the restart programme since the inception of the scheme; and if he will give the reasons for the trend shown by the figures.

Mr. Lee *[holding answer 19 January 1988]:* Expenditure on advertising the restart programme and the programmes included in the range of opportunities are shown below:

1986	
August	
September	
October	
November	
December	
1987	
January	
February	
March	
TOTAL	
(April to date)	

Advertising expenditure was heavy
period to establish an initial awar
programme. A lower weight was
television commercials could concent
the individual programmes under
jobclub, community programme and
Advertising was stopped during the
when air time is at a premium and exp
be less effective. It was resumed again
weight to regain awareness.

NORTHERN IRELA

Youth Training Progra

Mr. John D. Taylor: To ask the Se
Northern Ireland how many young pe
the youth training programme scheme
Castlereagh and Ards during the pas
many of these persons subsequentl
ticeships; and if he will make a
effectiveness of the youth training pro
the constituency of Strangford.

Mr. Viggers: The total number
participating in all full-time training
months ending 31 December 1987
Castlereagh and Ards was 902 and 6
addition, a number of 17-year-olds w
with training under YTP work scheme
Figures relating specifically to appr
within the Castlereagh and Ards district
I am satisfied that the effectiveness
is as positive in the Strangford constitu
remainder of Northern Ireland.

Radioactivity

Mr. John D. Taylor: To ask the Se
Northern Ireland why there is radioacti
Northern Ireland; why it is only appl
what are the sources which have c
existence of radioactivity in livestock in

Mr. Viggers: Radioactive monitori
waters around the Northern Ireland
out to assess the possible effect of radi
from nuclear energy installations.
Following the accident at Cher
monitoring of agriculture products w
ensure that foodstuffs were safe. As a
found that only in sheep have radiati
high enough to warrant continued

uring the launch
ess of the new
en possible and
te on promoting
tart eg — EAS,
restart course.
Christmas period
ience shows it to
a slightly heavier

D

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tary of State for
le participated in
n the districts of
12 months; how
gained appren-
atement on the
amme scheme in

f young people
hemes in the 12
the districts of
respectively. In
in employment

ticeship training
are not available.
this programme
ncy as it is in the

tary of State for
ty monitoring in
d to lambs; and
tributed to the
Northern Ireland.

of the air and
astline is carried
active discharges

byl, radioactive
s introduced to
esult it has been
levels remained
onitoring. Three

small hill areas were identified where some young lambs not yet ready for market had levels of radioactivity above the United Kingdom trigger level of 1,000 bq/kg. As a precaution the Department introduced controls on the movement and slaughter of sheep from these areas. Continued monitoring of sheepmeat indicates that Northern Ireland lamb products in the shops are safe.

The radioactivity found in livestock is characteristic of the Chernobyl fall out.

Mr. John D. Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what systems of checks for the level of radioactive radiation are presently carried out on *(a)* sheep, *(b)* cattle, *(c)* pigs and *(d)* poultry; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Viggers: The Department of Agriculture monitors (at slaughterhouses) the radioactivity levels in marketable lamb. All sheep leaving three designated areas are subject to movement controls and monitoring of radioactivity levels to ensure that these animals are not slaughtered unless cleared by the Department. Monitoring during 1986 and 1987 has shown other agricultural products to be safe so checks on cattle, pigs and poultry are not currently being carried out.

Mr. John D. Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what proposals he has for checking the level of radioactive radiation in Angora goats; whether their wool presents any risk to human beings; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Viggers: I have no plans to check Angora goats for radioactivity, as there is no evidence of Angora goats being kept in any of three designated areas; nor is there evidence that the wool from Angora goats presents any risk to human beings.

Sexual Harassment

Ms. Richardson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what is his Department's policy on sexual harassment at work; whether guidance on reporting complaints has been issued to all members of staff; how many complaints have been reported in the past five years; and what disciplinary action has been taken.

Mr. Stanley: The Civil Service policy on sexual harassment is set out in the programme of action to achieve equal opportunities for women in the civil service, which was published by the Cabinet Office (MPO) in 1984. Sexual harassment at work is not tolerated and is dealt with as a disciplinary matter through the usual Civil Service complaints procedures.

Action is in hand to issue guidance to all members of staff in the near future.

In the past five years eight complaints have been reported. All have been resolved without recourse to disciplinary action.

AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FOOD

Pesticides

Mrs. Ray Michie: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what plans he has to publicise the new pesticides laws due to come into force in 1989; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Donald Thompson: I refer the hon. Me
reply I gave to the hon. Member for Glasgow, H
Wray) on 15 January, at column *438*.

Agricultural Support

Mr. Kirkwood: To ask the Minister of A
Fisheries and Food what representations have
to the European Community Commission re
need to establish a rural development agency t
reductions in agricultural support which ar
proposed by the European Community Comm

Mr. Donald Thompson: There is already an
Development Commission, to promote rural de
in England; and there are similar agencies in Sc
Wales. I am well aware of the challenge posed
by the need to adjust their businesses to a redu
agricultural support. My Department has an
range of policies which can help on this, inclu
incentives for the planting of woodlands on f
grants to encourage the diversification of farm
the designation of environmentally sensitive a
proposals for implementing a Community set-a

Mr. Leighton: To ask the Minister of A
Fisheries and Food what is his estimate of sta
for agriculture as a percentage of the value of
in *(a)* the United Kingdom, *(b)* the EEC as a
what equivalent information he has about t
States of America.

Mr. Donald Thompson: It is difficult
comparisons of national spending on agricultu
ferent countries as definitions of support
information on agricultural expenditure in oth
is incomplete. The most reliable statistics co
support for prices and incomes, although these
the true amount of aid. In the United Kingdo
Community direct support equates to spending
guarantee section of the common agricultural
in the United States of America to equivalent e
by the Federal Government. For 1986—the
for which comparative figures are availa
percentages requested are as follows:

	per ce
(a) United Kingdom	1
(b) EC (12)	1
(c) United States of America	1

Food Labelling

Sir Bernard Braine: To ask the Minister of A
Fisheries and Food whether, in the light of t
connection between diet and health and its
relevance to coronary heart disease, the Gover
invoke their right under the relevant prov
safeguarding public health, as laid down in artic
treaty of Rome, to introduce mandatory la
foodstuffs to show the saturated fat, sugar, fib
content, as recommended by the Committee o
Aspects of Food Policy.

Mr. Donald Thompson: The EC food labellin
(79/112) has harmonised within the Comm
information that may be required to appear on f
and to that extent therefore article 36 of the
Rome is not available to member states to act u

We are discussing with the EC Commission a way forward within the framework of the Community rules for the introduction of fat labelling regulations only, which follows the recommendations of the Committee on the Medical Aspects of Food Policy. Meanwhile, guidelines published in July 1987 by me provide a standard format for nutrition labelling of foods. This format is intended to be the basis for legislation when we have experience of its uptake by industry and EC intentions in the area of nutrition labelling are clearer.

Soil Erosion

Mr. John Garrett: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (1) whether he proposes to continue in the current year the Agricultural Development Advisory Service scheme to monitor water erosion of arable land in England and Wales; and if he will make a statement;

(2) if he will establish a body to investigate soil erosion; and if he will make a statement;

(3) what plans his Department has to monitor soil erosion in upland areas of England and Wales.

Mr. Donald Thompson: The results of a five-year collaborative project which studied soil erosion on arable land are now being assessed by a small working group comprising representatives of the main interested organisations. This group will draw up proposals for further work covering soil erosion on lowland arable land and in the uplands.

Free Food

Mr. Cummings: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what arrangements he is proposing to deal with the distribution of free EEC foods to those in need in the Easington area during 1988; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Donald Thompson: I would refer the hon. Member to the answer given on 12 January to my hon. Friend the Member for Dumfries (Sir H. Monro) at columns *198-9*.

SOCIAL SERVICES

Adoption

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what was, for 1984 and each subsequent year *(a)* the number of children placed for adoption, *(b)* the number of those children who were placed for adoption while in local authority care, *(c)* the number of children on whom adoption orders were made, including the number made on children in local authority care, *(d)* the number of adoption orders made in cases where the court dispensed with parental consent, *(e)* the number of children freed for adoption and *(f)* the breakdown of age of children for each of the above categories.

Mrs. Currie: I regret that not all the figures requested are available. The available figures are set out in the tables:

Children and young people adopted from local authority care in England and Wales 1984-86

Age group	*1984*	*1985*	*1986*
Total	2008	2001	1987
Under one	588	569	581
1-4	646	602	603
5-9	516	538	482
10-15	202	231	266
16 and over	56	61	55

Table 2

Total numbers of adoption orders granted in England and Wales 1984-86 (including adoption orders made in respect of children in care)

Age Group	*1984*	*1985*	*1986*
Total	8,648	7,615	7,892
Under 1 year	1,843	1,605	1,572
1-4 years	1,935	1,645	1,748
5-9 years	2,613	2,261	2,349
10-14 years	1,730	1,625	1,652
15-17 years	527	454	495
Not stated age	—	25	76

Figures for the year 1984 incorporate a distribution of 11 children whose exact age was not stated.

Table 3

Freeing orders became notifiable on 27 May 1984, the date on which freeing for adoption was first introduced. Freeing orders made in England and Wales which were notified 1984-86

Age Group	*1984*	*1985*	*1986*
Total	16	235	244
Under 1 year	10	66	50
1-4 years	3	86	90
5-9 years	2	52	60
10-14 years	—	15	26
15-17 years	—	4	1
Not stated age	1	12	17

Further information on adoptions in 1985 and 1986 is contained in OPCS Monitor (Reference FM3 87/1) published on 11 August 1987, a copy of which is available in the Library.

Hospital Beds

Mr. Butler: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what percentage of hospital beds were on average unoccupied in the Mersey regional health authority in *(a)* 1981 and *(b)* the latest available year.

Mrs. Currie: The information requested is given in the table.

All National Health Service hospitals in Mersey region

	1981	*1986*
Average daily number:		
Available beds	21,025	17,959
Occupied beds[1]	17,290	14,880
Percentage occupied beds	82·2	82·9
Percentage unoccupied beds	17·8	17·1

[1] Bed occupancy figures are based on a midnight count and do not therefore reflect the use of beds by patients who do not stay overnight.

The health services information steering group (chaired by Mrs. Körner) recommended in its first report that bed use data should include all patients using a ward in a 24-hour period and that aggregated bed occupancy statistics should not be used as an indicator of efficient bed use. A more useful measure of bed utilisation is patient throughput per available bed. For Mersey region this increased from 14·2 to 18·8 between 1981 and 1986.

Heating Additions

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what was the total cost of heating additions paid by benefit offices in the Nottingham, North constituency in 1986-87; if he will break down this figure by week of payment; and if he will estimate the total number of claimants involved.

Mr. Portillo: I regret that this information is not available. Statistics on the number of people who receive heating additions and the costs involved are collected on a national basis and we are unable to supply information for individual areas.

Single Payments (North Tyneside)

Mr. Ted Garrett: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what is the expenditure on single payments benefits for the months of April to September 1987 from the offices at Saxon house, Newcastle, Unicorn house, North Shields and The Green, Wallsend to claimants residing in North Tyneside; and what is the total sum for this period.

Mr. Portillo: The expenditure on single payments from 8 April 1987 to 22 September 1987 by the local offices in question is given in the table.

	Newcastle East (Saxon House) Amount (£)	*North Shields (Unicorn House) Amount (£)*	*Wallsend (The Green) Amount (£)*
8 April-5 May 1987	35,076	29,829	17,916
6 May-2 June 1987	28,430	35,260	28,381
3 June-30 June 1987	27,263	29,702	29,967
1 July-28 July 1987	49,201	32,862	31,937
29 July-25 August 1987	35,996	40,227	31,452
26 August-22 September 1987	34,550	41,878	18,238
Totals for each office	210,516	209,758	157,891

Combined Total for 8 April 1987 to 22 September 1987 £578,165

Notes:
1. The figures given are provisional and subject to amendment.
2. The boundaries of Newcastle (East), North Shields and Wallsend local offices are not exactly conterminous with those of North Tyneside local authority.

Heating Bills (Seaham and Peterlee)

Mr. Cummings: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) how many households within the Seaham and Peterlee area of his Department he estimates will lose help they at present receive for heating bills, with the implementation of the Social Security Act 1986;

(2) how many households in the Seaham and Peterlee area of his Department are in receipt of social security payments to help towards heating bills.

Mr. Scott: I regret that no information is available concerning the number of households in the Seaham and Peterlee area which are in receipt of supplementary benefit heating additions.

The amount of money spent on heating additions has been included in the resources for the new income support scheme. Extra help will be directed more effectively through the premiums at those in greatest need — pensioners, sick and disabled people and families. Under the arrangements we have made for transitional protection, claimants whose benefit entitlement on the introduction of the income support scheme would be less than their existing benefit entitlement will have their benefit level maintained.

Severe Disability Premium

Mr. Andrew Bowden: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services how many claimants of income support aged 60 years or over will be entitled to the severe disability premium.

Mr. Scott: It is estimated that about 4,400 income support claimants aged 60 or over will be entitled to the severe disability premium.

Widows (Death Benefit)

Mr. Martyn Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will publish figures for weekly industrial death benefit paid to widows for each of the last 20 years.

Mr. Scott: The weekly rates of industrial death benefit since 1948 are shown in table 22.01 in *Social Security Statistics 1987*, a copy of which is in the Library.

Severe Weather Payments

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services, pursuant to his reply of 12 January, what account he proposes to take in deciding the details of new arrangements for severe weather payments of the unusually mild conditions so far in the current winter.

Mr. Portillo: The details of the new arrangements will be considered in the light of the whole of this winter's experience.

Departmental Local Offices

Mr. Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what are the grants, loans, and combined grants and loans budgets of each local benefit office expressed as a sum per head of the supplementary benefit claimant case load of each office.

Mr. Scott: The information is available in the Library.

Benefits

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) what has been the percentage rise in the value of unentitled benefits recouped per fraud detection officer of his Department since *(a)* 1979 and *(b)* 1984;

(2) what was the total value of unentitled benefits claims discovered and recouped by his Department in each year since 1979;

(3) what has been the average change in the value of unentitled benefits recouped per fraud detection officer of his Department in each year since *(a)* 1979 and *(b)* 1984.

Mr. Portillo: I regret that the information requested is not held centrally and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Fraud

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services how many officers are employed in *(a)* the United Kingdom and *(b)* England and Wales by his Department in investigating fraud; and what are the corresponding figures for each year since 1979.

Mr. Portillo: I am able to provide information only in respect of Great Britain. The information relating to Northern Ireland is a matter for my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland. Precise figures for staff investigating fraud are not available but it is possible to calculate the amount of staff time expended in the Department on fraud-related work. On that basis the equivalent full-time staff employed on fraud work have been as follows:

	England and Wales	*Great Britain*
1979-80	2,026	2,311
1980-81	2,092	2,336
1981-82	2,086	2,346
1982-83	1,933	2,185
1983-84	1,975	2,211
1984-85	1,946	2,204
1985-86	2,029	2,285
1986-87	2,152	2,390
1987-88	2,314	2,607

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what is his estimate of the ratio of the current cost of his Department's investigation into fraud to the benefits recouped; and what are the figures for each year since 1979.

Mr. Portillo: Information on which to base a reliable estimate is not held centrally and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Social Security Reform

Mr. Ieuan Wyn Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will make a statement, in the light of the proposed revised social security system, of the position of 16 to 18-year-olds who *(a)* are single parents and *(b)* who are unable to secure work in suitable YTS placements, with regard to their entitlement to benefits.

Mr. Scott: Sixteen and 17-year-olds who are single parents are currently entitled to supplementary benefit if they are not in full-time work and if their income does not meet their requirements. Their position from September, when the Government's proposals for this age group are planned to take effect, will be unchanged, and they will be able to receive income support without time limit.

Under the Government's proposals other 16 and 17-year-olds, with certain exceptions, such as the severely disabled, will normally have no entitlement to benefit. Instead, if they are registering for work or a YTS place their parents will be entitled to claim an extension of child benefit in respect of them. Child benefit will run up to the end of the calendar year for summer school leavers and for up to three months for others. Our intention is that certain young people for whom child benefit is not relevant (eg. orphans and those living away from home because they would be at risk of physical or sexual abuse) will be entitled to income support, but only during the extended child benefit period.

During this period all these young people will have the opportunity of considering the job and YTS opportunities that are available to them. The YTS guarantee applies to all in the age group. After the termination of the extended child benefit period no further child benefit will be paid in respect of them, nor will income support be available.

Pension Age

Mr. Patrick Thompson: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services when he expects to receive a report on the cost and other implications of either a change in the pension age for men or a more flexible retirement age to apply to men and women.

Mr. Scott: I refer my hon. Friend to my reply to my hon. Friend the Member for Eastleigh (Sir David Price) on 24 November 1987 at column *181-82*.

Disabled Persons

Mr. Alfred Morris: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will make a statement on Her Majesty's Government's intentions in regard to the resolution on implementation of the world programme of action concerning disabled persons adopted by the United Nations General Assembly at its 1987 session.

Mr. Scott: The Government are considering the recommendations of the 42nd session of the United Nations General Assembly on implementation of the world programme of action concerning disabled persons. We have made it clear that we support the overall objectives of the programme.

Welfare Rights

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he has yet replied to the letter sent to him on 9 November 1987 by the welfare rights team of Newham borough council.

Mr. Portillo: I regret that the Department has no trace of the correspondence from the welfare rights team of Newham borough council.

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services why his Department has stopped sending press releases to welfare rights organisations; on whose authority the decision was taken; and when it was taken.

Mr. Portillo: The Department's press office has not stopped sending press notices to any one group of

recipients. It does, however, review its long press lists from time to time. It works on the principle that press notices are designed and intended for the press and this is where they are mainly sent. Organisations, companies and individuals write in from time to time asking for press notices and these requests are considered on their merits.

The headquarters of voluntary and other charitable organisations who receive calls from the press or the public about health or social security are among those added to our press lists on request. If the hon. Member knows of any organisation which has a particular need for the Department's press releases and has recently been unable to get them I would be grateful if he would write to me.

Therapists and Midwives (Training)

Mr. Gareth Wardell: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will publish in the *Official Report* the number of (i) trainee physiotherapists, (ii) trainee speech therapists, (iii) trainee occupational therapists and (iv) trainee midwives (Royal College of Midwives) entering courses in England during each of the past 10 years.

Mr. Newton *[holding answer 15 January 1988]:* Information for (i) and (iii) is not available on an England-only basis. However, the number of trainee physiotherapists and occupational therapists entering courses in Great Britain over the past 10 years is as follows:

Trainee physiotherapists and occupational therapists entering courses 1978 to 1987 (Great Britain)

Academic year commencing	*Physiotherapy trainees*	*Occupational therapy trainees*
1978	960	634
1979	988	658
1980	996	695
1981	991	714
1982	977	766
1983	954	751
1984	960	747
1985	967	760
1986	962	754
1987	969	814

For (ii) information on the numbers commencing degree courses related to speech therapy is a matter for my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Education and Science since all courses are run by universities and polytechnics.

The information requested for (iv) is as follows:

Student midwives—England—1978 to 1987

Year	*Total numbers in training at 31 March*[1,2]	*Numbers entering training during year ended 31 March*[3]
1978	4,230	[3]—
1979	4,230	[3]—
1980	3,870	[3]—
1981	3,910	[3]—
1982	3,910	[3]—
1983	4,190	[3]—
1984	[3]—	[3]—
1985	4,363	2,916
1986	4,227	2,961
1987	4,487	2,759

Source: English National Board for Nursing, Midwifery and Health Visiting and predecessor.

[1] Figures prior to 1985 have been estimated as 95 per cent. of the England and Wales totals.

[2] The length of midwifery training was extended to 18 months on 1 September 1981.

[3] Not available.

It is important to note that the numbers of midwives intending to practise on qualifying have increased from 52 per cent. in 1978-79 to over 70 per cent. in 1985-86.

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Scottish Standing Committee

Mr. Home Robertson: To ask the Lord President of the Council what information he has as to the number of occasions since 1958 on which right hon. and hon. Members representing constituencies outside Scotland have been nominated to serve on the First or Second Scottish Standing Committee.

Mr. Wakeham *[pursuant to his reply, 18 January 1988, c. 486]:* No Members representing constituencies outside Scotland were nominated to the First or Second Scottish Standing Committee in the 1980-81 Session and not one Member, as indicated previously.

ENVIRONMENT

National Rivers Authority

7. **Mr. Wilshire:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment when he expects to respond to the consultations on his proposals for a National Rivers Authority.

Mr. Ridley: A memorandum setting out the Government's policy on the National Rivers Authority was placed in the Library on 17 December, in reply to a written reply to my hon. Friend the Member for Banbury (Mr. Baldry).

46. **Mr. Cran:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment when he last met the chairmen of the water authorities to discuss his proposals for a National Rivers Authority.

Mr. Moynihan: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State's last formal meeting with the water authority chairmen was on 25 June 1987. He proposes to meet them again on 19 January. My right hon. and noble Friend the Lord Privy Seal, when Minister for the Environment, Countryside and Water, and I, met them on 16 December.

Schindler Homes

15. **Ms. Walley:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what action he proposes to take to relieve the hardship suffered by residents who purchased Schindler homes from the former NCB, which were defective under the housing defects legislation; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Roe: Owners are entitled to assistance from their local housing authority under the housing defects legislation, provided they meet the conditions for eligibility. Those owners who do not qualify for HDA assistance but consider they face hardship should seek their own provisional advice on the courses open to them. I have recently invited the hon. Member to a meeting about this, together with other interested Members and local authority representatives.

Radioactive Waste

16. **Mr. Wallace:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment whether he has any plans to revise planning procedures to be used in dealing with applications for approval of sites for the disposal of radioactive waste.

Mr. Moynihan: No.

Property Services Agency

17. **Mr. Butler:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what measures he proposes to increase the commercial efficiency of the Property Services Agency.

21. **Mr. Heathcoat-Amory:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what future role he sees for the Property Services Agency; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Ridley: Deloitte Haskins and Sells have reported to me proposing adoption in PSA of commercial accounts as a prelude to establishing a trading fund. I hope to reach decisions on these proposals before long in the light of consultations with my colleagues.

37. **Mr. Tom Clarke:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he has any plans to increase the level of funding of the Property Services Agency.

Mr. Chope: PSA's expenditure on civil accommodation is planned to increase by £60 million in 1988-89 and £74 million in 1989-90 above the levels in last year's public expenditure White Paper.

Local Authority Services

18. **Mr. Sackville:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what representations he has received about the effects of competitive tendering on local authority services.

Mr. Howard: We have received a large number of representations, the most significant of which make it clear that exposing services to competition brings real and substantial benefits to ratepayers and service customers.

24. **Mr. Stern:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he intends to bring forward proposals to oblige local authorities to charge for the services they provide, such as planning permissions and fines for overdue return of library books on the basis of the income of the user; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Howard: No, it is entirely appropriate that local authorities should levy a flat rate charge for services of the kind mentioned by my hon. Friend.

Rating Reform

19. **Mr. Skinner:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment whether he has had any representations from Dulwich regarding the proposed poll tax legislation; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Ridley: Since the publication of the Green Paper "Paying for Local Government" I have received six such representations, and one from someone with a second home there.

20. **Mr. Allen:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what action he will be taking on the petition against the poll tax from the people of Nottingham presented to the House on 16 December 1987.

Mr. Howard: My right hon. Friend will be making his observations on the petition from residents of Nottingham shortly.

33. **Mr. Fearn:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will make a statement on the additional costs to hostels for homeless people resulting from the proposed community charge.

Mr. Howard: There is no need for hostels to incur additional costs under the new system. Hostel residents will pay the community charge either direct, or via their landlord in the form of collective community charge contribution. Landlords of properties designated for the collective community charge will be able to keep five per cent. of the conributions to cover administrative costs.

49. **Mr. Fraser:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what is his estimate of the population of Lambeth which is likely to be unable to pay the community charge.

Mr. Howard: I hope that Lambeth borough council and ILEA will ensure by their spending behaviour that the community charge in Lambeth will never exceed a modest and affordable level. People on low incomes will, of course, be eligible for rebates of up to 80 per cent. to help them pay the charge.

Water Supplies

22. **Mr. Teddy Taylor:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how many derogations are currently in force to permit water authorities to have public water supplies with nitrate levels in excess of 50mg; and what estimate he has made of the size of the population receiving public water supplies in the areas concerned.

Mr. Moynihan: There are currently 48 supplies with nitrate derogations, serving some 900,000 people. These derogations were granted because the concentrations in the supplies are not a health risk. However, in the light of recent legal advice I have decided that these derogations should be withdrawn. The Government will in due course publish their proposals for limiting nitrate concentrations in water. In the meantime studies are proceeding into solutions to the problem, including water de-nitrification processes and the feasibility of protection zones.

30. **Mr. Win Griffiths:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment whether, following the review of the investment programmes of water authorities to meet the European Economic Community quality of drinking water directive and the discussions being undertaken with them over meeting the standards of the bathing water directive, he will announce a date by which both directives will be fully implemented.

Mr. Moynihan: I have nothing further to add to my answers to the hon. Member's questions of 2 and 15 December about the EC directive on the quality of drinking water.

The bathing water directive is being implemented. We have identified 391 bathing waters which fall within its scope. These waters are kept under surveillance and reports on quality are made annually to the Commission. Some 60 per cent. of waters so far meet the directive's quality standards and some £70 million a year is now being spent on improvement schemes to bring the remainder up to standard.

Rented Housing

23. **Mr. Bevan:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment whether he will meet the Building Societies Association to discuss the role of building societies in investing in rented housing.

Mrs. Roe: I have already discussed this topic with the Building Societies Association. I am pleased to see that a major building society has announced a significant initiative in rented housing, and I hope that others will also wish to involve themselves in this area.

Leigh Environmentals

25. **Mr. Harry Barnes:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment on which dates since 1 January 1980 inspectors from his Department have visited the works of Leigh Environmentals and its predecessors at Killarmarsh, Derbyshire; and if he will make a statement based upon his inspectors' reports.

Mr. Moynihan: Since 1981 air pollution control inspectors have made over 100 visits to the site or its immediate vicinity, and hazardous waste inspectors have made nine visits. The purpose of these visits has been to ensure that the operator uses best practicable means to minimise emissions to air from registered processes, and to help the local authority to secure proper control over other processes.

European Year of the Environment

27. **Mr. Thurnham:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how many environmental projects have been undertaken as a result of the European Year of the Environment; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Ridley: Our national committee for European Year of the Environment has been notified of more than 3,000 events and projects taking place in the United Kingdom under the EYE banner. I warmly welcome this excellent British contribution to the year and I pay tribute to the committee for its successful campaign to increase public involvement in caring for the environment.

Cricket World Cup Final

29. **Mr. Harry Greenway:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what representations he has received about the decision by the Minister with responsibility for sport to attend the cricket world cup final in Calcutta in November 1987; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Moynihan: I have received one letter from a member of the public asking for information about my attendance at the Cricket world cup final (and a letter of thanks from the chairman of the TCCB). In addition, I have answered written questions from the hon. Members for Birmingham, Ladywood (Ms. Short) and for West Bromwich, East (Mr Snape).

Teesside

32. **Mr. Devlin:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment when he last met the chairman of Teesside urban development corporation to discuss progress in attracting private investment into the area.

Mr. Trippier: My right hon. Friend last met the chairman of the Teesside development corporation on 8 December 1987.

Housing Corporation

34. **Mr. Key:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what proportion of the Housing Corporation's funds are earmarked for spending in rural areas in the current financial year; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Roe: Information is not readily available on Housing Corporation allocations to rural housing associations other than in the 14 rural stress areas designated by the corporation. For 1987-88 the amount allocated to these associations to cover the cost of new rented and low-cost home ownership schemes approved during the year was some £9 million or 1·5 per cent. of the total for England. Forecast expenditure on these schemes, and other projects approved in the designated rural areas in prior years, is not separately available. The Housing Corporation has been reviewing the definition of, and allocation of funds to, rural areas with a view to implementing new arrangements in time for the allocations to be made within its 1988-89 programme, on which decisions will be made shortly.

Basildon

35. **Mr. Amess:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how many council houses and new town commission houses have been sold in Basildon in each of the last four years.

Mrs. Roe: Figures reported by Basildon district council and by the Commission for New Towns are published in "Local Housing Statistics", copies of which are held in the Library. The relevant issues are:

	Number
1983-84	75
1984-85	79
1985-86	83
1986-87	83

Housing Land

36. **Mr. Andrew Smith:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what plans he has for increasing the amount of land available for housing in the south of England; and whether he will make a statement.

Mr. Waldegrave: Responsibility for the provision of land for housing, in so far as that can be secured through the planning system, rests with county planning authorities in preparing structure plan proposals and with district planning authorities in making local plans and considering planning applications. In approving structure plans and alterations, my right hon. Friend takes into account the likely overall need for housing and the suitability of the proposed ways of meeting those needs.

Tree Planting

38. **Mr. Chapman:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what representations he has received on his Department's initiatives to encourage tree planting.

Mr. Moynihan: A number of representations have been received about various aspects. My right hon. Friend is considering the arrangements which should apply in 1988-89 and subsequent years.

Lambeth Council (Direct Labour Organisation)

39. **Mr. William Shelton:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what representations he has received about his decision to limit work undertaken by Lambeth council's direct labour organisation to contracts worth £50,000 or less; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Chope: My right hon. Friend has received one representation from Lambeth council. I am sending my hon. Friend a copy of that, together with the Department's response.

Protected Buildings

40. **Mr. Atkinson:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he has received any representations from local authorities concerning their existing powers of enforcement against developers who threaten to demolish protected buildings.

Mr. Waldegrave: Not currently. If my hon. Friend is concerned about a particular property I would be happy to investigate the problem if he would send me written details.

Planning Policy

41. **Mr. Adley:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment when he intends to introduce a new planning circular; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Heddle: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment when he will be publishing his conclusions on the draft statement of planning policy on large out-of-town shopping centres.

Mr. Waldegrave: My right hon. Friend is publishing today two new series of guidance notes. Planning policy guidance notes (PPG) will provide guidance on general and specific aspects of planning policy, and minerals planning guidance notes (MPG) will give advice on the control of minerals development.

PPGs and MPGs aim to provide concise and practical guidance on planning policies, in a clearer and more accessible form than in departmental circulars, the earlier series of development control policy notes (DCPNs), and other statements. In future, advice on legislation and procedures will be given in departmental circulars, while PPGs and MPGs will be the main source of policy guidance on planning matters.

In most cases the content of the new notes will be based on extant circulars and DCPNs. An index of all the relevant circulars is also being published today — in fulfilment of an undertaking in response to the fifth report, Session 1985-86, of the Environment Committee in the last Parliament. Unless otherwise stated in the PPGs and MPGs, those circulars remain extant for the time being, but the need to retain them will be reviewed in the light of experience with PPGs and MPGs. DCPNs are now being withdrawn to the extent indicated in the relevant PPGs.

The PPG and MPG notes published today are:

PPG1—General policy and principles
PPG2—Green belts
PPG3—Land for housing
PPG4—Industrial and commercial development small firms
PPG5—Simplified planning zones
PPG6—Major retail development
PPG7—Rural enterprise and development
PPG8—Telecommunications
PPG9—Regional guidance for the south east
MPG1—General considerations and the develop plan system
MPG2—Applications, permissions and conditions

Except for PPG2, 3 and 9, these notes are being is jointly by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of Stat the Environment and my right hon. Friend the Secre of State for Wales.

Further titles will be published in due course.

Copies of the PPG, MPG, and the index of ex circulars, are being placed in the Library.

Empty Council Houses

42. **Mr. Yeo:** To ask the Secretary of State fo Environment what is the latest available figure fo number of council houses which have been empty for m than six months.

Mr. Waldegrave: English local authorities pro information on the number of their dwellings vacan more than six months, for the first time in their ho investment programme returns for April 1987. estimated that there were then about 44,000 dwellings.

Peak Park Planning Board

44. **Mr. McLoughlin:** To ask the Secretary of Sta the Environment if he intends to pay a visit to the covered by the Peak Park planning board.

Mr. Waldegrave: My right hon. Friend has no pla such a visit at present.

Berkshire Structure Plan

45. **Mr. Andrew MacKay:** To ask the Secretary of for the Environment when he now intends to m statement on the Berkshire structure plan.

Mr. Waldegrave: My right hon. Friend expe publish his modifications to Berkshire county co submitted replacement structure plan very soon.

Housing (Rural Areas)

47. **Mr. Gregory:** To ask the Secretary of State f Environment what he is doing to encourage the pro of low cost housing to rent and for sale in rural ar

Mr. Waldegrave: The White Paper publishe September "Housing: The Government's Proposals" 214 set out the Government's proposals for h generally including proposals to expand the h association programme which provides low-cost for rent and other tenures in rural and urban area

I am currently considering whether any measures, designed specifically to help rural are needed.

PRC Houses

Dr. Twinn: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how much his Department has spent on assistance under the Housing Defects Act for people living in PRC houses.

Mr. Waldegrave: Under the housing defects legislation central government contributes towards the costs local authorities incur in assisting eligible owners of designated dwellings with reinstatement grants or repurchase. Authorities claim Exchequer contribution a year in arrears, and the payments take the form of annuities, payable over 20 years. The total contribution claimed by authorities for each financial year following the introduction of the HDA scheme, and the Exchequer payments made on those claims, are as follows:—

	Claims made £	*Claims paid* £
1984-85	21,963	21,963
1985-86	2,250,297	2,200,659
1986-87	4,836,225	[1]2,079,997

[1] Including payments made in January 1988.

Sites of Special Scientific Interest

Sir John Farr: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he is satisfied with the level of prior consultation taking place with landowners, farmers and those with sporting rights before a site of special scientific interest is designated.

Mr. Moynihan: Yes. I am generally content with the present consultation arrangements, but I am reviewing the matter with the chairman of the NCC to see whether improvements can be made.

Pollution (North Sea)

Mr. Patnick: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what steps he will be taking, following the recent conference on North sea pollution, to monitor the reductions in pollution in the North sea agreed at that conference.

Mr. Ridley: I propose shortly to issue a guidance note concerning the implementation of the agreements to reduce pollution reached at the second international conference on the protection of the North sea.

Homelessness

31. **Mr. Kirkwood:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what further steps he proposes to reduce levels of homelessness.

Mrs. Roe: I refer the hon. Member to the reply my hon. Friend gave to the hon. Member for Southwark and Bermondsey (Mr. Hughes) on 2 December last, at column 927.

Mr. Chris Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) if he will list each scheme selected for an additional allocation of housing investment programme funds, under the homelessness initiative promoted by his Department's Estate Action team *(a)* during 1986-87 and *(b)* during 1987-88; how many units of accommodation each scheme will bring into use for homeless households; when these units will be available for letting; and whether they will provide permanent, or temporary accommodation for homeless households;

(2) if he will list each scheme submitted for additional housing investment programme resources, under the homelessness initiative promoted by his Department's Estate Action team *(a)* during 1986-87 and *(b)* during 1987-88; and if he will list the criteria used by his Estate Action team in selecting (i) which schemes should receive additional resources, (ii) which authorities should receive additional resources and (iii) what additional resources each authority should receive.

Mrs. Roe: The local authorities which have so far received additional allocations under the Estate Action homelessness initiative, the amount of their allocations and the numbers of dwellings brought into use for the homeless are as follows.

The criteria used in assessing the bids submitted by some 40 local authorities are based on the initiative's stated objective of bringing vacant council dwellings back into use at reasonable cost.

Approved Estate Action Homelessness Schemes: as at 19 January 1988

Local Authority	*Estate*	*Number of units brought back into use*	£ *Allocation 1986-87*	£ *Allocation 1987-88*
Birmingham	Various	209	370,306	—
Bolton	Various	13	23,000	—
Bradford	Woodside	14	37,200	39,839
Bristol	Various	80	207,918	—
Bury	Sonings	25	145,000	—
Greenwich	Lolland House	40	325,000	—
Guildford	Guildford Park and Westborough	17	312,500	57,500
Hammersmith and Fulham	White City	69	147,000	349,000
Hyndburn	Woodnook	36	158,000	—
Islington	Grimaldi House	15	130,817	—
Leeds	Cripton and Seacroft	10	20,000	200,000
Manchester	Various	261	351,000	—
Mansfield	Oak Tree Lane/ Bellamy Road	10	60,282	—
Milton Keynes	New Bradwell	4	29,631	—
Newham	Hameway 3A	8	177,017	—

Local Authority	Estate	Number of units brought back into use	£ Allocation 1986-87	£ Allocation 1987-88
	Gooseley Lane	23	250,000	—
Rushmoor	Maitland Road	23	165,000	—
Sheffield	Various	37	110,000	180,000
Slough	Manor Park	1	9,100	—
South Tyneside	Tyne Dock	16	167,000	55,000
Stockport	Adswood and Gorsey Bank	25	87,500	—
Thamesdown	Latton Close	14	67,425	—
Tower Hamlets	Ocean	40	—	314,000
Wakefield	Airedale	16	60,000	90,000
Walsall	Various	101	314,000	—
Westminster	Queens Park	24	515,000	—
	Beachcroft House	29		
Woodspring	Several	14	18,982	—
York	Several	12	77,000	62,700

Mr. Chris Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) if he will list each scheme selected for additional housing investment programme resources in 1987-88 under the initiative announced by this Department on 30 November 1987, to enable local authorities to provide additional accommodation to meet the needs of the homeless; how many units of accommodation each scheme will provide; when these units are likely to be available for letting; and whether they will provide temporary or permanent accommodation for the homeless;

(2) if he will list each scheme submitted for additional housing investment programme resources in 1987-88, to enable local authorities to provide additional accommodation to meet the needs of the homeless, under the initiative announced on 30 November 1987; and if he will list the criteria which his Department used in selecting *(a)* which schemes should receive additional resources, *(b)* which authorities should receive additional resources and *(c)* what additional resources each authority should receive.

Mrs. Ree: In making these allocations through the Department's regional offices account was taken of proposals put forward by authorities. The objective was to enable schemes to go ahead this year which would reduce reliance on bed-and-breakfast accommodation or would otherwise benefit the homeless. Preference was given to those authorities with the most serious homelessness problems as indicated by the number of households in bed-and-breakfast accommodation, the number for which authorities had accepted responsibility, and the proportion of council lettings taken up by the homeless.

It is for authorities to decide how to use their allocations. However, the proposals put forward mainly related to bringing empty council dwellings back into use or to the acquisition of properties for use as hostels for the homeless.

Table 1 lists the authorities given allocations and their estimates of the extra dwellings or hostel places that would result. In total these estimates amount to nearly 2,800 extra dwellings/places.

Table 2 lists the authorities which applied but did not receive allocations.

Table 1
Authorities given additional allocations

Region and Local Authority	Allocation £ '000
Northern	
Durham	60
Gateshead	40
Hartlepool	300
Langbaurgh	90
Middlesbrough	84
Newcastle	300
North Tyneside	74
South Tyneside	51
Yorks and Humberside	
Barnsley	280
Bradford	80
Kirklees	200
Sheffield	400
Wakefield	100
York	40
East Midlands	
Ashfield	50
Derby	267
East Lindsey	40
Leicester	295
Nottingham	150
Northampton	198
Eastern	
Aylesbury	55
Colchester	190
Ipswich	30
Luton	111
Milton Keynes	159
Peterborough	165
St. Albans	150
Southend	400
Thurrock	40
South West	
Bath	150
Bristol	200
Isles of Scilly	160
Kennet	115
North Dorset	210
Poole	100
Purbeck	125
South Somerset	80
Weymouth and Portland	160
West Midlands	
Birmingham	325
Cannock Chase	18
Dudley	40

Region and Local Authority	Allocation £'000	Dwellings/ Places
North Shropshire	10	8
Redditch	22	9
Sandwell	100	26
South Herefordshire	55	6
South Shropshire	50	6
South Staffordshire	50	6
Stoke-on-Trent	50	4
Walsall	130	22
Wolverhampton	200	40
Wrekin	50	8
North West		
Blackburn	180	90
Blackpool	100	10
Bolton	40	20
Bury	70	5
Carlisle	100	8
Chester	80	5
Chorley	70	6
Congleton	40	5
Hyndburn	50	10
Manchester	1,000	400
Rochdale	160	18
Stockport	50	10
Tameside	100	6
Wigan	60	60
Greater London		
Brent	1,300	52
Camden	960	118
Greenwich	1,275	81
Hackney	1,300	145
Hammersmith	800	75
Haringey	910	137
Islington	800	129
Lambeth	900	83
Lewisham	900	88
Newham	1,255	141
Tower Hamlets	1,150	110
Wandsworth	750	32
Westminster	1,300	50
South East		
Brighton	300	6
Canterbury	240	18
Crawley	150	14
Dover	200	6
Gillingham	275	14
Gravesham	70	7
Guildford	200	6
Hastings	113	10
Lewes	15	3
Medina	250	8
Newbury	150	6
New Forest	400	20
Reading	235	13
Slough	330	8
South Oxford	25	2
Wealdon	200	5
Woking	47	3

Table 2

Authorities who applied but did not receive additional allocations:

Region and Local Authority

Northern
- Alnwick
- Derwentside
- Easington
- Stockton

Yorkshire and Humberside
- Beverley
- Calderdale
- Craven
- Doncaster
- Harrogate
- Leeds
- Ryedale

East Midlands
- Lincoln
- Mansfield
- Oadby/Wigston

Eastern
- Braintree
- Cambridge
- Chelmsford
- Hertsmere
- Maldon
- North Bedfordshire
- Norwich
- South Norfolk
- Stevenage
- Waveney

Greater London
- Barking
- Barnet
- Bromley
- Ealing
- Harrow
- Hillingdon
- Hounslow
- Kensington
- Merton
- Redbridge
- Richmond
- Southwark
- Sutton
- Waltham Forest

South East
- Adur
- Cherwell
- Fareham
- Horsham
- Oxford
- Portsmouth
- Rochester
- Southampton
- South Wight
- Tunbridge Wells
- Winchester
- Worthing

South West
- Bournemouth
- Caradon
- Carrick
- Cheltenham
- Exeter
- Gloucester
- Kerrier
- Mendip
- North Wilts
- Penwith
- Restormel
- Sedgemoor
- South Hams
- Stroud
- Taunton Deane
- Teignbridge
- Torridge
- West Dorset
- Wimborne
- Woodspring
- West Wiltshire

West Midlands
- Malvern Hills
- Nuneaton
- Worcester

North West
- Nil

43. **Mr. Matthew Taylor:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what action his Department has taken to assist young homeless people during the United Nations International Year of Shelter for the Homeless.

Mrs. Ree: Young people like others stand to benefit from the proposals in the current Housing Bill for increasing the supply of rented accommodation. Further specific steps taken during 1987 include the funding of the Housing Corporation's investment in hostels and other shared housing; the introduction of a new mixed-funding programme for housing association schemes for young job-movers; leaflets produced to encourage householders to take in lodgers and grants given to CHAR, First Key and other voluntary bodies for advice and assistance to the homeless. My Department has also been helping fund the IYSH trust's booklet "Moving Out" which ... homelessness among young people by ... about housing options before they decide ...

Planning Appeals (Buckingham...

Mr. Raison: To ask the Secretary of ... Environment what is the number of pl... made to him in each of the last five years ... council in Buckinghamshire; and how ma... have been upheld, and how many rejected ...

Mr. Waldegrave: The following table sh... of planning appeals received, decided, allo... and withdrawn in each district council are ... of Buckinghamshire between 1 January 19... date from which information on an indi... authority basis is available, and 30 Septe...

Outcome of planning appeals: Buckinghamshire district councils

Local authority	*Appeals received*	*Appeals decided*	*Appeals allowed*	*Appeals dismissed*	*App... withdr...*
Aylesbury vale					
1984	62	42	11	31	
1985	72	57	25	32	
1986	84	69	28	41	
Q1, 2 and 3 1987	76	48	17	31	
South Bucks					
1984	69	50	12	38	
1985	79	62	25	37	
1986	80	63	24	39	
Q1, 2 and 3 1987	77	57	25	32	
Chiltern					
1984	81	47	19	28	
1985	70	76	35	41	
1986	97	69	34	35	
Q1, 2 and 3 1987	101	65	29	36	
Milton Keynes					
1984	25	21	5	16	
1985	25	24	15	9	
1986	31	25	8	17	
Q1, 2 and 3 1987	33	12	6	6	
Wycombe					
1984	91	52	21	31	
1985	105	79	21	58	
1986	177	119	50	69	
Q1, 2 and 3 1987	117	97	37	60	

Note: Milton Keynes Development Corporation—No record of appeals during 1984, 1985, 1986 or 1987.

Vehicle Emissions

Mr. Allan Roberts: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will estimate the total annual emissions of *(a)* nitrogen oxides, *(b)* hydrocarbons and *(c)* carbon monoxide from all petrol-engined vehicles registered in the United Kingdom for each of the following categories (i) over 2 litres cubic capacity, (ii) 1·4 to 2 litres cubic capacity and (iii) under 1·4 litres cubic capacity in each of the years between 1970 and the present day; and what was the number of vehicles in each of the categories for each of the specified years.

Mr. Moynihan: I regret that the information is not readily available and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Council House Sales

Mr. Gerald Bowden: To ask the Secre... the Environment (1) what information ... reasons for the delay in the purchase by ... his home at 66 Tayside Court, Denma... SE5, from Southwark council;

(2) what information he has as to the ... delay in the purchase by Mr. J. R. Youn... 20 Bromleigh Court, Sydenham Hill, Lo... Southwark council;

(3) what information he has as to the ... delay in the purchase by Mrs. E. Kirkby ... 9 Hazel Close, Copeland Road, Lond... Southwark council;

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(4) what information he has as to the reasons for the delay in the purchase by Mr. R. E. Crawford of his home at 101 Scylla Road, London SE15, from Southwark council;

(5) what information he has as to the reasons for the delay in the purchase by Mr. D. J. Vince of his home at 160B Friern Road, London SE22, from Southwark council;

(6) what information he has as to the reasons for the delay in the purchase by Mrs. G. Mells of her home at 6 Steen Way, London SE22, from Southwark council;

(7) what information he has as to the reasons for the delay in the purchase by Mr. and Mrs. I. Whitton of their home at 37 Attle Borough Court, Sydenham Hill, London SE23, from Southwark council;

(8) what information he has as to the reasons for the delay in the purchase by Mr. and Mrs B. Tripp of their home at 181 Crystal Palace Road, London SE22, from Southwark council;

(9) what information he has as to the reasons for the continued delay in the purchase by Mr. Andrew Jamieson of his home at 8 Spring Hill Close, Champion Hill, London SE5, from Southwark council;

(10) what information he has as to the reasons for the delay in the purchase by Mr. W. B. Hammond of his home at 12B Mount Adon Park, London SE22 0DT, from Southwark council;

(11) what information he has as to the reasons for the delay in the purchase by Mrs. R. Newton of her home at 10 Denesmead, Herne Hill, London SE24, from Southwark council;

(12) what information he has as to the reasons for the delay in the purchase by Mrs. M. A. Brewster of her home at 49 Casino Avenue, London SE24, from Southwark council.

Mrs. Roe: The Department has taken up with the council the cases mentioned. The council says that it is now clearing the backlog and that it has issued approximately 1000 section 125 offer notices in recent weeks.

Mr. Gerald Bowden: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what progress has been made by his Department with its inquiries into the cases of the Southwark council tenants mentioned in his answer to the hon. Member for Dulwich on Tuesday 3 November 1987.

Mrs. Roe: The Department wrote to Southwark about these cases on 3 November 1987 but, despite reminders, the council has so far failed to reply fully. It says that it is giving priority to clearing the backlog of outstanding section 125 offer notices. The Department is continuing to press the council, and I will write to my hon. Friend as soon as the information requested is available.

Rent Arrears

Mr. Burns: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list in the *Official Report* in rank order, starting with the local authority with the highest proportion of rent arrears, the total arrears of rent outstanding for domestic properties owned by each local authority in the county of Essex for the latest available date and for 1982-83.

Mr. Waldegrave: The cumulative rent arrears owed to each local authority in Essex as at 1 April 1983 and 1 April 1987, together with the percentage those arrears of the rent collectable, are listed as follows. The a are ranked according to the percentage figure.

	Rent arrears (£)	*Rent as per rent*
i. at 1 April 1983:		
Thurrock	859,775	
Basildon	197,000	
Castle Point	69,468	
Uttlesford	74,000	
Brentwood	62,000	
Epping Forest	178,237	
Harlow	258,500	
Chelmsford	122,721	
Colchester	123,489	
Braintree	135,702	
Maldon	30,453	
Southend on Sea	102,794	
Tendring	43,769	
Rochford	10,965	
ii. at 1 April 1987:		
Thurrock	1,010,011	
Colchester	236,634	
Basildon	148,195	
Uttlesford	92,000	
Castle Point	46,719	
Harlow	244,391	
Chelmsford	125,672	
Southend on Sea	133,150	
Epping Forest	146,667	
Maldon	32,053	
Tendring	55,095	
Brentwood	40,000	
Braintree	81,485	
Rochford	13,328	

Mr. Kirkhope: To ask the Secretary of Stat Environment what are the latest available figur arrears of rent outstanding to each local aut England; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Waldegrave: I have today arranged information to be placed in the Library. All authorities provided figures on their subsidy clai and figures for the missing 26 were provide Department over the telephone.

The figures show that, at 1 April 1987, ren owing to all English local authorities amounted £196 million, or 5·1 per cent. of the rent collect total is some £15 million less than at 1 April 19 arrears stood at £211 million (5·7 per cent. of r However, we know that, in the past, some au provided figures for all arrears outstanding—re and service charges—while for 1987 some of th made an estimate of rent arrears alone. These changes could account for the whole of the improvement, and we believe that there has b change in the total level of rent arrears between A and April 1987.

Over 150 authorities have reported arrears of 2 per cent., and some of these are below 1 per ce again it is the few poorly-performing authorities w mainly responsible for the enormous sums due. worst authorities—17 of which were on the 19 poor performers — have reported arrears collectable ranging from nearly 8 per cent. to 38 and together were carrying a debt burden of £9 in uncollected rent.

In May 1987, my Department issued a circular to all local authorities, drawing their attention to Ministers' increasing concern about the high level of arrears owed by their tenants. The circular was based on best practice observed in those authorities where rent collection methods had proved effective, and recommended steps which all authorities might take to improve their performance. It is too early to say whether this advice has been heeded: we will be better able to judge when the figures for 1 April 1988 are available.

Postal Services (Stray Dogs)

Mr. Harry Greenway: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what representations he has received from the London borough of Ealing about the suspension of postal services on the Hanwell estate, Hanwell, as a result of the dangers to postmen caused by the failure of Ealing council to control the incidence of stray dogs in the area; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Moynihan: None. I understand that the police, who are primarily responsible for the control of stray dogs, have not been informed of any particular problem with stray dogs on the estate and that postal deliveries have now been resumed.

Mr. Harry Greenway: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what are the implications for the reform of the law relating to dog licences of the suspension of postal deliveries to the Hanwell estate, Hanwell, W7, as a result of the danger to postmen of uncontrolled dogs; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Moynihan: The law relating to dog licences is quite distinct from the legislation governing dog control, which will be unaffected by the abolition of licensing.

Floating Jetty, Coulport

Dr. Godman: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list the companies which have been invited by the Property Services Agency to submit tenders for the construction of a floating jetty at Coulport; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Chope: On commercial grounds it is not the Property Services Agency's policy to publish the names of tenderers until after the award of a contract.

Rate Support Grant (Oxfordshire)

Mr. Baldry: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how much Oxfordshire county council has lost in grant for the next financial year as a consequence of the rate support formula for redistribution from areas of high rateable value to areas of low rateable value.

Mr. Howard: Under the present system the domestic ratepayers of Oxfordshire will pay £9·2 million more in 1988-89 than they would in the absence of resource equalisation.

Carroll Group (Appeal)

Mr. Adley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what information he has on the reason for the delay in the appeal in the High Court by the Carroll Group against his decision on a major development at Hurn, Christchurch, Dorset.

Mr. Waldegrave: The judge who w
has stepped down, necessitating the
replacement.

GLC (Seaside and Countr

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secre
Environment what is the current situa
disposal of the Greater London co
country homes; and if he will make a

Mr. Chope: The London residua
complete arrangements for the dispos
North British Housing Association b

Hampstead Heat

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secre
Environment what is the current sit
Hampstead Heath; and if he will ma

Mr. Chope: The London residuary
January, a further consultation pap
whether the London borough of Cam
of the City of London, or a local t
responsible for the ownership and
heath. Comments are sought by 19
expects to make its recommendation
State thereafter with a view to a fo
heath as from 1 April 1989.

London Residuary B

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secre
Environment if he will itemise the se
the London residuary body which are
of negotiation with potential success

Mr. Chope: The following se
transferred to the London residuary
the subject of negotiations with pote

London Scientific Services
Computing Services
Hampstead Heath
Home Loans
Superannuation Fund
Industrial Mortgages
Housing Association Loans.

Estate Action (Wal

Mr. Winnick: To ask the Secret
Environment when Walsall metropol
will be notified of the outcome of
estate action allocation for several es

Mrs. Roe: We have already appro
additional resources this financial yea
action schemes at the Rose Hill and
borough council's outline bids for
1988-89 are being assessed alongside
other local authorities and we will b
to work up successful bids in Februa
be approved as soon as satisfactory
are received.

Water Authoritie

Mr. Boyes: To ask the Secreta
Environment if he will list the nam
salaries of the members of the b
authority.

Mr. Moynihan: Information about board members, their occupations, and emoluments is included in the regional water authorities' 1986-87 annual reports and accounts. These were presented to Parliament on 15 July 1987.

Expenditure Plans

Mr. Baldry: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment whether he will make a statement on his Department's public expenditure plans, following publication of the White Paper setting out the Government's expenditure plans for 1988-89 to 1990-91 (Cm. 288).

Mr. Ridley: My right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer has today laid before Parliament "The Government's Expenditure Plans 1988-89 to 1990-91" (Cm. 288).

The White Paper explains in more detail my Department's plans for expenditure for 1988-89 to 1990-91, announced in summary at the time of the Autumn Statement, and gives comprehensive information about what we have achieved through our programmes in past years, and about our targets for the future.

Housing

Substantially higher levels of planned gross expenditure on housing were announced in the Autumn Statement. Gross provision for housing capital expenditure in 1988-89 is now 11 per cent. higher than previous plans and £158 million higher than estimated outturn for 1987-88. In 1989-90 expenditure will be £284 million higher than previous plans. Increases on this scale have been made possible by the continuing success of the right to buy, and by the disposal of new towns land for housing, which is generating higher levels of capital receipts than previously forecast.

This year's White Paper provides more information about the housing programme than has been previously published. There is a more detailed breakdown into components of the programme and, for the first time, this detailed breakdown is extended to future years' plans. Information on the outputs achieved by the expenditure is continued from previous years and developed. The balance of planned spending between components of the programme reflects the policies set out in the White Paper "Housing: the Government's Proposals", published in 1987 (Cm. 214).

Housing Associations

Housing associations are playing an increasing role in the provision of new social housing for rent. This will be further encouraged by the increase of some £50 million in planned gross provision for the Housing Corporation in 1988-89. The Government expect some of this money to be used to attract additional investment from the private sector, thereby increasing the amount of housing which can be built for the available public resources. Details of the corporation's development programme will be announced shortly.

Local Authority Programmes

Planned local authority gross capital expenditure is £313 million higher in 1988-89 than in previous plans. After taking account of the increased spending power available to local authorities from higher levels of receipts, this leaves housing investment programme capital allocations at £1,150 million. Individual loc allocations were announced by my hon. Minister for Housing and Planning on 18 Dec As the figures show, local authorities are growing proportion of their resources on the of the existing housing stock. The plans publ reflect the Government's intention that this t continue and it will be encouraged. There is substantial increase in the size of the e programme, to allow £140 million of targeted This should permit work to begin on a furth so rundown local authority dwellings, to add t 100,000 included in schemes so far. Disposal sector owners and managers are running at about 8,000 units a year, the target for 1988- set at 15,000 disposals.

Housing Action Trusts

A new component of the housing pro expenditure on housing action trusts (HATs) for the establishment of these trusts are curr the House. The Government intend to lau programme of HATs in the first instance t problems of some of the worst areas of public designated areas they will take over the ow management of local authority housing, i programme of renovation and repair an property on to different forms of own management. HATs will also have a role in local enterprise and employment in their million has been earmarked for HATs in the years of operation.

Other Environmental Services

Urban Development Corporations

Urban development corporations (UDCs) to spend over £200 million in each of the next There are now six UDCs in England. I inter three more during 1988, in Bristol, Leeds and This reflects the high priority I give to rege inner cities, and the effectiveness of the UDC Docklands and Merseyside in regenerating the example, three quarters of Merseyside corporation's area was derelict initially—m per cent. of that derelict land has already bee In London Docklands, 1987 saw the ope Stolport and Docklands light railway, and th an agreement to develop Canary wharf.

Urban Programme and Derelict Land Grant

Despite the increased emphasis on UDC expenditure by DOE on the urban program urban development grant and urban regener and derelict land grant amounts to nearly £3 year. In 1987-88 local authorities' inner area p supported by Government grant, are forcast preserve about 31,000 jobs and support ab training places. Urban development gra approved since 1982 will generate over £50 private sector investment a gearing ratio of 4:1 same period over 6,000 hectares of derelict lan reclaimed with the aid of derelict land grant.

New Towns

The new towns programme of disposals of and industrial property continues successf

private sector takes an increasingly prominent role in the future of the towns. This is reflected in the high level of forecast receipts — £311 million in 1988-89. Capital expenditure—planned at £81 million in 1988-89—is now aimed at rounding off development in the remaining new towns and bringing forward assests for disposal. Throughout the plan period capital receipts continue significantly to exceed gross capital expenditure.

Countryside

I have increased resources for the countryside agencies and the Sports Council. Next year's increase for the Nature Conservancy Council will finance the designation of 500 sites of special scientific interest (SSSIs) and several new nature reserves. It will also cover the cost of 500 new management agreements with farmers and landowners to protect SSSIs, and 600 grants for voluntary conservation work. The Countryside Commission, is aiming to plant 2·25 million trees in 1988-89, in addition to those planted in the aftermath of the 15-16 October storm. Their increase in funding will allow the commission to make a start on a major programme to upgrade the nation's footpaths by the end of the century. Next year's increase for the Development Commission will enable it to continue to develop its successful job creation programmes in support of the rural economy. The increases for the Sports Council will enable it to undertake more work in areas of high priority need in the inner cities, and in particular to increase participation among young people. The council's expenditure is "pump priming" and so will help to stimulate additional private sector involvement.

Local Environmental Services Capital

Gross provision is £627 million per annum for 1988-89 to 1990-91. Capital receipts generated by local authorities on LES have risen sharply in recent years and forecast receipts have accordingly been revised upwards to £542 million per annum.

British Waterways Board

The British Waterways Board external financing limit (EFL) is increased by £1·6 million. This is intended to preserve the real value of the grant for 1988-89. Efficiency savings are expected to flow from the preparation of the waterway plans for the board's network, and the implementation of the MMC report.

Water Authorities

Water authorities continue to reduce real operating costs and this, taken with increased profitability, will enable them to finance large increases in investment proposed in their 1987 corporate plans, with a slight reduction in borrowing. Capital expenditure has already grown in real terms by 40 per cent. since 1980-81 and is currently running at about £1 billion. Further major growth is now assured in programmes to improve water and sewage treatment and to renew underground assets.

Property Services Agency

On PSA's civil accommodation programme, disposal and property repayment services (PRS) receipts are planned to increase by £86 million in 1988-89 and £136 million in 1989-90, enough to allow expenditure increase of £60 million and £74 million and net reductions of £26 million and £62 million in these years. Some of the increase in expenditure is needed to meet unavoidable demands, such as higher rents to be paid to landlords. But enoug will remain to carry out priority major new works and halt the deterioration in the condition of the civil estate 1988-89 and start making inroads on the backlog maintenance work in 1989-90.

Local Authority Capital Expenditure, England

Gross provision for capital expenditure by loc authorities under the main local authority capital ca limit, DOE/LA1, is £5,173 million, £246 million high than the equivalent provision for 1987-88. Under t Local Government, Planning and Land Act loc authorities have two main sources of capital spendi power: capital allocations issued by the Government a a prescribed proportion of their capital receipts. Capit allocations on DOE/LA1 in 1988-89 will total £2,6 million, broadly similar to this year. Because loc authorities are continuing to generate more capit receipts, particularly under right to buy, their potenti spending power from capital receipts will be £300 milli higher than in 1987-88, at about £3·6 billion. T Government's plans take account of the fact that aggregate local authorities do not make full use of th potential spending power.

DEFENCE

Irish Sea (Incidents)

Mr. John D. Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State f Defence how many incidents involving fishing boats a submarines were reported in the Irish sea in 1987.

Mr. Ian Stewart: The only incident involving a Roy Navy submarine and a fishing vessel occurred in the Iri sea on 6 December 1987.

Sexual Harassment

Ms. Richardson: To ask the Secretary of State f Defence what is his Department's policy on sexu harassment at work; whether guidance on reporti complaints has been issued to all staff; how ma complaints have been reported in the past five years; a what disciplinary action has been taken.

Mr. Sainsbury: The Civil Service policy on sexu harassment is set out in the programme of action achieve equal opportunities for women in the Civil Serv which was published by the Cabinet Office (Manageme and Personnel Office) in 1984. Sexual harassment at wo is not tolerated and is dealt with as a disciplinary mat through the usual Civil Service complaints procedures.

The MOD is in the process of discussing and agreei departmental guidelines, on policy and procedures to followed in cases of sexual harassment, with the MO trades unions.

Cases of sexual harassment are recorded centrally MOD only if they result in a disciplinary penalty. Statist are available for the past four years; there have been fo such cases and the penalties ranged from dismissal suspension from duty without pay.

Nuclear Waste

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Defe whether any agreements exist for military nuclear waste be *(a)* taken into the United Kingdom from ot

countries and *(b)* taken to other countries from the United Kingdom; and whether any such waste has been moved under either of these two categories.

Mr. Sainsbury: There are no formal agreements involving acceptance overseas of nuclear wastes from British defence operations in the United Kingdom, and none has been sent.

Nor are there formal agreements for acceptance into the United Kingdom of nuclear wastes from British defence operations overseas, but small quantities have been returned to the United Kingdom on an ad hoc basis.

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many plutonium and radioactive waste related projects at the Atomic Weapons Research Establishment, Aldermaston, have been agreed by Ministers in each year since 1979; what have been the costs of each project *(a)* at the time agreed and *(b)* currently; and if he will make a statement about the reasons for changes.

Mr. Sainsbury: Information on past and current estimates of the capital works programme at AWE Aldermaston, together with the progression of costs were contained in the report by the Comptroller and Auditor General on the "Control and Management of the Trident Programme" (HC 27). I have nothing to add to this information.

Trident

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence which private contractor has been chosen to oversee and complete nuclear work for the Trident missile programme at the Atomic Weapons Research Establishment, Aldermaston; and what is the exact nature of the contractor's responsibilities.

Mr. Sainsbury: Tenders for the role of facilities project management contractor for the capital programme at AWE Aldermaston were received from five firms on 18 December 1987. The proposals are still under consideration. Tenderers will be advised of their success or otherwise in accordance with normal MOD practice.

Harrier GR5

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether it is proposed that the Harrier GR5 will replace Jaguars in the ground attack role; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Ian Stewart: I refer the hon. Member to the reply given to him by my hon. Friend the Member for Hove (Mr. Sainsbury) on 11 December at column *307*.

Military Bases and Facilities

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what is the total number of *(a)* United States and *(b)* United Kingdom military bases and facilities in the United Kingdom.

Mr. Ian Stewart: There are approximately 700 principal military bases and facilities in the United Kingdom wholly under United Kingdom command. There are a further 66 military bases and facilities in the United Kingdom made available for use by United States forces under United States national command. In addition, there are two armament depots run by United Kingdom civilians on behalf of NATO which provide a service for United States forces.

Service Establishments, Nottinghamshire

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list the medical facilities at all service establishments in Nottinghamshire, along with the number of beds available and average number occupied for which suitable figures are available.

Mr. Freeman: There is no military hospital facility in Nottinghamshire. The only service medical bed facility is eight beds at the station medical centre RAF Newton. Bed occupancy statistics are not kept for this unit which is provided only as a recovery facility for sick single personnel.

RAF Molesworth

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence at what time he expects to make a decision about the future use of RAF Molesworth after the implementation of the intermediate nuclear forces treaty.

Mr. Ian Stewart: No decision on this is expected for some time.

Departmental Offices

Mr. Skinner: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what assessment he has made of the effect on the efficiency and effectiveness of his Department of the proposal to centralise parts of his Department at Thames house, Millbank.

Mr. Freeman: There are no plans to centralise parts of the Ministry of Defence in Thames house, Millbank.

Low-flying Aircraft

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many complaints were received about low-flying aircraft in 1987 from England, Scotland and Wales.

Mr. Freeman: During 1987 the Ministry of Defence received 4,053 inquiries and complaints about military low flying in relation to England, 729 in relation to Scotland and 913 in relation to Wales.

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what was the total number of aircraft movements authorised for flying below 250 ft over the United Kingdom in 1987; on how many days such low flying took place; and if he will provide a breakdown of these figures for *(a)* the northern Scotland tactical training area, *(b)* the central Wales tactical training area, *(c)* the Borders tactical training area and *(d)* other areas.

Mr. Freeman: The information requested regarding aircraft movements authorised for flying below 250 ft within the tactical training area is given in the table. The number of days on which such flying actually took place is not however available, and could not be provided without disproportionate effort. Figures in the table relate to the number of days on which flying was authorised to take place. We would expect actual figures to be significantly lower because alternative dates are often prebooked for use in case of bad weather. Operational low flying only takes place in the United Kingdom in the three tactical training areas.

Tactical training area

	Northern Scotland	*Central Wales*	*Borders*	*Total*
Operational low flying movements	518	242	626	1,386
Number of days on which operational low-flying was authorised	133	101	110	145

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what was the total number of low-flying sorties carried out over the United Kingdom in 1987, calculated by *(a)* counting the number of sorties directly and *(b)* the pre-1985 method of logging movements between low-flying areas.

Mr. Freeman: The total number of sorties flown during 1987 was 147,661. The approximate total number of sorties flown, as recalculated from movements by the pre-1985 method, was 133,213.

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what proportion of the total number of low-flying sorties flown over the United Kingdom in 1987 was accounted for by *(a)* fast jets, *(b)* light jet trainers, *(c)* heavy propeller-driven aircraft, *(d)* light propeller-driven aircraft and *(e)* helicopters.

Mr. Freeman: The proportion of military low-level training sorties flown over the United Kingdom during 1987 for each of the categories stated is as follows:

	per cent.
Fast Jets	60
Light Jet Trainers	10
Heavy propeller-driven aircraft	2
Light propeller-driven aircraft	1
Helicopters	27

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what proportion of the total number of low-flying sorties flown over the United Kingdom in 1987 was represented by *(a)* British military aircraft, *(b)* United States air force aircraft, *(c)* other NATO air forces aircraft and *(d)* aircraft from non-NATO countries.

Mr. Freeman: Central statistics do not distinguish between categories *(c)* and *(d)* in the question. Otherwise available information for 1987 is as follows:

Operating authority	*Proportion of sorties flown per cent.*
British Military	84
USAF	15
Others	1

Research Projects

Mr. Gareth Wardell: To ask the Secretary of Sta Defence if he will publish in the *Official Report* res projects currently under way in Welsh university co that are funded by his Department.

Mr. Salmsbury: Yes. The list is as follows:

Serial	*Title*
1.	Synthesis and reactions of boron alkyls.
2.	Fundamental studies into the influence of rotation o transfer in flow geometrics appropriate to the coding turbine rotor blades.
3.	Prediction of stress corrosion crack propagation in w aluminium alloys.
4.	Mixed layer dynamics at ocean weather ship Lima.
5.	Short fatigue cracks in near-alpha-titanium.
6.	Creep strain and creep life prediction for comm aluminium alloys.
7.	A novel numerical technique for the calculatio electromagnetic coupling to structures at high freque
8.	Review of elastic-plastic finite element analysis of we
9.	Mathematical modelling of the circulation in the Ta
10.	Numerical modelling of shallow oceans and supp measurements.
11.	Improved/novel techniques for atmospheric ion produ —Phase II.
12.	Special resource requirements of a fielded network.
13.	IR emission from combustion products of pyrote propellants.
14.	Improved digitial terrain models.
15.	Practicality of tool support interfaces for the APSE.
16.	Electromagnetic energy coupling into gaseous deto waves.
17.	Provision of ophthalmological services.
18.	Human information processing under high work loa
19.	Confidence band estimation for distributions us probabilistic design.
20.	The prediction of percutaneous absorption.
21.	Automatic natural language generation.
22.	Vicon/Pasco "development".
23.	Thermo-dynamic equilibria for metal complex reactio
24.	Flow cytometry and cell sorting of micro-organisms.
25.	Investigation into ferrite loaded lines for sub-nanose pulse sharpening application.
26.	Invitro assessment of toxicity.
27.	Surface examination of fine metal powders and alloy
28.	Verification of computer code grult.
29.	Micro structural characterisation of commercial alumi lithium alloys.
30.	Ultimate load of aluminium alloys.
31.	Protease mutants in yeast cloning systems.
32.	Semiconductor-semiconductor interfaces.
33.	Cytotoxicity of alkylating agents.
34.	Catalysis of co-oxidisation reactions on platinum.

Written Answers to Questions

Thursday 21 January 1988

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Regional Aid

Ms. Armstrong: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster how many grants were given, and what was the total annual amount of regional aid granted in the district of Derwentside, in each of the last eight years.

Mr. Atkins: The number of grants offered and the total amount of regional aid granted in the district of Derwentside in each of the last eight years was as follows:

	Regional Selective Assistance (RSA) offered		*Original Regional Development Grant (RDG I) paid*	*Revised Regional Development Grant (RDG II) approved*	
	Number	*Value (£ million)*	*Value (£ million)*	*Number*	*Value (£ million)*
1979	3	0·4	0·8	—	—
1980	3	0·4	0·4	—	—
1981	11	0·8	0·4	—	—
1982	11	2·6	0·4	—	—
1983	19	2·1	0·8	—	—
1984	9	0·3	0·6	—	—
1985	2	0·4	0·5	41	1·2
1986	14	1·4	0·7	111	3·9
1987	12	1·1	0·1	120	3·1

The RDG I figures relate to published information on individual payments of over £25,000 in the Consett and Stanley employment office areas which together almost exactly approximate to the Derwentside district. The number of RDG I payments made is not available. The Department does not maintain more detailed statistics.
The RDG II scheme was introduced in November 1984.

Business improvement service grant records are not maintained on a district basis.

Ms. Armstrong: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster how many grants were made and what was the total annual amount of regional development grants, for each year since their inception, for the district of Derwentside.

Mr. Atkins: Information on regional development grants cannot be provided since the inception of the scheme in 1972. Sufficiently detailed records are available only from 1977 and these do not record the number of payments made. The amount of grant awarded in each year since 1977 and the number and value of grants approved under the revised scheme introduced in November 1984 are as follows:

	Original regional development grant (RDG I) Value (£ million)	*Revised regional development grant (RDG II)*	
		Number	*Value (£ million)*
1977	1·3		
1978	1·7		
1979	0·8		
1980	0·4		
1981	0·4		
1982	0·4		
1983	0·8		
1984	0·6		
1985	0·5	41	1·2
1986	0·7	111	3·9
1987	0·1	120	3·1

The RDG I figures relate to published information on individual payments of over £25,000 in the Consett and Stanley employment office areas which almost exactly approximate to the Derwentside district. The Department does not maintain more detailed statistics.

Advertising Costs

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what is the cost of the current advertising campaigns for his Department.

Mr. Butcher: Planned expenditure on advertising for the enterprise initiative campaign in the current financial year is £6·3 million.

South Africa

Mr. Galloway: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, pursuant to his reply to the right hon. and learned Member for Aberavon (Mr. Morris) on 21 October 1987, *Official Report*, column *814*, what was the basis for Her Majesty's Government's estimate, that about 90,000 full-time job equivalents may be involved in the export of goods and services to South Africa.

Mr. Alan Clark: The figure of about 90,000 job equivalents involved in exports of goods and services to South Africa was a broad estimate based on the aggregate level of trade with that country, together with an assumption about the relationship between output and employment.

Mr. Galloway: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if he will publish the figures for exports from Scotland to the Republic of South Africa and for imports to Scotland from the Republic of South Africa, expressed as a percentage of total Scottish exports and imports in the last five years for which figures are available.

Mr. Alan Clark: The information is not available.

Space Research

Mr. Ieuan Wyn Jones: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if he will give a regional breakdown of the expenditure on United Kingdom space research during the last year for which full figures are available.

Mr. Butcher *[holding answer 20 January 1988]:* These figures are not held centrally and could be compiled only at disproportionate cost.

Mr. Ieuan Wyn Jones: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if he will make a statement on United Kingdom participation in the ERS-2 satellite and Columbus programmes.

Mr. Butcher *[holding answer 20 January 1988]:* My right hon. and learned Friend is currently discussing with industry the scope for greater private sector involvement in the planning and financing of future space activities. We will take account of these discussions in assessing proposals for United Kingdom participation in the ERS2 and Columbus programmes alongside other priorities.

Mr. Ieuan Wyn Jones: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what was the total value to the United Kingdom of exports of space technology and engineering in 1986-87.

Mr. Butcher *[holding answer 20 January 1988]:* The information is not available.

Mr. Ieuan Wyn Jones: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what funds will be made available to the British National Space Centre for 1988-89 by his Department; what funds were made available for 1987-88; and what are the corresponding figures for each year since 1979-80 both outturn and 1987 prices.

Mr. Butcher *[holding answer 20 January 1988]:* The following table shows DTI expenditure on space, which since October 1985 has been administered by the British National Space Centre, from 1979-80 to 1986-87, and the provisions for 1987-88 and 1988-89. The amounts are shown in cash and in 1986-87 prices using the general gdp deflator.

DTI Space Expenditure 1979-80 to 1988-89

	Outturn/ provision	*19*
1979-80	37·1	
1980-81	44·1	
1981-82	58·7	
1982-83	61·5	
1983-84	59·9	
1984-85	64·1	
1985-86	74·4	
1986-87	72·2	
1987-88	71·7	
1988-89	72·3	

Inner-city Development Grant

Mr. Cummings: To ask the Chancellor of the Lancaster what definition of deprivation his D uses in relation to the granting of inner-city de grants.

Mr. Trippier: I have been asked to reply.

In England, priority for urban development urban regeneration grant is given to the programme areas. The selection of these areas, w authorities have been invited to submit programmes for support under the urban prog not based on any single measure of deprivatio following factors were taken into account:

Unemployment:
the scale, rate and concentration of residential ment, including information on long term unemployment, and unemployment at ward level.

Census information:
selected census indicators of economic, social an stress, showing the scale, intensity and concen deprivation.

Dereliction:
information from the 1982 derelict land survey.

Population:
towns over 30,000.

In addition to these specific factors, account of the local and regional economic context.

ATTORNEY-GENERAL

Public Records

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Attorney-General wh the Lord Chancellor uses in determining the period for which papers withheld from the Pub Office after 30 years should remain closed; and make a statement.

The Attorney-General: Records may be periods longer than 30 years under section 5 Public Records Act 1958 and in accordance criteria set out in paragraphs 26 and 27 of the W "Modern Public Records", Cmnd. 8531, March period of closure is determined by referen particular nature of the record in question.

Judicial Review Pamphlet

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Attorney-General place in the Library a copy of the training pam Judge over your Shoulder — Judicial R Administrative Decisions", prepared by the Solicitors Department.

The Attorney-General: Yes. I have today placed a copy of "The Judge over your Shoulder" in the Libraries of the Houses of Parliament.

DEFENCE

Home Defence

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how much of his Department's current budget is devoted to providing home defence, defined as the approximate military equivalent of civil defence, for the protection of the United Kingdom in the event of hostilities in Europe.

Mr. Ian Stewart: There is no clear military equivalent to civil defence. I therefore refer the hon. Member to figure 10 of the 1987 "Statement on the Defence Estimates", which attributes £2,219 million to defence of the home base.

Challenger Tank

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what progress has been made in encouraging the United Kingdom's North Atlantic Treaty Organisation allies to purchase the new generation Challenger battle tank.

Mr. Sainsbury: We will continue to encourage NATO allies, whenever it is appropriate and realistic to do so, to consider Challenger as a means of fulfilling their medium-term requirements for main battle tanks, in the context of the general approach described in my reply to the hon. Member on 2 November 1987, at column *602*.

Alvey Project

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will explain the purpose of the Alvey advanced information technology project.

Mr. Sainsbury: This is primarily a matter for my right hon. and noble Friend the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry.

However, the Alvey advanced information technology project is a five-year programme of pre-competitive collaborative research in the technologies of IT between Government, industry and academic institutions. It is funded and managed through the co-operation of the Department of Trade and Industry, the Ministry of Defence and the Science and Engineering Research Council. The four major thrusts of the programme are intelligent knowledge-based systems, software engineering, VLSI (very large-scale integration) and man-machine interface. As these clearly have a relevance to defence systems, MOD has contributed financially and seconded manpower to the programme.

Simulators

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on progress in introducing low flight and air combat simulators into the Royal Air Force and in improving their realism; and what is the cost programme for these simulators.

Mr. Freeman: Simulators of increasing sophistication and realism are currently being introduced into service. RAF air crew have been training for several years in a prototype air combat simulator, and a production system was delivered to RAF Coningsby in November. Orders have recently been placed for Harrier GR5 n simulators which will include digitally generated systems to provide a low-level flying training capa

The training value of simulators remains limit their inability to simulate all aspects of flying an must, therefore, be seen as a supplement to low-level training and air combat exercises in aircraft. The procurement cost of all RAF simulator program 1986-87 was £22·4 million.

Costs (Statistics)

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for D if he will express total United Kingdom defence co an amount (i) per household, (ii) per taxpayer and (i person in the United Kingdom.

Mr. Ian Stewart: The information requested, o basis of the latest estimate of defence expenditu 1987-88, is as follows:

Defence expenditure

	£
Per household	877
Per income tax payer	763
Per person	331

Vanguard Class Submarine

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for D whether it is proposed that the Vanguard class subm currently being built will be capable of carrying missiles; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Sainsbury: The Vanguard class subm currently under construction are not designed to ha capability of carrying cruise missiles and there are no to modify them to provide this capability.

Rolls-Royce plc (Winter Seminar)

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for D if he will provide a complete list of personnel fro Department and the armed forces attending the lunc cocktail party and winter seminar organised by Royce plc on 13 January; and what was the purp their attendance.

Mr. Sainsbury: Ninety-four officers and ci personnel from the Ministry of Defence and the a forces attended the winter seminar organised by Royce plc on 13 January. This reflected their responsi to maintain close contact with major companies i aerospace sector.

Overspending

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for D if he will place in the Library a complete list of all and projects for which he is responsible, estimated million or over likely overspent from the last D Estimates, together with the amount overspent or overspent for items and projects from when first plac the Defence Estimates.

Mr. Sainsbury: No. While the terms of the questio not entirely clear, it would appear to cover a lot of gr

and a great deal of effort would be required to answer it. I am satisfied that the scale of effort would be disproportionate, particularly since the annual major project statement for defence equipment which my Department supplies to the appropriate Committees of the House shows a comparison, for projects for which approved expenditure on development and production combined exceeds £250 million, between the estimated cost at the time of approval and the currently estimated cost.

NFR 90 Frigate

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) when a decision is to be made about whether the United Kingdom will enter the next phase of the NFR 90 collaborative frigate project;

(2) further to his answer of 12 November 1987, *Official Report*, column *298*, if he will make a statement about the outcome of project definition and subsequent decisions in respect of the NFR 90 collaborative frigate project.

Mr. Younger: Following completion of international feasibility studies, we have been considering whether to participate in the next stage, project definition, of the collaborative project NFR 90 (a NATO frigate replacement for the nineties). NFR 90 could potentially meet the Royal Navy's requirement for an anti-air warfare escort coming into service at the turn of the century to replace the type 42 destroyers. Adoption of a standard frigate by NATO navies would yield valuable operational advantages in terms of interoperability.

In the interests of sound and efficient procurement practice, we have been concerned to ensure proper co-ordination between work on the frigate and work on the principal armament it would require for Royal Navy service, namely a support defence missile system, which we hope to procure through a separate collaborative programme. Although our concerns on this score are not yet entirely allayed, I am pleased to say that, following discussion with our allies, we have now decided to join the project definition stage of NFR 90 and to sign the implementing memorandum of understanding. We are, however, making clear to our partners that our continued participation is conditional upon the agreement of a timetable which is both realistic in technical terms and properly matched to the timetables for the ship's major weapon systems.

The arrangements for project definition include provision for reviews at various points by the participating nations to take stock of progress. In the light of the first such review, we shall consider whether the timetable proposed for the remainder of the project has the characteristics we are seeking, and we shall decide accordingly whether or not to continue our participation.

Early Warning Systems

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) if there is a ballistic missile early warning system in the United Kingdom purely for United Kingdom use;

(2) whether *(a)* United Kingdom or *(b)* United States officials have initial access to information from the early warning system at RAF Fylingdales; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Ian Stewart: The ballistic missile early warning system at RAF Fylingdales was constructed as a joint venture by the United Kingdom and United States Governments. The system is under RAF co control and the early warning information is d in parallel to both the United Kingdom and U authorities.

Cruise Missiles

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State on how many occasions cruise missiles have outside the perimeters of their United Kingd

Mr. Ian Stewart: Cruise missiles have deployed during off-base training exercises.

National Joint Ocean Surveillance Informa

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State further to his answer of 14 December 1987 co United Kingdom national joint ocean information centre, what is its current cost to budget; and where it appears in the Defence

Mr. Sainsbury: Provision for the j surveillance information centre will be conta defence Votes 2 and 4, with a very small a attributable to Vote 1. The estimated costs are confidential.

States of Alert

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State if he will list the different states of alert, and significance.

Mr. Ian Stewart: For security reasons, i normal practice to give details of alert states.

Mould Radio System

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State whether the installation of the Mould radio been completed; if it has complied with budg requirements for its installation; and if he wi purpose.

Mr. Sainsbury: The installation progra Mould home defence radio system is ahead and within cost. Details of the project are cl

New Tactical Warhead

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State whether work has started at the Atomi Establishment at Aldermaston on the desig tactical warhead; and if he will make a state

Mr. Sainsbury: Work continues at the ato establishment at Aldermaston to keep ab relevant nuclear technologies, but no decisi taken to start the design of a new tactical w

Maritime Operations

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State when the updating of NATO's concept operations is likely to be completed.

Mr. Ian Stewart: I understand that n currently been set.

Military Bases and Facilities

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will place a list in the Library of those United Kingdom military bases and facilities with more than 500 personnel and the estimated number of personnel in each.

Mr. Freeman: It would not be in the public interest to make available information on the numbers of personnel in United Kingdom military bases and facilities at the level of detail requested.

Trident

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence upon what satellite guidance system it is currently anticipated Trident will be dependent.

Mr. Sainsbury: Trident will not be dependent on any satellite guidance system.

Mr. Andrew Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what is the latest estimate of the cost of the Trident system.

Mr. Younger: I am pleased to announce that for the second year running there has been a reduction in the estimated cost of the Trident programme, which now stands at £9,043 million.

After allowing for the effects of inflation and exchange rate variations, there is a real reduction in the estimate over the one announced previously of some £376 million and a real reduction of £1,038 million over the original 1982 estimate, over and above the savings resulting from the decision to have United Kingdom missiles processed in the United States facility at King's bay, Georgia. The total will be spent over a period of 20 years.

In line with established conventions adopted for the recosting of the defence programme, the estimate is based on the exchange rate used for the long term costing of the defence programme, namely £1-$1·62.

The proportion of the programme to be undertaken in the United Kingdom has also reached its highest recorded level—64 per cent.

The Select Committee on Defence previously asked that when announcing the annual revised estimate, I should report on the state of the project as a whole. I am pleased to say that the project remains on programme to enter service as planned in the mid-1990s. There has been no slippage in the in-service date since the decision to proceed with Trident II was announced in March 1982. I am, as last year, sending to the Chairmen of the Select Committee on Defence and the Public Accounts Committee a more detailed report covering the points on which the Select Committee on Defence sought advice. I am also placing a copy of the report in the Library of the House.

Research and Development

Ms. Gordon: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) how many research contracts or agreements for research and development his Department has with Southampton university; and into which subjects;

(2) how many contracts or agreements for research and development his Department has with the university of Aston in Birmingham; and into which subjects;

(3) how many contracts or agreements for research and development his Department is currently placing in United Kingdom universities or other such educational est ments; and at what cost for the financial years 1986 1987-88;

(4) if he will list the universities, polytechnics, schools or other such educational establishments United Kingdom at which research directly or in sponsored by his Department is taking place or ha place over the last two years;

(5) how many contracts or agreements for resea development his Department has with the unive Birmingham; and into which subjects.

Mr. Sainsbury: The Ministry of Defence curre 753 research agreements and 76 contracts with range of United Kingdom universities, polytechn other institutions of education. In addition, the M participating with the research councils in makin funded grants for university research of releva defence.

The cost of research and development in the ac sector during the financial years 1986-87 was £14 and is forecast to be some £18 million in 1987-88. I our policy to give details of these arrangements. I the universities themselves to confirm their involv

Ms. Gordon: To ask the Secretary of State for D whether his Department has awarded any cl research contracts or agreements to United Ki universities or other such educational institutions.

Mr. Sainsbury: There are currently no cl research contracts with universities or other educ establishments. It is however MOD's practice t work at universities and other establishments of education by agreements rather than by formal co and at present there are three classified agreement

Bruslee Shooting Range, Newtownabbey

Mr. Beggs: To ask the Secretary of State for D what consultation took place with adjoining f whose livelihood was likely to be affected prior establishment of Bruslee shooting range, Newtown Co. Antrim.

Mr. Freeman: The MOD consulted Newtow urban district council in January 1973 about the pr to lease the Bruslee quarry site for a firing rang council agreed to this in March 1973 and the ran opened in November 1976. Although not obliged to do so, it would have been for the council to canva opinion on the project. The range has been closed a site was returned to the Newtownabbey district cou 31 December 1986.

Army Equipment Exhibition

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for D what arrangements have been made for the holdi British Army equipment exhibition in 1988.

Mr. Sainsbury: I refer the hon. Member to my r 13 November 1987 at column *333*.

RAF Training

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for D (1) what reductions in flying hours in the Royal Air fast jet operational training programme are planne the next three years;

(2) if he will place in the Library a copy of the Eustace report on Royal Air Force navigator training;

(3) if he will make a statement on action taken to implement the recommendations of the Eustace report on Royal Air Force navigator training;

(4) if he will place in the Library a copy of the Gibson report on Royal Air Force fast jet operational training, completed in August 1985;

(5) if he will make a statement on action taken to implement the recommendations of the Gibson report on Royal Air Force fast jet operational training, which reported in August 1985.

Mr. Freeman: The recommendations of the Gibson report on Royal Air Force fast jet operational training which were made in August 1985 have subsequently been examined and work has started on implementation as appropriate. If all goes to plan, some useful reductions in flying hours should be seen over the next three years. The recommendations of the recent Eustace report on Royal Air Force long-term navigator training are still being considered and no decisions have been taken yet on implementation. Both reports are internal working papers and it would be inappropriate to place copies in the Library.

Tornado Aircraft (Employment Implications)

Mr. Strang: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what estimates he has made of the employment implications for skilled and design staff of the Tornado mid-life update.

Mr. Sainsbury: No final decision has yet been taken on the content of the proposed mid-life update programme for the Tornado GR1 aircraft. It is not possible to assess the employment implications for skilled and design staff, but, if approved, a mid-life update programme would help to sustain job opportunities over a range of disciplines.

Eurofighter

Mr. Strang: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make representations to the other partners in the Eurofighter consortium to proceed with the Eurofighter in the light of the policy committee decision.

Mr. Sainsbury: As would be expected, my right hon. Friend frequently exchanges views with his colleagues in the other EFA partner countries and this dialogue is continuing as each of the partners proceeds with its national consideration of the launch of full development of the project.

Mr. Strang: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) whether the Eurofighter will be entirely European in design and content;

(2) whether there are any provisions to prevent American companies competing for Eurofighter contracts.

Mr. Sainsbury: The involvement of companies from nations not participating in the European fighter aircraft is, in principle, permissible. In order to maximise the involvement of the participating nations, such companies would be encouraged to acquire a partner—or partners—from within these nations. As the equipments for the European fighter aircraft are to be selected as a result of competition, it is not possible to forecast what if any involvement of industries from non-participating nations there might eventually be.

Mr. Strang: To ask the Secretary of S how many jobs he estimates would be cr Aerospace by the purchase of 250 Eurofi

Mr. Sainsbury: It is not possible at specific about the number of long-term jo be sustained at British Aerospace as a r Kingdom participation in the European programme. However, it is clear that de subsequent production of the aircraft w significant programme of work well into not only for British Aerospace but Kingdom aerospace industry as a whole.

Mr. Strang: To ask the Secretary of S what estimate he has of the potential fo Eurofighter.

Mr. Sainsbury: It is too early at this sta forecasts of the sales of the European However, there is likely to be a big dema combat aircraft during the lifetime of the aircraft.

Radar Systems

Mr. Strang: To ask the Secretary of S if he will make it his policy to give full Ferranti/Fiat/Inisel ECR90 radar syste American-developed APG 65.

Mr. Sainsbury: The radar for the E aircraft will be selected as a result of co that competition is currently under wa inappropriate for me to comment further

PRIME MINISTER

Hinton St. Mary

Q25. **Mr. Nicholas Baker:** To ask the if she will pay an official visit to Hinton

The Prime Minister: I have at present n

North-West Region

Q41. **Mr. Pike:** To ask the Prime Mi any plans to visit the north-west in 1988.

The Prime Minister: I have at present n

Eastlands

Q59. **Mr. Pawsey:** To ask the Prime M any plans to make an official visit to Eas

The Prime Minister: I have at present n

Ramsbottom

Q94. **Mr. Burt:** To ask the Prime Mi pay an official visit to Ramsbottom.

The Prime Minister: I have at present n

European Council (Tax Harmo

Q104. **Mr. Teddy Taylor:** To ask the P she will seek to raise the issue of the im harmonisation at the next meeting of Council; and if she will make a statemen

The Prime Minister: No. The European Commission's proposals for tax approximation are being dealt with by Economic and Finance Ministers. They have commissioned an evaluation of the Commission's proposals from the Economic Policy Committee and will discuss the implications of the proposals in the light of the Committee's report.

Africa (Visit)

Q123. **Mr. Ashton:** To ask the Prime Minister what was the cost to public funds of her recent visit to Africa.

The Prime Minister: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the answer which I gave to the hon. Member for Holborn and St. Pancras (Mr. Dobson) on 14 January, at column *353*.

"Their Trade is Treachery"

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Prime Minister if any disciplinary action has been taken against officials who failed to convey to Sir Robert Armstrong the fact that they had vetted proofs of Mr. Chapman Pincher's book "Their Trade is Treachery".

The Prime Minister: No.

Public Records

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Prime Minister if, pursuant to her answer of 13 January, *Official Report*, columns *269-70*, she will specify which of the criteria governing the withdrawal of papers beyond 30 years set out in paragraphs 26 and 27 of the White Paper "Modern Public Records", Cmnd. 8531, applied to the 1957 file headed "Leader of the Opposition"; and if she will make a statement.

The Prime Minister: No.

HMS Conqueror (Logbook)

Mr. Alan W. Williams: To ask the Prime Minister if, in the light of the information contained in the foreword by Clive Ponting to the recently published book "The Unnecessary War", a copy of which has been sent to her, she will establish an inquiry into the circumstances in which the logbook of HMS Conqueror was lost following the Falklands war; and if she will make a statement.

The Prime Minister: I have nothing to add to the statements made by my right hon. Friend the Member for Henley (Mr. Heseltine) on 30 November 1984, at columns *593-94*, and by my right hon. Friend the Member for Tonbridge and Malling (Mr. Stanley) on 25 October 1985, at column *227*.

Engagements

Mr. Chapman: To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 21 January.

Mr. Stern: To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 21 January.

Mr. Adley: To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 21 January.

Mr. Janner: To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 21 January.

Mr. Robert G. Hughes: To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 21 January.

The Prime Minister: This morning I pr
meeting of the Cabinet and had meetings with
colleagues and others. In addition to my d
House I shall be having further meetings late

HOME DEPARTMENT

Traffic Wardens

15. **Mr. Harry Greenway:** To ask the Secret
for the Home Department how many traffic
currently employed; how many were employe
the past five years; and if he will make a stat

Mr. Douglas Hogg: The number of traffic
England and Wales on 31 December is as fol

	Numbe
1982	4,597
1983	4,914
1984	4,866
1985	4,769
1986	4,793
1987[1]	4,769

[1] On 31 October.

Juvenile Crime

17. **Mrs. Virginia Bottomley:** To ask the S
State for the Home Department what proposa
combat juvenile crime.

Mr. John Patten: We have a wide range o
in hand for combating crime and others are in p
With 15 as the peak age for offending, many
aimed at offences commonly committed by ju
key to success lies in effective local co-operatio
both the relevant services and the wider comm
recent report of the working party on juvenil
up by the Standing Conference on Crime
shows the way forward.

Broadcasting

19. **Mr. Fallon:** To ask the Secretary of S
Home Department when he now expects to
Green Paper on radio broadcasting.

Mr. Renton: As outlined in my answer earl
a question from the hon. Member for C
Shetland (Mr. Wallace), we want to brin
legislation based on our Green Paper "Radio:
Opportunities", published last year. We have
a further Green Paper on radio.

Kent (Policing)

20. **Mr. Campbell-Savours:** To ask the S
State for the Home Department when he nex
meet the chief constable of Kent to discuss po
county.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: My right hon. Friend
meetings at present arranged.

Prisoners (Custodial Costs)

21. **Mr. John Townend:** To ask the Secret
for the Home Department what is the annual co

funds of all the prisoners convicted of murder held in Her Majesty's prisons, using as the basis of the calculation the average cost of keeping all prisoners in custody.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: The average annual cost of keeping a person in custody in 1986-87 was £13,104. On 30 September 1987 an estimated 1,850 prisoners were serving life sentences for murder in penal establishments in England and Wales, but the uneven distribution of convicted murderers throughout the prison system makes it impossible to calculate the cost of keeping them in custody.

BBC and IBA

22. **Mr. Nicholas Bennett:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he next intends to meet the chairmen of the British Broadcasting Corporation and Independent Broadcasting Authority; and what matters he expects to discuss.

Mr. Renton: My right hon. Friend has no immediate plans to meet the chairman of the BBC or IBA, but we expect to keep in close touch with them over the next few months as our policy on broadcasting develops.

Miss Salema Begum

23. **Mr. James Lamond:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he has yet arrived at a decision on the application by Miss Salema Begum at present on temporary admission in Oldham, to join her parents in the United Kingdom.

Mr. Renton: I advised the hon. Member on 22 December that the outstanding inquiries — here and abroad—would take some time. I undertook to let him know the outcome in due course, and I hope to be able to do so shortly.

Immigration

24. **Mr. Madden:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many *(a)* women, *(b)* men and *(c)* children have been refused visas to visit the United Kingdom from those countries subject to such visa control since October 1986.

Mr. Renton: I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave to him on 17 December 1987, at column 628.

43. **Mr. Ashton:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many male immigrants from North Yemen have been allowed to settle in Britain annually since 1983.

Mr. Renton: Information is readily available only on the numbers granted settlement in the United Kingdom on the removal of time limit and these are shown in the following table for the years 1983 to 1986. In addition, there may have been a small number accepted for settlement on arrival in the United Kingdom.

North Yemeni males (all ages) accepted for settlement on removal of time limit[1]

Year	*Number*
1983	6
1984	11
1985	17
1986	14

[1] Excludes any male children obtaining sett as the mother and included on her passport.

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of Department if he will provide an indic of individuals refused entry to the although in possession of a valid entry year.

Mr. Renton: The only comprehensi of passengers refused entry while in p entry clearance relate to the citizens Bangladesh, Ghana and Nigeria who at Heathrow, Gatwick and Dover sin visa requirements to these countries. year ending 2 January 1988 are as fol

Nationality	
India	
Pakistan	
Bangladesh	
Ghana	
Nigeria	
TOTAL	

[1] As from 1 February 1987.

Welsh Police Force

25. **Mr. Ieuan Wyn Jones:** To ask th for the Home Department when he constables of the Welsh police forces were discussed.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: I visited Gwent September 1987 and discussed with th number of policing matters. My right to include a visit to the headquarters police in his programme of engageme year.

Charities

26. **Mr. Yeo:** To ask the Secreta Home Department what representatio regarding the Woodfield report on ch

Mr. John Patten: We have rece representations from charitable organ support of the report's recommendati

Five Precautions Act

27. **Mr. Madel:** To ask the Secret Home Department if he will make workings of the Fire Precautions Act the workplace; and if he will make a

Mr. Patten: Designation orders m Precautions Act 1971 provide for ge places of work. Factories, offices, premises, where more than 20 perso work at any one time or more than employed elsewhere than on the groun to have a fire certificate. This requir adequate means of escape and means training for employees in action to be of fire.

In premises which do not require a fire certificate the occupier must provide such means of escape in case of fire for the persons employed to work there as may reasonably be required and appropriate means for fighting fire.

Parking (London)

28. **Mr. Tony Banks:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make more resources available to the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis to enable him vigorously to enforce parking regulations in London.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: The strength of the Metropolitan police has risen by some 5,000 police officers since this Government took office in May 1979. The strength of the civil staff has also risen—by some 1,400—releasing a large number of officers from administrative posts for redeployment on operational duties. It is a matter for the Commissioner to determine how best to deploy his resources to meet the many demands on the Metropolitan police, but I know that he recognises the importance of the enforcement of parking and other traffic law. Proposals for improving the effectiveness of parking enforcement (including those arising from a recent scrutiny of the Metropolitan police traffic warden service) are currently being considered by a working party, in which the Home Office, the Department of Transport, the police and the local authority associations are all represented.

Police Manpower

29. **Mr. Latham:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he will make a statement on police manpower; and what recent discussions he has had with chief constables on this matter.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: Total police strength at the end of October 1987 was 123,870, the highest ever recorded. Since then my right hon. Friend has approved further increases in police force establishments as part of the phased programme which he announced to Parliament on 20 May 1986, at column 124.

Mr. Thurnham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement about the current level of recruitment of police officers.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: A total of 6,871 police officers were recruited in England and Wales including the Metropolitan police in the 10 months up until 31 October 1987, either to replace officers who retired or resigned or to enable forces to implement increases in establishment. Between May 1979 and October 1987, the strength of the police service, excluding those who are on secondment, increased by 12,019 police officers, from 109,998 to 122,017.

Alcohol Sales (Minors)

30. **Mr. Sackville:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps he is taking to deter the sale of alcohol to minors from public houses and off-licences.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: As my hon. Friend the Minister of State said in reply to a question from the hon. Member for Lancashire, West (Mr. Hind) on 19 January, at columns 646-7, in the light of discussion within the ministerial group on alcohol misuse the Government intend to amend the Licensing Act 1964 to strengthen the of alcohol to young people under 18 and penalties for the offence. Appropriate amer tabled to the Licensing Bill.

AIDS

31. **Mr. Cohen:** To ask the Secretary o Home Department what is the latest figure of prisoners infected with the HIV virus; make a statement.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: On 12 January 1 population of England and Wales includ reported as having been identified as positive. One hundred and fifty four such reported since central monitoring began in

West Midlands Police

32. **Mr. Mullin:** To ask the Secretary o Home Department when he last met the chi the west midlands; and what was discusse

Mr. Douglas Hogg: My right hon. Fri West Midlands police on 11 December discussed with the chief constable a ran matters.

Mentally Disordered Prisone

33. **Mr. Cran:** To ask the Secretary o Home Department when he intends to recommendations of the joint Home Department of Health and Social Security on the problems presented by mental offenders in prisons in England and Wales

Mr. Douglas Hogg: A number of the rec already have been or are being impl recommendations aimed at increasing the e mentally disordered offenders are detained prison custody are to be taken forwa discussion between Home Office and DHS

Racial Equality

34. **Ms. Abbott:** To ask the Secretary o Home Department if he plans to make any policy on racial equality, in the light of the of the Commission for Racial Equality.

Mr. John Patten: We remain committe just society in which all individuals, whatev colour, have equal rights, responsibilitie tunities. We shall continue to support th Commission for Racial Equality under its

Thamesmead (Prison)

35. **Mr. Evennett:** To ask the Secretary Home Department when he expects const new prison at Thamesmead to be complete

Mr. Douglas Hogg: The new urban p being constructed at Woolwich is curr completion in December 1990.

Fresh Start Programme

36. **Mr. Kirkwood:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on progress being made to implement the fresh start prison programme.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: Fresh start has been implemented at 105 establishments in England and Wales, including all those in the south-west and midland regions. Work is continuing to complete the process at the remaining 16 establishments by the end of February.

DNA Testing

37. **Mr. Tony Lloyd:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on progress with DNA testing.

Mr. Renton: DNA profiling has been used in the analysis of evidential material in about 150 forensic science cases so far, and in analysing samples from mass screenings. The technique is to be used in analysing samples from a mass screening which is to be undertaken in Thames Valley in connection with investigations into an unsolved murder.

Due weight is already given to the results of DNA tests submitted by applicants in support of entry clearance applications. The results of the pilot trial to evaluate the role of DNA testing in immigration procedures should be available shortly.

Television Licences

38. **Mr. Skinner:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what representations he has received from pensioners' associations seeking the abolition of television licences for pensioners; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Renton: During 1987, six written representations, including one petition, seeking free television licences for pensioners were received from pensioners' organisations.

Rural Areas (Policing)

39. **Mr. Wigley:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on his Department's policy regarding the policing of rural areas.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: It is for chief officers of police to determine the most suitable methods of policing rural areas.

Gartree Prison (Escape)

40. **Sir John Farr:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on the outcome to date of the inquiry into the helicopter escape from Gartree prison.

Mr. Hurd: Two highly dangerous category A prisoners, Kendall and Draper, escaped by air from Gartree prison at about 3.15 pm on 10 December 1987. They were taken out in a helicopter whose pilot had been hijacked by an armed passenger. They disembarked a short distance from the prison and made good their escape by road. Police inquiries into the escape are continuing, but both men are still at large. Mr. G. H. Lakes CB, MC, deputy director general of the prison service, has completed his inquiry into the escape and has reported the results to me.

The escape was able to succeed mainly because, while Kendall and Draper were taking their normal exercise in a large open space under the supervision of prison staff, there was no physical barrier to stop the helicopter from landing in that part of the prison and no practical means of preventing it from leaving. The attempt was made easier because it came as a complete surprise to the staff and because those planning it had been able confidently to predict the time and place at which the escapers would be taking their outdoor exercise that day. The helicopter was on the ground for only 23 seconds and then in the air for less than five minutes before it landed again outside the prison. That was too short a period in which successfully to track it by radar in accordance with existing contingency plans, which have been further refined in the light of this incident.

It has been suggested that reduced manning levels resulting from fresh start transitional arrangements may have contributed to the success of the escape. A comparison of staff deployment both before and after 1 November clearly indicates that manning arrangements were unchanged.

Immediately after the escape an immediate and vigorous review of security measures was ordered and all establishments holding category A prisoners were put in a heightened state of alert. A number of practical steps were taken at once within dispersal prisons to frustrate any similar or other possible method of escape. Regime activities and arrangements for outdoor exercise have been changed and now make it significantly more difficult for individual category A prisoners to predict where they will be from day to day. Physical obstacles, for example wires strong enough to foul helicopter rotor blades, have been erected above exercise areas at a number of prisons, and will be installed at others very shortly, in order to impede a helicopter attempting to land in those areas. At suitable prisons observation posts at a level to watch for approaching aircraft will be manned at times when this is necessary. The prison service is reviewing the policy assumptions governing the arrangements for the security of category A prisoners. It has already introduced some changes which will bring the difficult job of preventing escape by highly dangerous prisoners under closer management attention.

The current system of dispersal prisons was designed to contain highly dangerous prisoners securely. It also has to provide satisfactory regimes which allow control to be maintained. It has to operate with sufficient flexibility to enable inmates to be moved from one establishment to another within the system for security, control or other reasons. Steps have been taken to tackle the security weaknesses revealed by this escape and further measures are being considered to give added strength to the dispersal system.

Prison Workshops and Farms

41. **Mr. Atkinson** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he has any plans to improve the profitability of prison workshops and farms; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: The implementation of a series of measures for the rationalisation of prison industries announced in March 1986, which included the setting of clear management targets by the prisons board, has

reduced the cost of employing inmates in prison workshops and improved the value for money obtained from the resources invested in providing this type of activity for prisoners. Work to maintain these trends is continuing. Prison farms and gardens consistently operate at a modest profit.

Chief Constables

42. **Mr. Alex Carlile:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many chief constables have been dismissed under section 5 of the Police Act 1964 since the Act came into force.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: One chief constable has been dismissed under section 29(1) of the Act, which empowers my right hon. Friend to require a police authority to exercise its power under section 5(4) to call upon the chief constable to retire in the interests of efficiency.

Vandalism

Mr. Nicholas Bennett: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what representations he has received seeking the abolition of the age limit below which parents cannot be held responsible for vandalism caused by their children; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. John Patten: Parents are not responsible in law for criminal offences committed by their children, although they may be required to pay fines or other financial penalties imposed on children who have reached the age of criminal responsibility (10 years) but are under the age of 17. In 1987, the Home Office received about 20 letters suggesting that parents should be made liable for the criminal acts of their children; about half of them specifically suggested that such liability should extend to children below the age of criminal responsibility.

Citizenship

Mr. Pike: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what information he has regarding the non-availability of forms required for the registration of British citizenship in accordance with the British Nationality Act 1981; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Renton: We are satisfied that there were supplies available to meet reasonable demands for all the forms subject to the 31 December 1987 deadline for the ending of certain rights to register. There was a temporary shortage of forms which were not subject to time limits, but orders are now being met and the backlog cleared.

Mr. Baldry: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make available the income and expenditure account for the administration of citizenship applications for 1986-87.

Mr. Hurd: I have today placed in the Library of the House a copy of the nationality fees income and expenditure account for the 12 months ended 31 March 1987.

Television Violence

Mr. Robert G. Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will introduce legislation to enable him to enforce through statutory powers the so-called 9 o'clock watershed as a safeguard for young poeple against scenes of violence and depravity on television.

Mr. Renton: The responsibility for enforcing programme standards must rest with the broadcasting authorities. The Government recognise the need for stronger and more effective oversight of standards relating to the portrayal of violence and sex on television and to that end my right hon. Friend has announced his intention to set up the Broadcasting Standards Council.

Drug Trafficking and Abuse

Sir Dudley Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what part his Department took in the Council of Europe's parliamentary hearing on drug trafficking and drug abuse, held in Paris on 11 and 12 January.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: The head of the Home Office drugs branch was present throughout, and delivered a paper, in his capacity as chairman of the committee of senior officials of the Council of Europe's Pompidou group.

Inner London Education Authority

Mr. Thorne: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he has made a new electoral arrangement order for the Inner London education authority; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Hurd: Yes. I have signed an order implementing the recommendations of the Local Government Boundary Commission for England contained in its report No. 533, which was submitted to me on 24 March 1987. This provides for single member wards to come into effect for the next ordinary elections of the ILEA in 1990 as required by section 19(3) of the Local Government Act 1985. The commission was required to hold the review by paragraph 3 of schedule 9 to the 1985 Act, which also requires me to make an order implementing the commission's recommendations, with or without modifications. As the House knows, my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Education and Science has introduced a Bill which includes provisions on the future of ILEA. Under his proposals, the size of the elected ILEA will be reduced if boroughs successfully apply to assume education responsibilities for their area. This does not effect the 1985 Act requirement that provision should be made for single member wards for future ILEA elections.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Disarmament

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the most recent responses by ambassadors at the United Nations 40-nation disarmament committee in Geneva on *(a)* nuclear disarmament initiatives from the United Kingdom under article VI of the nuclear non-proliferation treaty and *(b)* United Kingdom initiatives on verification procedures in support of a comprehensive nuclear test ban treaty.

Mr. Mellor: Article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons requires the parties to it to pursue negotiations on effective measures connected with nuclear disarmament. The conference on disarmament provides a valuable forum for discussion of these issues, but since the United States and the Soviet Union

possess between them the overwhelming preponderance of nuclear weapons it is universally recognised that the primary responsibility for negotiations must fall to them. The resolution of outstanding verification procedures in support of a comprehensive test ban treaty does not require "initiatives", which are unlikely to solve the real technical difficulties; rather, it needs scientific work, which is conducted by the conference on disarmament's ad hoc group of scientific experts, in which the United Kingdom plays a constructive part.

Nuclear Materials (Libya and Pakistan)

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what evidence he possesses that nuclear materials owned by EURATOM, and under safeguards, have been illegally diverted from the Federal Republic of Germany to Libya and Pakistan.

Mr. Mellor: We have no evidence of illegal diversion of nuclear material from the Federal Republic of Germany to Libya and Pakistan. The Government of the Federal Republic of Germany are currently investigating such allegations with the assistance of the International Atomic Energy Agency. The agency stated on 18 January that it was satisfied there had been no unauthorised diversion of nuclear material in significant quantities. We await further details.

United Kingdom-USSR (Bilateral Agreements)

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will list in the *Official Report* *(a)* all bilateral cultural, trade, science and technology co-operation, defence and arms control agreements currently in force between the United Kingdom and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, *(b)* all multilateral cultural trade, science and technology co-operation, defence and arms control agreements signed, respectively, by the United Kingdom and Soviet Governments and *(c)* all United Nations decrees, charters and other agreements on cultural, trade, science and technology co-operation, and arms control matters signed both by the United Kingdom and the Soviet Union.

Mr. Mellor: Bilateral agreements under which activity is currently conducted include the following (year of signature and brief explanation where needed in brackets):

United Kingdom-Soviet Protocol on Consultations (1975. Provides for regular ministerial and official level discussions on a wide range of political issues).

Long-term Economic and Industrial Co-operation Programme (renewed in 1986).

United Kingdom/USSR Credit and Financing Agreement. (1987).

United Kingdom/Soviet Programme for Scientific and Technological Co-operation (1975).

Memorandum of Understanding on Energy, Trade and Co-operation 1986).

Memorandum of Understanding on Co-operation in Agriculture and Food Production (1986).

United Kingdom/Soviet Agreement on Co-operation in the Field of Medicine and Public Health (1975).

United Kingdom/USSR Cultural Agreement (renewed 1987. Provides for exchanges in arts, science and education fields).

Memorandum of Understanding on Information/Cultural (1987. Provides for closer contacts between the media and in other areas).

United Kingdom/USSR Co-operation Agreement (1987).

Agreement on Prevention of Incidents at Sea (1986).

Agreement concerning the Establishment of a Direct Communication Link (1967. Hotline).

Agreement on the Prevention of Accidental Nuclear War (1977).

For the remainder of the question, the answers are not readily available and could be produced only at disproportionate cost.

South Africa

Mr. Galloway: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will list the restrictive measures and sanctions which have been imposed against South Africa since 1983; and to what extent they are in line with measures that have been suggested by *(a)* the Commonwealth and *(b)* the European Community.

Mrs. Chalker: The restrictive measures imposed by us against South Africa since 1983, together with an indication of whether they were adopted in common with our European and/or Commonwealth partners, are as follows:

1. *Measures agreed at the Meeting of EC Foreign Ministers September 1985*

(i) A re-affirmation of an embargo on exports of arms and para-military equipment to South Africa (United Nations Security Council resolution 418 of 4 November 1977);

(ii) A re-affirmation of an embargo on imports of arms and para-military equipment from South Africa (United Nations Security Council resolution 558 of 13 December 1977);

(iii) A refusal to co-operate in the military sphere;

(iv) The recall of military attachés accredited to South Africa and refusal to grant accreditation to military attachés from South Africa;

(v) Discouraging cultural and scientific agreements except where these contribute towards the ending of apartheid or have no possible role in supporting it and freezing of official contacts and international agreements in the sporting and security spheres;

(vi) The cessation of oil exports to South Africa;

(vii) The cessation of exports of sensitive equipment destined for the police and armed forces of South Africa;

(viii) The prohibition of all new collaboration in the nuclear sector.

2. *Measures agreed at the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting, Nassau, October 1985*

(i) The strict enforcement of the mandatory arms embargo against South Africa;

(ii) A re-affirmation of the Gleneagles declaration of 1977, which called upon Commonwealth members to take every practical step to discourage sporting contacts with South Africa;

(iii) Agreement upon the commendation to other Governments of the adoption of the following further economic measures against South Africa:

(A) A ban on all new Government loans to the Government of South Africa and their agencies;

(B) A readiness to take unilaterally what action may be possible to preclude the import of Krugerrands;

(C) No Government funding for trade missions to South Africa or for participation in exhibitions and trade fairs in South Africa;

(D) A ban on the sale and export of computer equipment capable of use by South African military forces; police or security forces;

(E) A ban on new contracts for the sale and export of nuclear goods, material and technology to South Africa;

(F) A ban on the sale and export of oil to South Africa;

(G) A strict and rigorously controlled embargo on imports of arms, ammunition, military vehicles and para-military equipment from South Africa

(H) An embargo on all military co-operation with South-Africa;

(I) The discouragement of all cultural and scientific events except where these contribute towards the ending of apartheid or have no possible role in promoting it.

3. *Measures which the United Kingdom agreed to implement following the Commonwealth Review Meeting, Marlborough House, August 1986*

(i) A voluntary ban on new investment in South Africa;

(ii) A voluntary ban on the promotion of tourism to South Africa;

(iii) The implementation of any EC decision to ban the import of coal, iron and steel and of gold coins from South Africa.

4. *Measures agreed at the EC Meeting of Foreign Ministers, September 1986*

(i) A ban on imports of certain South African iron and steel;

(ii) A ban on imports of certain South African gold coins;

(iii) A ban on certain new investment in South Africa.

EDUCATION AND SCIENCE

Teacher Training (Report)

Mr. Gareth Wardell: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will publish in the *Official Report* a list of the 26 institutions in England that formed the sample on which was based Her Majesty's Inspectorate's survey "Quality in Schools: the Initial Training of Teachers."

Mrs. Rumbold: The following English polytechnics and colleges were included in the sample of institutions in Her Majesty's inspectorate's report "Quality in Schools: the Initial Training of Teachers":

Bath College of Higher Education
Bedford College of Higher Education
Birmingham Polytechnic
Bishop Grosseteste College, Lincoln
Bradford and Ilkley Community College
Christchurch College, Canterbury
Edge Hill College of Higher Education
Hertfordshire College of Higher Education
Humberside College of Higher Education
Kingston Polytechnic
La Sainte Union College of Higher Education, Southampton
Leeds Polytechnic
Liverpool Polytechnic
Manchester Polytechnic
Nene College, Northampton
Newman College, Birmingham
Polytechnic of the South Bank
Portsmouth Polytechnic
College of Ripon and York, St. John
Rolle College, Exmouth
St. Martin's College, Lancaster
St. Mary's College, Twickenham
College of St. Paul's and St. Mary, Cheltenham
Trent Polytechnic
West London Institute of Higher Education
West Midlands College of Higher Education

Pupil Performance

Mr. Nicholas Bennett: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what information he has as to the relative performance of *(a)* state maintained and *(b)* independent schools in England and Wales at (i) GCE O-level grades A to C and CSE grade 1 and (ii) GCE A-level, in 1965, 1975 and 1985, taking into account the number and percentage of pupils educated in each sector in each of these years.

Mrs. Rumbold: Indicators of relative school performance would require information on the attainments and aptitudes of pupils on entry to the school or proxies for this, not collected by the Department. The GCE O-level grades A to C and CSE grade 1 examination achievements of school leavers from maintained and independent schools are as follows, expressed in terms of the number of leavers from each sector.

For GCE A-level the attainments are expressed in terms of the 17-year-old population. Because attendance post-16 is not compulsory, it is not appropriate to express A-level attainments as a percentage of school rolls.

Table 1
School Leavers, England[1]
expressed as a percentage of leavers in each category

	Academic year		
	[1]1964-65	1974-75	1984-85
Maintained schools			
Percentage of leavers with			
1 or more higher[2] grades at O-level or CSE	[3]n.a.	46·1	52·2
5 or more higher[2] grades at O-level or CSE	16·9	19·1	23·7
Total leavers (000s)	600·10	608·84	690·99
Independent schools			
Percentage of leavers with			
1 or more higher[2] grades at O-level or CSE	[3]n.a.	94·2	93·5
5 or more higher[2] grades at O-level or CSE	67·3	72·7	75·8
Total leavers (000s)	45·70	42·87	45·22
All schools			
Percentage of leavers with			
1 or more higher[2] grades at O-level or CSE	35·9	49·2	54·7
5 or more higher[2] grades at O-level or CSE	20·5	22·6	26·9
Total leavers (000s)	645·78	651·71	736·21

Source: School leavers sample survey. Data subject to sampling error.

[1] England and Wales for 1974-75.

[2] O-level grades A-C, CSE grade 1.

[3] Not available.

Table 2
School Leavers, England[1]
leavers with GCE A-level passes as a percentage of the 17-year-old population[2]

	Academic year		
	[1]1964-65	1974-75	1984-85
Maintained schools			
1	1·6	2·6	2·5
2	2·2	3·2	3·3
3 or more	3·8	5·7	6·8
Total	7·6	11·4	12·6
Independent schools			
1	0·5	0·5	0·4
2	0·7	0·8	0·6
3 or more	1·4	2·4	2·9
Total	2·6	3·7	3·9
All schools			
1	2·1	3·1	2·9
2	2·9	4·0	3·9

	Academic year		
	[1]1964-65	1974-75	1984-85
3 or more	5·2	8·0	9·7
Total	10·2	15·2	16·5
17-year-old population (000s)	812	662	763

Source: School Leavers sample survey. Data subject to sampling error.

[1] England and Wales for 1964-65.

[2] GAD estimates of the population.

University Entrants

Mr. Nicholas Bennett: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what information his Department has as to the proportion of university entrants whose father's occupation is given as being in social classes IIIm, IV and V; how this compares with 1958, 1968 and 1978 in the United Kingdom; and what equivalent information he has about other countries.

Mr. Jackson: In 1986, 21 per cent. of university entrants were from social classes IIIm, IV or V. In 1978 the comparable figure was 23 per cent. Information for 1958 and 1968 is not available, but it is estimated that in 1955, 1961 and 1971 the equivalent figures were 25, 25 and 27 per cent. respectively.

The OECD has published some information on parental occupations for higher education students in a few countries, but this is not strictly comparable as each country has its own classification of occupations.

Nursery Schools

Mrs. Clwyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science which authorities provide an educational welfare officer service for nursery schools; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Dunn: The information requested is not centrally available. All local education authorities maintain an education welfare service, but it is for them to decide on its deployment. DES circular 2/86 on "School Attendance and Education Welfare Services" set out the Government's view that the objectives and emphasis of education welfare services should remain firmly rooted in promoting regular attendance at school. Attendance at nursery schools is not compulsory.

Widowers' Pensions

Mr. Martyn Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will, in consultation with teacher's representatives, remove the discrimination against women teachers regarding the payment of widowers' pensions on contributions made prior to April.

Mrs. Rumbold: Discussions are continuing with representatives of teachers and their employers about the arrangements for covering pre-April 1988 service when automatic survivors benefits for female teachers are introduced into the teachers superannuation scheme. Although male and female teachers have paid the same contribution rate since 1972, that rate, determined by the Government Actuary in his actuarial valuations of the scheme, took into account only the existing benefits of the scheme. The contributions already paid by teachers d reflect the cost of covering pre-April 1988 servic survivors benefits for female teachers.

Leeds Education Authority

Dr. Hampson: To ask the Secretary of Stat Education and Science how much Leeds educ authority spent on books and equipment per pupil for year since 1982; what is the estimate for 1987-88; and is the comparable average expenditure for metrop districts over the same period, as a whole.

Mrs. Rumbold: Based on the returns of expenditu 1982-83 to 1985-86 made to the Department o Environment by local authorities and pupil returns to the Department of Education and Science the o expenditure on books and educational equipmen primary and secondary pupil for Leeds and fo metropolitan districts as a whole are as given in the The figures for 1987-88 are taken from "Educ Statistics, 1987-88 Estimates" published by the Cha Institute of Pulbic Finance and Accountancy; a co which is in the Library.

Expenditure on books and equipment per pupil
Primary and secondary schools
(at November 1986 prices)

	Leeds	Metropolitan districts
	£	£
1982-83 (actual)	10·65	24·83
1983-84 (actual)	11·82	27·83
1984-85 (actual)	11·23	29·96
1985-86 (actual)	12·03	29·63
1987-88 (estimates)	17·86	38·28

Equipment Donations

Sir Fergus Montgomery: To ask the Secretary of for Education and Science if he has had representations concerning the payment of value tax on donations of equipment to higher educa institutions.

Mr. Jackson: I have received two such representa

Sir Fergus Montgomery: To ask the Secretary of for Education and Science what steps have been tal encourage companies to donate equipment, partic computers, to higher educational institutions; and will make a statement.

Mr. Jackson: There are various tax incentiv encourage company donations of equipment to education institutions. These will very shortly be br together in a convenient form in a guide to be pub by the Manpower Services Commission on the curre treatment of companies' expenditure on educatio training. As far as computers are concerned, the Con Board for the Universities and the research Coun ready to consider proposals for schemes of ma support involving donations of equipment.

Student Grants

Mr. Bendall: To ask the Secretary of Stat Education and Science when the regulations in resp educational grants to university students are likely amended to improve the position of self-employed pa

Mr. Jackson: The regulations make no distinction between self-employed and other parents, and it is not proposed to introduce one.

Bickleigh Down (Primary School)

Mr. Steen: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science when he will pay the final instalment of grant for the new primary school at Bickleigh Down, Roborough, near Plymouth, details of which were submitted to his Department on 20 February 1987 for the amount of £39,086·84; and if he will make a statement as to why there has been an 11 month delay.

Mr. Dunn: When my right hon. Friend approved the establishment of the new voluntary aided school at Bickleigh Down, the Exeter diocesan education committee was informed that grant would be paid on the whole of the governors' approved net building expenditure on the provision of the new school less the proceeds of the sale of the premises of the former Bickleigh CE primary school.

Before the final payment of grant can be made, the Department needs to know the proceeds of the sale of the Bickleigh premises. The Exeter diocesan education committee has been made aware of this requirement but, as yet, the Department has received no response. Until one is forthcoming it will not be possible to make any further payments of grant.

SCOTLAND

Regional Development Grant

Mr. Dunnachie: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what representations he has received about the announcement made on the withdrawal of regional development grant for Scotland.

Mr. Lang: I have not received any representations following the announcement of the ending of regional development grant for Scotland.

Forestry

Mr. Ron Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland when he intends to respond to the Countryside Commission for Scotland's report, "Forestry in Scotland"; and if he will make a statement.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: The Countryside Commission for Scotland published its report "Forestry in Scotland" in July 1986 and initially did not seek a Government response in order that it might pursue its ideas with the industry and the conservation movement in the first instance. However, the commission has recently informed the Government that it would wish a formal response and this is now under consideration.

Water Rates

Mr. Gordon Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what the percentage rise in average water rates for Scotland has been between 1979 and the latest date available in *(a)* cash and *(b)* real terms.

Mr. Lang: Comparison of rates between years before and after 1985 is not straightforward, because of revaluation. The percentage rise in average domestic water rate bills for Scotland between 1979-80 and 1987-88 has been 156·7 per cent. in cash terms and 47·9 per cent. in real terms.

Winget-Type Housing

Mr. David Marshall: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will list in the *Official Report* the total numbers of Winget-type houses in each district council area of Scotland where such houses exist.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: Glasgow district council has 1,268 Winget-type houses in its area.

Prisons (Statistics)

Dr. Godman: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what was the certified normal prison accommodation and the actual population on the latest available date for *(a)* Her Majesty's prison, Peterhead, *(b)* Her Majesty's prison, Aberdeen, *(c)* Her Majesty's prison, Perth, *(d)* Her Majesty's prison, Saughton, Edinburgh, *(e)* Her Majesty's prison, Shutts and *(f)* Her Majesty's prison, Barlinnie, Glasgow.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: The information is set out in the table:

HM prison	*Design capacity*	*Current available capacity*	*Population at 19 January 1988*
Peterhead	180	[1]130	124
Aberdeen	151	151	180
Perth	519	[1]478	481
Edinburgh	547	547	610
Shotts	528	[1]371	342
Barlinnie	983	983	989

[1] Temporary reduction in capacity due to work in progress following recent incidents.

Dr. Godman: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what percentage of those persons sentenced to a period of immediate imprisonment in Scotland in 1986 were sentenced to a period of six months or less.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: 84·3 per cent.

Dr. Godman: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what was the average weekly cost of keeping a person in prison in Scotland at the latest available date.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: £260.

Dr. Godman: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what was the average prison remand population in Scotland during 1987.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: The 1987 figures are not yet available.

Dr. Godman: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what was the prison remand population for Scotland at the latest available date.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: At lock-up on 19 January 1988 there were 938 remand prisoners in Scotland.

Prison Population

Dr. Godman: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what was the average prison population in Scotland for 1987.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: The 1987 figures are not yet available.

Dr. Godman: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what was the prison population for Scotland at the latest available date; and what was the comparable figure in 1979, 1983 and 1985.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: The figures are as follows:

Date	*Prison population*
16 January 1979	4,753
18 January 1983	5,039
22 January 1985	4,979
19 January 1988	5,287

Scottish Economy

Mr. Strang: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland (1) what estimates have been made of the effect of taking up of the ECR 90 option for the Eurofighter on employment in Scotland's electronics industry;

(2) what assessment he has made of the impact of the adoption of the European radar system on the Scottish economy;

(3) what assessment he has made of the contribution of Ferranti to the Scottish economy.

Mr. Lang: Ferranti's Scottish group employs 9,500 and is therefore a major employer making a substantial contribution to the Scottish economy. Turnover in 1986-87 was over £280 million.

My right hon. and learned Friend and I both keep in contact with Ferranti about its efforts to supply the ECR 90 radar for the European fighter aircraft. In addition, Scottish Office officials liaise closely with colleagues in the MOD.

If the ECR 90 is selected in the competition now in progress it will maintain employment within Ferranti's Scottish group well into the next century as work on current contracts, including equipment for the Tornado aircraft, comes to an end. Success would also enable Ferranti to maintain its capability to design radar and other avionic equipment to the most exacting technological standard and to compete effectively in important international markets.

In addition to being important to Ferranti, the adoption of the ECR 90 for Eurofighter should also provide new opportunities for Scottish electronic subcontractors.

Housing Repairs

Mr. Hood: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what are the latest figures for houses in need of urgent repairs *(a)* in urban areas and *(b)* in rural areas.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: This information is not held centrally.

Coatbridge Project

Mr. Tom Clarke: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what discussions he has had with the Scottish Development Agency and others concerning the effectiveness of the Coatbridge project; what consideration he is giving to widening the project geographically to cover all of Monklands district; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Lang: My right hon. and learned Friend a indicated to the Scottish Development Agency regard Lanarkshire as an area which continues t special attention of the agency. In the first however, it is for the agency and its partne Coatbridge project to consider any extension o geographical area at present covered or beyond currently agreed. I have been told by the agen intends to start discussions with its partne extension in both respects soon.

Last year the agency and my Department co research project which established ways to me achievements of an area initiative. This has no applied to the Coatbridge project.

Rating Reform

Mr. Galloway: To ask the Secretary of Scotland how many representations have bee *(a)* in favour of and *(b)* against the Abolition of Rates Etc. (Scotland) Act 1987.

Mr. Lang: My right hon. and learned F received 853 representations since the Abo Domestic Rates Etc. (Scotland) Bill was enacte last year. Since many representations have comments in favour of some of the proposals a others, it is not possible to provide the informa form requested.

Mr. Galloway: To ask the Secretary of Scotland when he intends to inform Scot authorities of the level of the proposed unifie rate for 1989-90; and on what basis the busines be calculated.

Mr. Lang: I refer the hon. Member to the re on 27 November to the hon. Member for Clyd Milngavie (Mr. Worthington) at column *132*.

South African Consul General for Scot

Mr. Galloway: To ask the Secretary of Scotland when he last met the South Afric general for Scotland; and what was the pu outcome of the meeting.

Mr. Rifkind: I received a courtesy call from African consul general on 10 February 1986 in I No issues of substance were discussed.

Inflation

Mr. Nigel Griffiths: To ask the Secretary o Scotland if he will give the average rate of i Scotland in each year from 1977 to 1987.

Mr. Lang *[holding answer 26 October* official estimates are available.

Job Training Scheme

Mr. McAllion: To ask the Secretary of Scotland, for each new job training scheme managing agent in the Dundee area, what are t figures since the start of the scheme for entr each period showing how many *(a)* were mal female, *(c)* were six to 12 months unemployed, below the age of 25 years, *(d)* were 12 to unemployed, above and below the age of

(e) were unemployed 24 months or more, above and below the age of 25 years, *(f)* were disabled, *(g)* were of ethnic minority origin and *(h)* entered work placements; and how many leavers there were in each period, and of those how many (i) found work, (ii) failed to attend, (iii) went to a further education course or other training, (iv) completed the job training scheme course, (v) left because of sickness and (vi) left for other reasons; and what are the latest cumulative figures of entrants and leavers.

Mr. Lang *[holding answer 14 December 1987]:* It is not Government policy to publish comparative information on the performance of individual managing agents.

EMPLOYMENT

Resignations

Mr. Andrew F. Bennett: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how many civil servants by grade resigned from his Department in the financial year 1986-87; what percentage of the total number of staff employed by his Department this represents; and what measures he is taking to reduce the level of staff turnover.

Mr. Lee: The figures requested are as follows:

Resignations for year ending 31 March 1987

	Number
Administrative Assistant	2,369
Administrative Officer	2,847
Typist	161
Executive Officer	282
Administrative Trainee/ Management Trainee/Higher Executive Officer (Development)	1
Higher Executive Officer	45
Senior Executive Officer	13
Grade 7 and above	7
Others	257
Total	5,982

Notes:
1. 'Others' includes industrial staff.
2. Casual staff are excluded.
3. Part-time staff are counted as whole units.

This represents 9·44 per cent. of the total number of staff employed by the Department of Employment Group.

We continue to use a range of personnel measures to reduce the level of staff turnover including effective recruitment of the staff we need, realistic levels of pay, reasonable working conditions, career development and training, good communications and employee involvement in the work, and recognition of a job well done.

Benefit Offices (Staff)

Mr. Andrew F. Bennett: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what was the level of staff turnover in unemployment benefit offices in *(a)* the Greater London area and *(b)* the south-east of England area in 1986-87.

Mr. Lee: The level of staff turnover in 1986-87 was as follows:

The Greater London area 17·1 per cent.
The South East of England 13·1 per cent.

Asbestos

Mr. Andrew F. Bennett: To ask the Secretary of St for Employment if he will list for each health and saf inspectorate area office, any asbestos stripping operati which have taken place, or are planned for 1987 and 19 which did not or will not receive any visit from inspect to ensure compliance with current legislation.

Mr. Nicholls: A record of the information requested not held centrally and could be obtained only disproportionate cost.

HSE (Staff)

Mr. Andrew F. Bennett: To ask the Secretary of St for Employment how many construction inspectors th are in post in each area office of the Health and Saf Executive; how many resigned in 1987; and how many is planned to recruit in 1988.

Mr. Nicholls: The number of inspectors employed construction work in each area office of the Health a Safety Executive at 1 January 1988 is as follows:

HSE Area Office	*Num*
South West	
South	
South East	
London North	
London South	
East Anglia	
Northern Home Counties	
East Midlands	
West Midlands	
Wales	
Marches	
North Midlands	
South Yorkshire and Humberside	
West and North Yorkshire	
Greater Manchester	
Merseyside	
North West	
North East	
Scotland East	
Scotland West	

[1]Construction inspectors for the London area are all based London south area office.

Fourteen trainee inspectors are also currently employ on construction work in the Executive's area offices.

Factory inspectors are allocated to groups responsi for inspection of different industries and during th careers inspectors move between groups; it is therefore possible to tell how many have resigned from work construction.

It is planned to recruit enough factory inspectors bring the total number of experienced inspectors construction groups nationally to around 100 by 1990

Mr. Andrew F. Bennett: To ask the Secretary of St for Employment how many trainee factory inspectors w recruited to the Health and Safety Executive in each y since 1980; and how many it is planned to recruit in 19

Mr. Nicholls: The number of class II factory inspect recruited in each year since 1980 is as follows:

	Number
1980	17
1981	—
1982	—

	Number
1983	—
1984	11
1985	3
1986	39
1987	32

It is planned to recruit enough factory inspectors to bring total numbers in the inspectorate, currently 554, to around 585 by the end of 1988.

Mr. Andrew F. Bennett: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how many class IB factory inspectors resigned from the Health and Safety Executive in 1987.

Mr. Nicholls: During 1987, 19 of the class IB factory inspectors resigned.

Mr. Andrew F. Bennett: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how many factory inspectors there are in each area offices of the Health and Safety Executive in the grades of *(a)* principal inspector, *(b)* inspector class IB, *(c)* trainee factory inspector II Q, *(d)* trainee factory inspector class II T and *(e)* trainee inspector.

Mr. Nicholls: The information requested for each grade and HSE area office is as follows (1 January figures).

Area	Inspectors [1]IA	IB	[2]II
South West	5	16	5
South	6	15	3
South East	6	14	5
London North	7	20	5
London South	10	15	9
East Anglia	6	12	3
North Home Counties	6	13	2
East Midlands	5	13	5
West Midlands	8	13	7
Wales	5	11	4
Marches	5	13	6
North Midlands	5	9	4
South Yorkshire and Humberside	6	14	4
West and North Yorkshire	7	17	4
Greater Manchester	6	15	7
Merseyside	6	11	6
North West	5	13	2
North East	7	12	5
Scotland East	5	12	3
Scotland West	6	13	5
Total	122	271	94

[1] Inspector IA equates to principal inspector.
[2] Figures for class II inspectors are totals of trainee inspectors II T and II Q.

Labour Statistics

Ms. Armstrong: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what was the average annual percentage of *(a)* economically active males and *(b)* economically active females unemployed in the district of Derwentside, for each of the last eight years.

Mr. Lee: Information on the economically active population for small areas is available only from the decennial census of population, the last of w April 1981. The following table shows th economically active males and females wh employment as a percentage of the total active, in the Derwentside local authority ar and for those aged 16 to 19 years at that d

	Males Per cent.
All ages	29·2
Aged 16-19	27·7

Ms. Armstrong: To ask the Secretary Employment how many people presently u the district of Derwentside have been un more than *(a)* one year, *(b)* two years and (

Mr. Lee: The following information is the library. On 8 October 1987 the unemployed claimants in the Derwentside l area who had been unemployed for more t two years and three years were 2,679, 1,8 respectively.

Ms. Armstrong: To ask the Secretary Employment what was the average annual economically active males and econo females, under 19 years of age, in th Derwentside, for each of the last eight yea

Mr. Lee: The latest available informatio the 1981 census of population, which foun cent. of males and 54·3 per cent. of females years and usually resident in the district o were economically active.

Ms. Armstrong: To ask the Secretary Employment how many people have beer unemployed for more than one period of ti year in the district of Derwentside in each o years.

Mr. Lee: The information requested is

Ms. Armstrong: To ask the Secretary Employment (1) what was the number of *(b)* females employed in the district of De each of the last eight years;

(2) what proportion of the total employ in the district of Derwentside were emp manufacturing industry and *(b)* service indu of the last eight years;

(3) what was the number of people emp time, and *(b)* part-time in the district of De each of the last eight years.

Mr. Lee: Information about employmen is available only for years in which employment are conducted. The availa estimates for the district of Derwentside, t September 1981 and September 1984 employment, are as follows.

Employees in employment[1]

Derwentside local authority district[2]	*September 1981* *Number (thousand)*	*Per cent.*	*September 1984* *Number (thousand)*	*Per cent.*
All industries and services				
Male	8,700		9,600	
Female	9,100		8,900	
Male and Female	18,800	100·0	18,500	100·0
Full-time	13,900		13,600	
Part-time[3]	4,900		4,900	
Manufacturing industries	4,800	25·7	4,300	23·5
Service industries	12,200	65·0	12,200	66·2

[1] The figures exclude the self employed and members of HM Forces.
[2] The district is defined in terms of ward boundaries as at 1981.
[3] Part-time workers are defined as those working not more than 30 hours a week.

Ms. Armstrong: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how many private sector firms there are with *(a)* fewer than 24 employees, *(b)* between 25 and 49 employees, *(c)* between 50 and 199 employees, and *(d)* more than 199 employees, in the district of Derwentside; and what is the total number of people employed by firms in each category.

Mr. Lee: I regret that the information requested is not available.

Domestic Staff

Mrs. Gorman: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what estimate is available to him of the employment creation potential of placing the cost of employing domestic staff in private households on the same footing as office staff, with regard to tax deductibility; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Lee: No such estimate is available.

Social Fund

Ms. Ruddock: To ask the Secretary of St Employment if he will itemise, by recipient organis body, European social fund allocations to project in Greater London in 1987, indicating the main of the grant, the main category of beneficiary number of beneficiaries for each project.

Mr. Cope: The European Commission alloca following amounts from the European social projects based in Greater London for the calend 1987. The list does not, however, include national run, for example, by the Manpower Services Com and industrial training boards from which those l Greater London will have benefited. Separate fig Greater London for these national schemes are not available.

1987 European social fund allocations for Greater London

Applicant name	*Organisation*	*Beneficiaries*	*£ aid*	[1]*Article*
Brent Asian Professionals' Association (BAPA)	PB1	60	125,098·00	12a
Brent, London Borough of	LA1	8	2,751·00	12a
Brent, London Borough of	LA1	8	1,391·00	12a
British Refugee Council	PB1	260	485,601·00	12a
British Refugee Council	PB1	449	863,252·00	12a
British Refugee Council	PB1	36	199,044·00	12a
British Refugee Council	PB1	39	89,764·00	12a
Broadwater Farm Youth Association	PB4	15	65,376·00	12a
Camden Training Centre	PB1	48	176,413·00	12a
Camden Training Centre	PB1	48	142,147·00	12a
Camden Training Centre	PB1	8	12,914·00	12a
Community Service Volunteers	PB1	45	59,456·00	12a
Community Service Volunteers	PB1	70	86,452·00	12a
Community Service Volunteers	PB1	100	380,760·00	12a
Connections Limited	PB1	30	17,877·00	12a
Davy McKee (London) Ltd.	PB3E	30	60,313·00	12a
Downham Community Workshop	PB4	24	31,771·00	12a
East Ham College of Technology	LA2	11	62,549·00	12a
F. & R. Cooling Limited	PB3E	2	2,768·00	12a
Greenwich Training Company Limited	PB4	40	28,306·00	12a
Greenwich Training Company Limited	PB4	40	22,870·00	12a
Greenwich Training Company Limited	PB4	30	26,678·00	12a
Greenwich Training Company Limited	PB4	7	8,831·00	12a
Greenwich Training Company Limited	PB4	18	14,999·00	12a
Greenwich Training Company Limited	PB4	6	5,960·00	12a
Greenwich Young People's Theatre	PB4	12	129,366·00	12a
Hackney African Organisation	PB1	20	36,885·00	12a
Hackney African Organisation	PB1	20	78,042·00	12a
Hackney African Organisation	PB1	20	22,714·00	12a
Hackney Information Technology	PB1	6	14,271·00	12a

Applicant name	Organisation	Beneficiaries	£ aid	A
Hackney Information Technology	PB1	6	11,499·00	
Hackney Pakistan Womens Welfare Centre	PB1	12	7,446·00	
Hackney Pakistan Womens Welfare Centre	PB1	12	3,765·00	
Hammersmith and Fulham Training Services	PB4	15	31,542·00	
Haringey Womens Training and Education Centre Ltd.	PB1	90	221,049·00	
Hillingdon Asian Women's Group	PB4	15	15,145·00	
Hillingdon Asian Women's Group	PB4	15	7,658·00	
Independent Media Traing Trust	PB1	15	96,913·00	
Inner London Education Authority	LA1	20	25,734·00	
Inner London Education Authority	LA1	20	13,012·00	
Inner London Education Authority	LA1	8	36,609·00	
Inner London Education Authority	LA1	8	18,510·00	
Inner London Education Authority	LA1	8	31,385·00	
Inner London Education Authority	LA1	8	15,869·00	
Inner London Education Authority	LA1	32	19,584·00	
Inner London Education Authority	LA1	7	17,216·00	
Inner London Education Authority	LA1	8	9,949·00	
Inner London Education Authority	LA1	16	19,052·00	
Inner London Education Authority	LA1	8	4,841·00	
Inner London Education Authority	LA1	15	3,900·00	
Inner London Education Authority	LA1	8	6,013·00	
Inner London Education Authority	LA1	7	2,660·00	
Inner London Education Authority	LA1	15	4,092·00	
Invalid Children's Aid Association	PB1	15	92,293·00	
Islington Training Centre Ltd.	PB4	16	8,745·00	
Islington Training Centre Ltd.	PB4	60	65,367·00	
Islington Training Centre Ltd.	PB4	60	22,994·00	
Lambeth Womens Workshop	PB4	48	35,554·00	
Leetec Limited	PB3E	10	17,342·00	
Lewisham Womens Training Centre Limited	PB4	12	79,061·00	
Lewisham Womens Training Centre Limited	PB4	12	63,705·00	
London Borough of Lambeth	LA1	24	36,021·00	
London Borough of Lambeth	LA1	24	18,213·00	
London Borough of Bexley	LA1	21	11,701·00	
London Borough of Bexley	LA1	21	5,916·00	
London Borough of Hackney (Economic Dev. Unit)	LA1	15	14,892·00	
London Borough of Hackney (Economic Dev. Unit)	LA1	15	7,530·00	
London Borough of Waltham Forest	LA1	25	72,854·00	
London Borough of Hackney	LA1	14	99,092·00	
London Co-operative Enterprise Board	PB4	40	28,763·00	
London Co-operative Training Ltd.	PB4	100	87,006·00	
London Co-operative Training Ltd.	PB4	200	165,323·00	
London Co-operative Training Ltd.	PB4	100	72,582·00	
London Co-operative Training Ltd.	PB4	100	87,178·00	
London Energy and Employment Network	PB4	10	10,390·00	
London Institute, London College of Fashion	LA2	25	18,250·00	
London Institute, London College of Fashion	LA2	100	78,000·00	
Londra Halkevi (Turkish Community Centre)	PB1	20	33,745·00	
Manpower Services Commission	MSC	30	85,844·00	
Newham Association for the Education and Training of Women	PB1	60	29,334·00	
Newham Women's Activities Project	PB1	40	7,764·00	
North Downham Tenants Association	PB4	20	21,068·00	
North Downham Tenants Association	PB4	10	8,488·00	
Pimlico Arts and Media Scheme	PB1	30	30,232·00	
Polytechnic of North London	PB1	40	3,821·00	
Polytechnic of the South Bank	LA2	40	78,263·00	
Project Fullemploy Ltd.	PB1	10	17,730·00	
Richmond Adult and Community College	LA2	60	50,364·00	
Road Transport Industry Training Board	PB2	125	82,953·00	
Road Transport Industry Training Board	PB2	34	33,891·00	
South-West London Women's Training Workshop	PB4	15	52,696·00	
South-West London Women's Training Workshop	PB4	15	42,461·00	
Sargam Ethnic Craft Training Centre	PB1	30	10,542·00	
Skillnet (Training Trust)	PB1	100	65,279·00	
Skillnet (Training Trust)	PB1	100	55,003·00	
Skillnet (Training Trust)	PB1	100	44,320·00	
Skillnet (Training Trust)	PB1	1,000	500,394·00	
South Bank Acoustic Engineering	PB4	13	25,459·00	
Southall College of Technology	LA2	30	9,688·00	
Southall ITEC	PB1	24	10,489·00	
Southall ITEC	PB1	24	8,452·00	
Southwark Women's Training Workshop	PB4	16	59,178·00	
Southwark Women's Training Workshop	PB4	32	59,549·00	
Southwark Aid/Southwark Hardware Servicing	PB4	8	39,047·00	
Southwark Aid	PB4	20	12,215·00	
Southwark Aid	PB4	20	8,336·00	

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Applicant name	Organisation	Beneficiaries	£ aid	[1]Article
Southwark Aid	PB4	12	7,664·00	12a
Spirax Sarco Ltd.	PB3E	11	13,561·00	12a
Thames Polytechnic	LA2	30	90,359·00	12a
Thames Polytechnic	LA2	30	176,525·00	12a
Thames Polytechnic	LA2	30	44,886·00	12a
The Paul Bogle Foundation	PB1	40	81,909·00	12a
The Polytechnic of Central London	LA2	90	32,149·00	12a
The Universities Settlement in East London	PB1	30	60,567·00	12a
The Universities Settlement in East London	PB1	10	17,400·00	12a
Tower Hamlets Community of Vietnamese Refugees	PB1	40	17,104·00	12a
Tower Hamlets Training Forum	PB1	24	75,215·00	12a
Tower Hamlets Advanced Technology Training	PB1	26	62,054·00	12a
Tower Hamlets Advanced Technology Training	PB1	8	13,914·00	12a
Tower Hamlets Advanced Technology Training	PB1	75	176,894·00	12a
Training Initiatives Limited	PB4	14	71,189·00	12a
United Medical and Dental Schools	LA3	80	83,160·00	12a
Waltham Forest MENCAP	PB1	70	42,854·00	12a
Willesden College of Technology	LA2	6	2,104·00	12a
Willesden College of Technology	LA2	12	2,128·00	12a
Wimpey Group Services Ltd.	PB3C	338	175,088·00	12a
Women's Motor Mechanics Workshop Limited	PB1	32	55,141·00	12a
Womens Education in Building Ltd.	PB1	60	116,059·00	12a
Youth Business Initiative	PB1	218	86,576·00	12a

The coding used is as follows:

[1] COMPUTER CODINGS FOR APPLICATIONS

Organisation Types

PB1 = Registered charities and friendly societies.
PB2 = Industrial Training Boards.
PB3 = Private companies.
PB4 = Companies limited by guarantee.

LA1 = Local authorities.
LA2 = Educational establishments (excluding universities).
LA3 = Universities.
LA4 = Health Authorities.

NATIND1 = Nationalised Industries.
NATIND2 = Public Corporations e.g. BBC.

MSC = Manpower Services Commission.
DE = Department of Employment.
OGD = Other Government schemes.

Article Numbers

12a = Vocational training.
12b = Recruitment & wage subsidies.
12c = resettlement & socio-vocational integration in connection with geographical mobility.
12d = services and technical advice concerned with job creation.

41– = Under-25 scheme.
42a = unemployed people over the age of 25.
42b = women over-25 who wish to return to work.
42c = handicapped (over 25).
42d = migrant workers (over 25).
42e = people over 25 employed in small or medium-sized enterprises.

Ms. Ruddock: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will itemise, by recipient organisation or body, European social fund allocations to projects based in Greater London for the current year, indicating the main purpose of the grant, the main category of beneficiary and the number of beneficiaries for each project.

Mr. Cope: The European Commission is not expected to announce its decision on the allocation of 1988 European social fund grants until April 1988 at the earliest. My Department will not be able organisations of the result of their application The following list details social fund applicati applied for which have been submitted to th Commission for schemes to operate in Grea during the calendar year 1988. The list does no include national schemes run, for examp Manpower Services Commission and industr boards from which those living in Greater L benefit. Separate figures for Greater Londo national schemes are not readily available.

1988 European social fund allocations for Greater London

Applicant name	*£ Aid*	*Beneficiaries*	*Organisation*
Afro Caribbean Project	68,655·00	12	PB1
Afro Caribbean Harembi Project	51,173·00	20	PB1
Alfa (Access to Learning for Adults)	69,852·00	100	LA2
Battersea Basement Studios	56,209·00	24	PB1
Bexley London Borough	11,786·00	22	LA1
Bexley London Borough	11,786·00	23	LA1
Brent Asian Professionals' Association (BAPA)	130,025·00	60	PB1
Bridge Self Enterprise Project	63,300·00	40	PB1
British Refugee Council	500,612·00	251	PB1
British Refugee Council	978,930·00	360	PB1
Broadwater Farm Youth Association Co Op Ltd	69,150·00	15	PB4
C. S. M. H. Employment Service	159,000·00	120	PB1
CAITS	184,750·00	34	PB4
Camden Itec Limited	9,492·00	10	PB1
Camden Itec Limited	21,115·00	20	PB1
Camden Itec Limited	134,910·00	36	PB1
Camden Training Centre Limited	245,460·00	63	PB1
Camden Training Centre	245,460·00	63	PB1
Carr-Gomm Society Ltd	93,498·00	100	PB1
Cinestra Pictures Ltd	2,955·00	5	PB4
Cinestra Pictures Ltd	2,955·00	5	PB4
City of Westminster (Social Services Department)	300,000·00	40	LA1
City of London Polytechnic (Houndsditch)	31,704·00	6	PB1
City of London Polytechnic (Houndsditch)	12,719·00	3	PB1
City of London Polytechnic (Houndsditch)	24,215·00	30	PB1
City of London Polytechnic (Houndsditch)	67,503·00	6	PB1
Community Service Volunteers	77,650·00	50	PB1
Community Service Volunteers	195,503·00	45	PB1
Community Service Volunteers	67,028·00	45	PB1
Community Service Volunteers	112,900·00	16	PB1
Computer Technology for Women: London Link	177,485·00	60	PB1
Connections Limited	19,855·00	32	PB1
Davy McKee (London) Ltd	70,359·00	33	PB3E
Docklands Skillnet	40,895·00	100	PB1
Docklands Skillnet	40,895·00	100	PB1
Docklands Skillnet	84,913·00	22	PB1
Docklands Skillnet	408,967·00	1,000	PB1
Downham Young People's Business Centre	47,662·00	30	PB4
ELMV Shadwell Basin Project	22,275·00	60	PB1
Fluor Daniel Ltd	52,693·00	25	PB3E
GEC Research Ltd	103,528·00	297	PB3E
Ghana Union London	27,776·00	10	PB1
Greenwich Training Company Ltd	22,128·00	15	PB4
Greenwich Training Company Ltd	29,975·00	40	PB4
Greenwich Training Company Ltd	29,975·00	40	PB4
Greenwich Training Company Ltd	21,028·00	15	PB4
Greenwich Training Company Ltd	16,557·00	8	PB4
Greenwich Training Company Ltd	71,396·00	20	PB4
Hackney Youth in Action (Clapton Enterprises)	22263·00	8	PB1
Hackney Employment and Training Agency	50239·00	60	PB1
Hackney Pakistan Womens Welfare Centre	7875·00	12	PB1
Hackney Pakistan Womens Welfare Centre	7875·00	12	PB1
Hackney Construction Services	200357·00	20	LA1
Hackney Construction Services	168403·00	15	LA1
Hackney African Organisation	45105·00	10	PB1
Hackney African Organisation	43435·00	10	PB1
Hackney Information Technology	24290·00	18	PB1
Hackney Information Technology	20140·00	12	PB1
Hackney, London Borough of (Economic Dev. Unit)	12000·00	6	LA1
Hackney, London Borough of (Economic Dev. Unit)	12000·00	6	LA1
Hammersmith and Fulham Training Services	31575·00	15	PB4
Hammersmith and Fulham Training Services	14255·00	5	PB4
Haringey Health Authority	75000·00	9	LA4
Haringey Women's Training and Education Centre Ltd.	313024·00	90	PB1
Hillingdon Asian Women's Group	24040·00	25	PB4
Hillingdon Asian Women's Group	24040·00	25	PB4
Independent Media Training Trust Ltd.	151844·00	15	PB1
Inner London Education Authority	20810·00	10	LA1
Islington Training Centre Ltd.	62072·00	60	PB4
Islington Training Consortium	86637·00	99	PB4
Jobfit	162500·00	54	PB1
Lambeth Women's Workshop	46472·00	48	PB1
Lambeth Accord	36541·00	22	PB1
Lewisham Womens Training Centre	84789·00	12	PB1
Lewisham Womens Training Centre	85369·00	12	PB1
Local Aid Limited	62449·00	16	PB4

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Applicant name	£ Aid	Beneficiaries	Organisation	Article
Local Aid Limited	124270·00	32	PB4	12
London Borough of Waltham Forest	64925·00	30	LA1	12
London Borough of Lambeth	24458·00	18	LA1	12
London Borough of Lambeth	24458·00	18	LA1	12
London Borough of Ealing	17717·00	5	LA1	12
London Borough of Ealing	17717·00	5	LA1	12
London Co-operative Training Ltd.	12535·00	10	PB4	12
London Co-operative Training Ltd.	13410·00	12	PB4	12
London Co-operative Training Ltd.	49156·00	33	PB4	12
London Co-operative Training Ltd.	19201·00	15	PB4	12
London Co-operative Training Ltd.	109041·00	107	PB4	12
London Co-operative Training Ltd.	195699·00	182	PB4	12
London Co-operative Training Ltd.	66842·00	57	PB4	12
Londra Halkevi (Turkish Community Centre)	38867·00	25	PB1	12
Mainstream	37500·00	20	PB1	12
Manpower Services Commission	123926·00	36	MSC	12
Marconi Defence Systems Ltd.	159820·00	166	PB3E	12
Microjob	260525·00	75	PB1	12
National Steering Group on Equal Opportunities Women in NHS	316000·00	22	LA4	12
National Ethnic Minority Advisory Council	67916·00	18	PB4	12
Newham, London Borough of	538,161·00	1,536	LA1	12
Newham, London Borough of	62,080·00	236	LA1	12
Newham, London Borough of	17,885·00	12	LA1	12
Newham, London Borough of	28,841·00	4	LA1	12
Newham, London Borough of	25,227·00	8	LA1	12
Newham, London Borough of	30,260·00	6	LA1	12
Newham Association for the Education and Training of Women	38,179·50	60	PB1	12
Newham Association for the Education and Training of Women	263,389·00	60	PB1	12
North Downham Tenants Association	17,980·00	10	PB1	12
Nottingdale Technology Centre	206,323·00	50	PB1	12
Pimlico Arts and Media Scheme	38,725·00	40	PB1	12
Polytechnic of North London	69,000·00	80	PB1	12
Polytechnic of North London	57,500·00	30	PB1	12
Priory Centre	22,341·00	20	PB1	12
Priory Centre Music Projects	32,687·00	30	PB1	12
Priory Print Shop	30,630·00	15	PB1	12
Project Kiran	50,220·00	50	PB1	12
Richmond Adult and Community College	104,564·00	60	LA2	12
Riverside Systems Ltd.	20,328·00	4	PB4	12
Riverside Systems Ltd.	20,124·00	4	PB4	12
Sargam Ethnic Craft Training Centre	26,150·00	20	PB1	12
Sargam Ethnic Craft Training Centre	26,150·00	20	PB1	12
South West London Womens Training Workshop	64,303·00	15	PB1	12
South West London Womens Training Workshop	64,303·00	15	PB1	12
Southall ITEC	17,775·00	24	PB1	12
Southall ITEC	17,775·00	24	PB1	12
Southall ITEC	23,025·00	24	PB1	12
Southall ITEC	23,700·00	12	PB1	12
Southwark Aid Ltd.	15,268·00	12	PB4	12
Southwark Aid Ltd.	8,907·00	20	PB4	12
Southwark Co-Op Development Agency	7,365·00	8	PB4	12
Southwark Co-Op Development Agency	7,365·00	8	PB4	12
Southwark Co-Op Development Agency	12,656·00	10	PB4	12
St. Mungo Community Housing Association Ltd.	219,000·00	90	PB4	12
Taxi Trade Promotions Ltd.	78,932·00	25	PB4	12
Thames Polytechnic Ltd.	131,423·00	25	LA2	12
Thames Polytechnic Ltd.	131,423·00	25	LA2	12
Thames Polytechnic Ltd.	215,350·00	30	LA2	12
Thames Polytechnic Ltd.	131,423·00	25	LA2	12
Thames Polytechnic Ltd.	131,423·00	25	LA2	12
The Centaur Project	65,781·00	425	PB1	12
The Paul Bogle Foundation	82,500·00	40	PB1	12
The Paul Bogle Foundation	37,500·00	40	PB1	12
The Polytechnic of Central London	32,900·00	30	LA2	12
Tower Hamlets Advanced Technology Training	106,980·00	75	PB1	12
Tower Hamlets Advanced Technology Training	106,980·00	75	PB1	12
Tower Hamlets Advanced Technology Training	126,899·00	50	PB1	12
Tower Hamlets Training Forum	37,036·00	18	PB1	12
Tower Hamlets Training Forum	45,002·00	24	PB1	12
Tower Hamlets Training Forum	54,937·00	75	PB1	12
Unity Association of Finsbury Park	83,333·00	25	PB1	12
Unity Association of Finsbury Park	16,667·00	5	PB1	12
Walker House Management Centre	10,000·00	30	PB1	12
Walker House Management Centre	12,500·00	30	PB1	12

Applicant name	£ Aid	Beneficiaries	Organisation	[1]Article	[1]Article
Walker House Management Centre	12,500·00	30	PB1	12a	42b
Walker House Management Centre	12,500·00	30	PB1	12a	41–
Walker House Management Centre	12,500·00	30	PB1	12a	42d
Walker House Management Centre	12,500·00	30	PB1	12a	41–
Walker House Management Centre	12,500·00	30	PB1	12a	41–
Walker House Management Centre	10,000·00	30	PB1	12a	41–
West London Tamil School	44·168·00	20	PB1	12a	41–
West London Tamil School	34,658·00	50	PB1	12c	42a
Willesden College of Technology	4,050·00	12	LA2	12a	41–
Willesden College of Technology	8,000·00	24	LA2	12a	42b
WINTECH (Ltd.)	136,942·00	40	PB1	12a	42b
Women's Motor Mechanics Workshop Ltd.	39,994·00	16	PB1	12a	41–
Women's Motor Mechanics Workshop Ltd.	39,994·00	16	PB1	12a	42b
Women's Education in Building	237,700·00	60	PB1	12a	42b

The coding used is as follows:
[1] COMPUTER CODINGS FOR APPLICATIONS
Organisation Types
PB1 = Registered charities and friendly societies.
PB2 = Industrial Training Boards.
PB3 = Private companies.
PB4 = Companies limited by guarantee.

LA1 = Local authorities.
LA2 = Educational establishments (excluding universities).
LA3 = Universities.
LA4 = Health Authorities.

NATIND1 = Nationalised Industries.
NATIND2 = Public Corporations e.g. BBC.

MSC = Manpower services Commission.
DE = Department of Employment.
OGD = Other Government schemes.

Article Numbers
12a = Vocational training.
12b = Recruitment & wage subsidies.
12c = resettlement & socio-vocational integration in connection with geographical mobility.
12d = services and technical advice concerned with job creation.

41– = Under-25 scheme.
42a = unemployed people over the age of 25.
42b = women over-25 who wish to return to work.
42c = handicapped (over 25).
42d = migrant workers (over 25).
42e = people over 25 employed in small or medium-sized enterprises.

YTS

Mr. Ian Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment whether the Government's undertaking that all unemployed 16 and 17-year-old school leavers would be offered a suitable YTS place by Christmas 1987 has been met; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Cope: I am very pleased to say that the Government's undertaking for 1987 has been effectively met. Some 330,000 young people joined YTS during the year, and on 4 January 1988 only 2,305 young people were waiting for the offer of a place, most of whom have now been made an offer. The 1987 figure is an improvement on the 1986 figure (2,376) especially since it includes, for the first time, 17-year-olds, and reflects great credit on the Manpower Services Commission and the careers service.

There will not be a specific Christmas undertaking in 1988. Instead the Government have given a new undertaking to guarantee a place on YTS for all 16 and 17-year-olds who want one. This guarantee will apply not just to school leavers but to young people who may have lost their job or left a YTS scheme. The availability of good quality training within YTS will ensure that in 1988 no one under 18 need be unemployed.

WALES

Teacher Training

Mr. Gareth Wardell: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales which two institutions in Wales formed the sample on which was based Her Majesty's inspectorate's survey "Quality in Schools: The Initial Training of Teachers".

Mr. Wyn Roberts: Bangor normal college and the West Glamorgan institute of higher education.

Mr. Gareth Wardell: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will indicate whether the two institutions included in Her Majesty's inspectors' report "Quality in Schools: The Initial Training of Teachers" provided British education degree courses which contained a method course designed for students to consider the application of their specialist subject to children's learning.

Mr. Wyn Roberts: Yes, they did contain such a method course.

Health Authorities (Cash Allocations)

Mr. Nicholas Bennett: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will give an estimate as to the effect of the

provisional cash allocations to Welsh district health authorities for 1988-89 on table 17 of "Results of Resources Formula for Distribution in Wales 1988-89;" and if he will publish in the *Official Report* an amended version of table 17 showing the results of his estimate on individual district health authorities in Wales.

Mr. Grist: The effect of the provisional cash allocations to Welsh district health authorities for 1988-89 on the results of the revenue formula assessment for that year is as follows:

	Per cent. Change Suggested by 1988-89 formula assessment	*Per cent. Change Required as a result of 1988-89 Provisional Allocations*
Clwyd	+2·5	+2·4
East Dyfed	+2·8	+2·0
Pembrokeshire	+5·2	+2·6
Gwent	+1·7	+1·8
Gwynedd	−3·1	−2·7
Mid Glamorgan	+0·2	+0·4
Powys	+0·1	−0·3
South Glamorgan	−1·4	−1·4
West Glamorgan	−3·4	−2·8

An amended version of table 17 of the formula assessment is given in the following table.

Table 17 Effect of allocation by formula incorporating all outstanding RCCS and taking into account the effect of the provisional cash allocations to health authorities in Wales in 1988-89.

£ million 1988-89 prices

	Total Net Recurrent Element of Allocation 1988-89	*Specific Allowances 1988-89*	*RCCS 1988-89*	*Net Recurrent Residual Allocation 1988-89*	*Notional Foromula Allocation (Adjusted for outstanding RCCS)*	*Effect of Formula on Residual Allocation*	*Projected Net Recurrent Allocation 1988-89*	*Per cent. Change Suggested by Formula*
	£ million	*£ million*	*£ million*	*£ million*	*£ million*	*£ million*	*£ million*	*Per cent.*
Clwyd	95·180	16·849	—	78·331	80·588	+2·257	95·180	+2·4
East Dyfed	59·759	12·228	0·948	48·479	49·692	+1·213	60·707	+2·0
Pembrokeshire	22·674	1·279	—	21·395	21·989	+0.594	22·674	+2·6
Gwent	114·532	26·309	—	88·223	90·257	+2·034	114·532	+1·8
Gwynedd	57·787	8·194	—	49·593	48·047	−1·546	57·787	−2·7
Mid Glamorgan	134·733	28·689	—	106·044	106·586	+0·542	134·733	+0·4
Powys	26·978	9·142	—	17·836	17·745	−0·091	26·978	−0·3
South Glamorgan	154·986	61·557	0·502	93·931	91·730	−2·201	155·488	−1·4
West Glamorgan	99·349	14·662	—	84·687	81·885	−2·802	99·349	−2·8
	765·978	178·909	1·450	588·519	588·519	—	767·428	—

Revaluation

Mr. Nicholas Bennett: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what estimates he has as to the likely effects on average rateable values in each local authority in Wales if a general revaluation were to take place, and if he will publish in the *Official Report* the estimate for each Welsh local authority, together with current average rateable values.

Mr. Peter Walker: I refer my hon. Friend to the reply given to him on 18 January, at column *555*, by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment. The same position applies for Wales.

Welsh Development Agency

Mr. Nicholas Bennett: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what has been the total cost of the Welsh Development Agency, including grants each year since its establishment and the estimated number of jobs created in each year.

Mr. Peter Walker: I refer my hon. Friend to the reply given to the right hon. Member for Swansea, West (Mr. Williams) on 19 January, at column *612*, setting out the direct subvention to the WDA since its inception.

The Welsh Development Agency contributes to the job creation process through a range of activities including the provision of factory space, investment and advice. It is not possible to quantify the full cumulative impact in terms of jobs created. Information on job opportunities provided through the agency's factory building programme is published in its annual report and accounts, copies of which are available in the Library of the House. The jobs forecast for the current financial year is given in table 17.10 of the public expenditure White Paper (Cm. 288).

Mr. Barry Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will direct the Welsh Development Agency to build additional new advance factories at *(a)* Engineer park, Sandycroft and *(b)* Deeside industrial park, Clwyd; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Walker: No. The 30 per cent. increase in Welsh Development Agency resources announced for 1988-89 will enable it to make an early start on a wide ranging and ambitious new programme of property initiatives in conjunction with private sector and other partners. The needs and potential of north-east Wales will be recognised fully in the new programme which I plan to announce shortly.

Privatisation

Mr. Butler: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will publish a table showing for each district health authority in Wales *(a)* which services have been contracted out, *(b)* the dates of the awards of these

contracts, *(c)* what savings have been made or are expected from the process and *(d)* whether the authorities have notified him of their intention to contract out further specified services.

Mr. Grist: The information given in the following table relates to domestic cleaning, catering and laundry services which have been subject to competitive tendering. Details of contracts relating to other ancillary services are not held centrally. All Welsh health authorities have complied or indicated that they will comply with the requirement which my right hon. Friend placed upon them in August 1987 that they test by competitive tendering at least 75 per cent by value of their domestic cleaning, catering and laundry services by December 1988.

District health authority and details of contract

		Estimated savings (£) per annum	In-house/Private contractor	Date of commencement of contract
Gwent				
Domestic:	District Health Authority Headquarters	5,080	Private Contractor	1986
Gwynedd				
Domestic:	Llandudno Hospital;	58,000	In-House	5 July 1987
Domestic:	Arfon Offices	92	In-House	5 July 1987
Mid-Glamorgan				
Laundry:	District Service	200,000	In-House	1 April 1988
Pembrokeshire				
Laundry:	District Service;	82,950	Private Contractor	30 July 1984
	District Service;	—	Private Contractor	1 August 1987[1]
Domestic:	Withybush Hospital	164,618	In-House	4 February 1985
Domestic:	South Pembs/Tenby Cottage	25,233	In-House	4 February 1985
Domestic:	Community Services	6,782	In-House	4 February 1985
Catering:	Withybush Hospital in-house	60,468	In-House	1 April 1986
Catering:	South Pembs/Tenby Cottage;		In-House	1 April 1986
Powys				
Domestic:	Phase I Machynlleth;	15,000	In-House	25 November 1984
Domestic:	Phase II Llandrindod Wells Builth Wells;	19,855	In-House	1 September 1985
Domestic:	Phase IVb New Ystradgynlais Hospital;	No cost	In-House	1 January 1986
Domestic:	Phase III Llanidloes Hospital etc;	18,000	In-House	1 July 1986
Domestic:	Phase IVa Mid Wales and Bronllys Hospitals etc plus District HQ;	36,212	In-House	1 March 1987
Catering:	Phase Ia Ystradgynlais Hospital;	No cost comparison	In-House	1 January 1986
Catering:	Phase Ib Llandrindod Wells, Builth Wells and Knighton Hospitals;	11,000	In-House	1 July 1986
Catering:	Phase II Llanidloes Hospital;	16,000	In-House	1 September 1986
Catering:	Phase IV Brecon War Memorial and Brecon War Hospitals;	8,565	In-House	1 September 1987
Catering:	Phase III Mid Wales and Bronllys Hospitals;	82,548	In-House	1 December 1987
West Glamorgan				
Domestic:	District HQ and Trinity Buildings;	19,868	In-House	1 August 1986
Domestic:	Outpatient Department, Neath General Hospital;	3,393	In-House	1 August 1986
Domestic:	Public Corridors and Residences;		In-House	
	(i) Morriston	5,000		1 August 1986
	(ii) Singleton	6,000		3 November 1986
	(iii) Neath	28,749		6 April 1987
	(iv) Cefn Coed	23,000		19 October 1986
Domestic:	Health Centres and Clinics;	32,000	In-House	1 December 1986
Catering:	Neath General Hospital;	60,000	In-House	6 April 1987
Laundry:	District Services;	199,538	In-House	4 August 1986

[1] Interim contract pending re-tendering exercise.
The table contains details of contracts awarded up to 31 October 1987.

National Museum of Wales

Mr. Faulds: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales, with respect to the 15th report of Session 1986-87 from the Committee of Public Accounts and the Comptroller and Auditor General's memorandum on the National Museum of Wales, whether the Comptroller and Auditor General was provided with a copy of the agreement between the national museum and its former keeper of a approved by the Welsh Office and signed on 8 April 19

Mr. Wyn Roberts: It is for the Comptroller and Audit General to say what documents were provided to h during the course of his examinations.

Mr. Faulds: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales, with regard to the staffing recommendations of his Department's staff inspectors for the department of art of the National Museum of Wales in 1983-84, what were the professional qualifications of the two full-time and one part-time conservators in post at the time of the staff inspection.

Mr. Wyn Roberts: The professional qualifications of staff employed by the National Museum of Wales are matters for the museum authorities.

Nurses (Pay)

Mr. Nicholas Bennett: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what was the maximum salary of a staff nurse and a ward sister in 1979 and in the current year; and what this represents as an increase in real terms.

Mr. Grist: The information is as follows:

	Salary 1979 £	*Maximum 1988* £	*Increase in real terms Percentage*
Staff nurse	3,813	8,600	29
Ward sister	4,949	12,000	38

NHS (Expenditure)

Mr. Nicholas Bennett: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how much in 1988 prices has been spent on capital investment in the National Health Service in Wales since April 1979.

Mr. Grist: It is estimated that the net capital expenditure on the National Health Service in Wales between April 1979 and March 1988 will have been £497·6 million at 1987-88 prices.

Mr. Raffan: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will give the expenditure on the National Health Service in Wales *(a)* in 1978-79 and *(b)* projected for 1988-89; and what was the average spending per household on the National Health Service in Wales (i) in 1978-79 and (ii) projected for 1988-89.

Mr. Walker: The information requested is as follows:

National Health Service net expenditure in 1978-79;

Total expenditure	£398·2 million
Average spending per household	£410·8

Planned National Health Service net provision in 1988-89:

Total provision	£1,173·1 million
Average spending per household	£1,111·9

In reply to the hon. Member for Ogmore (Mr. Powell) on 18 January, I stated that the gross NHS expenditure in Wales is planned to increase between 1978-79 and 1988-89 from £418 per household to £1,238. This information was given to me based on the number of households in 1979. The answer above takes account of the forecast increase in households—from 969,400 in 1979 to 1,055,000 in 1988. This increase largely represents a reduction in average household size (from 2·8 to 2·6) and not a significant increase in population. Therefore, the gross NHS spending in Wales will increase on current plans from £144·1 per person in 1978-79 to £426·7 per person in 1988-89, representing a real increase of more than 39 per cent.

Notes:

1. The planned provision is subject to parliamentary approval of the Supply Estimates.
2. The NHS totals include the administrative costs of the artificial limb and appliance service which will from 1 April 1988 be transferred to the Welsh Health Common Services Authority.

Doctors and Nurses

Mr. Nicholas Bennett: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many doctors and nurses are employed in the National Health Service in Wales at the present time and in March 1979.

Mr. Grist: The information is given in the following table:

	Whole-time equivalents as at:			
	March 1979	*September 1979*	*September 1986*	*December 1987*
Medical and Dental Staff	n/a	2,181	2,470	n/a
Nursing and Midwifery Staff	[1]24,826	[1]24,567	27,187	27,759

[1] Adjusted to take account of the change from 40 to 37½ hours in the working week in 1980.

Note:

Figures are available for nursing and midwifery staff on a monthly basis but only at September for medical and dental staff (1987 figures are not yet available).

Hospital Waiting Lists

Mr. Nicholas Bennett: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what was the increase in the waiting list for in-patients in Wales *(a)* between March 1978 and March 1979 and *(b)* between March 1986 and March 1987.

Mr. Grist: The in-patient waiting list in Wales increased by 4,126 between March 1978 and March 1979. It decreased by 1,053 between March 1986 and March 1987.

Hip Replacement Operations

Mr. Raffan: To ask the Secretarty of State for Wales how many hip replacement operations were carried out in Welsh hospitals in 1979 and for the latest year for which figures are available.

Mr. Grist: In 1986, the latest year for which complete information is available, 1,908 hip replacement operations were carried out in Welsh hospitals, compared with 1,551 operations in 1979.

NHS (Treatment Statistics)

Mr. Raffan: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will set out for the National Health Service in Wales the increase in the treatment of in-patient cases *(a)* between 1974 and 1979 and *(b)* between 1979 and 1986, and the increase in new out-patient cases (i) between 1974 and 1979 and (ii) between 1979 and 1986.

Mr. Grist: The information is given in the following table:

		Per cent.
In-patient cases		
1974-79	+20,722	+6·3
1979-86	+84,175	+24·1
New out-patient cases		
1974-79	−15,293	−3·4
1979-86	+76,021	+17·7

A44

Mr. Geraint Howells: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he had any plans to improve the A44 trunk road by Rhydlydan, Ponterwyd, during the current year and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Wyn Roberts: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the reply I gave him on 18 January 1988, at column *545*.

Milk Quota

Mr. Geraint Howells: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many dairy farmers in Wales do not produce milk up to their allocated quota; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Walker: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the reply given to him by my right hon. Friend the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food on 19 January 1988, at column *615*.

Greencroft Hostel, Aston

Mr. Barry Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales (1) if, on his visit to Clwyd county council on 22 February, he will take steps to discuss with the director of social services, the council and other senior county officials the financial implications of closing the Greencroft hostel, Aston, Deeside, so far as adequate funding and staffing and the consequent placing of former residents of the hostel in homes and flats in the Deeside community is concerned;

(2) if he will make extra financial allocations to Clwyd county council in order that the county will have sufficient cash successfully to locate the former residents of Greencroft hostel, Aston, Deeside, in the community; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Grist: It is for individual authorities to determine spending priorities for their areas, having regard to the financial implications of particular schemes and the resources available to them. The total amount of rate support grant made available for 1988-89, and the principles underlying its distribution between authorities, are published in the Welsh rate support grant 1988-89. The allocations were approved by the House on 15 December, and there is no scope for extra allocations. However, in setting current expenditure provision for Wales in 1988-89, an increase of £9·9 million (7·1 per cent.) was allowed for personal social services (including port health).

My right hon. Friend expects soon to announce capital additional funding for the development of community-based services under the all-Wales mental handicap strategy in response to bids which have already been made by county joint planning teams.

Ewes

Mr. Martyn Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will make it his policy that there will be no change in the definition of ewes eligible for payme variable premium in the foreseeable future; and if h make a statement.

Mr. Peter Walker: The redefinition of an eligibl for the sheep annual premium scheme is one of a nu of proposals which the Commission has put forward review of the sheepmeat regime. Further detail required before the Commission's proposal can be assessed.

Tourism

Mr. Gareth Wardell: To ask the Secretary of Sta Wales if he will now respond to the Select Committ Welsh Affairs' report on tourism in Wales.

Mr. Peter Walker: The response has been rel today and copies have been placed in the Libraries o Houses.

ENVIRONMENT

Skillnet (Docklands)

Mr. Leighton: To ask the Secretary of State f Environment what percentage of the places on Skill docklands were taken up; how many students com their courses; and what were the post-course destin of students.

Mr. Trippier: Skillnet supported 1,270 training during 1987. About 75 per cent. are expected to be Two thirds of enrolled trainees generally complete courses. Data on the post-course destinations of tr are currently being collected.

London Docklands Development Corporatio

Mr. Leighton: To ask the Secretary of State f Environment what is the policy of the London Doc development corporation on the recruitment of labour.

Mr. Trippier: The London Docklands develo corporation operates an open recruitment systen welcomes applications from local people for all its It encourages others in the area to employ local pe

Mr. Leighton: To ask the Secretary of State f Environment what machinery exists for liaison be the London Docklands development corporation a Manpower Services Commission.

Mr. Trippier: The LDDC are working closely w MSC's docklands liaison group.

Mr. Leighton: To ask the Secretary of State f Environment what criteria are used when the L Docklands development corporation allocates diture on education and training.

Mr. Trippier: They are set out in detail in LI published corporate plan at pages 37-42.

Mr. Leighton: To ask the Secretary of State f Environment what are the social and community a the London Docklands development corporation.

Mr. Trippier: Broadly to ensure that dockland attractive place for people to live and work in. C detail is set out in its annual corporate plan, a c which is in the Library.

Mr. Leighton: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment whether it is an aim of the London Docklands development corporation to seek to reduce unemployment in docklands; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Trippier: Yes—and the unemployment rate in docklands has fallen from 23 per cent. in January 1986 to 18 per cent. in October 1987.

Mr. Leighton: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how many students have completed courses on London Docklands development corporation funded training projects; what were those courses; what qualifications they obtained; and what were the students' post-course destinations.

Mr. Trippier: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for Newham, South (Mr. Spearing) on 23 October 1987 at column *891*. No further information is readily available.

Mr. Leighton: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what steps the London Docklands Development Corporation takes to see that contractors offer employment to local labour.

Mr. Trippier: The LDDC encourages its contractors to employ local labour. It cannot require them to do so.

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what information he has as to the average house price at the mortgage completion stage in the London Docklands development corporation area during 1987.

Mr. Trippier *[holding answer 13 January]:* From an analysis of sales of new homes on land owned by them, LDDC currently estimate the median price paid for a property during the first three quarters of 1987 to be £65,900.

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what is his current estimate of private sector money invested in the London Docklands development corporation area to date.

Mr. Trippier *[holding answer 13 January]:* At 31 March 1987 an estimated £2·2 billion had been spent or committed by the private sector. A further £758 million is forecast for the current financial year. These estimates are published annually in the LDDC's annual report and in its corporate plan.

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what has been the total amount of public money invested in the London docklands area through the Docklands Joint Committee, the Port of London Authority and the London Docklands development corporation, including the cost of enterprise zone benefits itemised by categories of expenditure, grant and allowance, on an annual basis from 1974.

Mr. Trippier *[holding answer 13 January]:* The latest figures for LDDC expenditure, and for the cost of the Isle of Dogs enterprise zone benefits, are set out in the tables. Information about the DJC and PLA expenditure in the London docklands area is not readily available.

(A) LDDC Actual Annual Expenditure 1981-87

£ million

	1981-83	*1983-84*	*1984-85*	*1985-86*	*1986-87*	*Total*
Land Acquisition	34	16	4	8	13	75
Land Reclamation	9	10	11	18	16	64
Roads & Transport	6	8	6	8	16	44
Services	5	7	5	6	14	37
Environment	5	6	3	5	8	27
DLR	—	2	16	13	5	36
Housing	1	2	—	—	—	3
Sub-Total *(a)*	60	51	45	58	72	286
Community/Industry Support	3	4	4	4	4	19
Estate Management	2	3	3	2	2	12
Promotion and Consultancies	4	3	3	2	2	14
Administration and Tax	6	8	6	8	8	36
Sub-Total *(b)*	15	18	16	16	16	81
TOTALS	75	69	61	74	88	367

(B) Cost of Enterprise Zone benefits

£ million

	1981-82	*1982-83*	*1983-84*	*1984-85*	*1985-86*
Capital allowances [1] (all United Kingdom Zones—net)	20	20	20	30	60
Rates Revenue foregone [2]	—	1·25	1·49	2·43	2·32

[1] Estimated: 1985-86 prices (no figure is available for the Isle of Dogs Zone).
[2] Outturn prices.

Ordnance Survey

Mr. John Marshall: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment whether the full category A royalty is levied for all copies of the Temple Press-Ordnance Survey "Motoring Atlas of Great Britain" hardback edition.

Mr. Moynihan: Category B royalty rate is charged on the "Ordnance Survey Motoring Atlas" of Great Britain published in softback only. This is in line with the rates applied to private sector publishers for similar publications.

Rent Arrears

Mr. Nicholas Bennett: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list in the *Official Report* in rank order starting with the local authority with the highest proportion of rent arrears, the total arrears of rent outstanding for domestic properties owned by each English local authority at the latest available date, together with the percentage figure which their arrears represent of each authority's total rent roll and the number of tenants with arrears of more than four weeks.

Mr. Waldegrave: I have today arranged to be placed in the Library tables setting out the figures on the cumulative arrears of rent owed to each local authority in England as at 1 April 1987, together with the percentage those arrears represent of the rent collectable. The authorities are ranked according to the percentage figure. Information on the number of tenants with arrears of more than four weeks is not collected centrally.

Housing Waiting Lists

Mr. Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how many households were recorded on local authority housing waiting lists on 1 April 1987 in England as a whole and for each region of England.

Mr. Waldegrave: The information provided by local authorities in their 1987 housing investment programme returns is as follows:

Households on local authority waiting lists, April 1987

Standard region	*Thousands*
North	112
Yorkshire and Humberside	160
East Midlands	110
East Anglia	43
Greater London	264
Rest of South East	200
South West	87
West Midlands	132
North West	181
England	1,289

Local authorities' criteria for inclusion of names on the waiting lists are not uniform and the frequency of reviewing the lists varies.

Mr. Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how many households were housed by local authorities from their waiting lists through allocation procedures *(a)* during 1983-84, *(b)* during 1984-85, *(c)* during 1985-86 and *(d)* during 1986-87, for England as a whole and for each region of England.

Mr. Waldegrave: In their annual housing investment programme returns local authorities report the number of dwellings which have been let on secure te households under normal waiting list procedures. The information is as follows:

New secure tenants housed from waiting list

	1983-84	*1984-85*	*1985-8*
Standard region			
North	17·4	18·3	19·
Yorkshire and Humberside	24·4	23·5	25·
East Midlands	17·3	17·5	16·
East Anglia	5·6	5·4	4·
Greater London	13·6	10·9	10·
Rest of South East	22·0	21·4	20·
South West	10·1	9·8	9·
West Midlands	20·6	19·1	18·
North West	30·1	30·5	29·
England	161·0	156·4	153

Homeless Families

Mr. Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of S Environment what is his latest estimate of the p revenue costs of housing homeless families *(a)* London and *(b)* in English non-metropolitan providing them with newly-built council dwell providing them with council dwellings acquir private sector and newly improved for letting providing them with bed and breakfast accon and if he will publish these figures on a comp with those published in his replies to the hon. Islington, South and Finsbury (Mr. Smith) on 1987. *Official Report*, columns *331-2*, and o 1987, *Offical Report*, column *639*.

Mr. Waldegrave: Estimates for 1986-87 are

	Greater London	*metr*
	£	
New build	7,400	
Acquisition and renovation	6,700	
Bed and breakfast	31	

Notes:

i. the estimates for new build and for acquisition a show the total first year costs to local autho accommodation shown;

ii. estimates of average new built and renovatio derived from information provided by local authorit subsidy and can show significant variation from authority and year to year reflecting differences in th undertaken;

iii. the bed and breakfast figures are gross costs per and are based on returns to CIPFA from those lo providing information on both gross expenditure breakfast and the number of household days of bed provided.

Home Improvements

Mr. Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of Environment when he plans to publish the f his Department's distribution of grants inqu and when he will bring forward legislation t current system of grant aid for home improve private sector.

Mr. Waldegrave: We plan to publish a fu on the Department's distribution of grant inq

as possible, though the main results have already been published in Cmnd. 9513. Legislation to reform the home improvement system will be brought forward at the first suitable opportunity.

Rating Reform

Mr. Gordon Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what is *(a)* the amount and *(b)* the proportion of net income after rebates, adjusted for family size, which households paid in domestic rates in 1987-88; and what estimates he has made of what these figures would be if the community charge were in operation in 1987-88, broken down into decile groups.

Mr. Howard: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave today to the hon. Member for Warrington, North (Mr. Hoyle).

Mr. Blunkett: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment to what extent it will be open to local authorities after the break-up of a marriage or cohabitation to recover any arrears of the poll tax which have accrued during the period of the relationship from either of the partners; and to what extent this will depend on whether the partner from whom the authority seeks recovery had his or her own income during the period when the arrears accrued.

Mr. Howard: It will be open to local authorities to recover arrears from either partner. In deciding whether to proceed against either partner or both, I would expect them to take account of each partner's income and assets.

Mr. Blunkett: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment whether a local authority wishing to hold a woman responsible for arrears of poll tax which accrued in the name of a man with whom she was living, but to whom she was not married, will have to establish whether the man and woman in question were living together as husband and wife.

Mr. Howard: Yes.

Sport and Leisure Facilities

Mr. Cummings: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what representations he has received from organisations in the county of Durham on competition in the management of local authority sport and leisure facilities; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Moynihan: The Northern Council for Sport and Recreation is the only organisation based in the county of Durham to have responded directly to the consultation paper which we issued on this subject on 28 September 1987. The local authority associations have of course responded on behalf of their members and many local authorities (but none in Durham) have also submitted comments direct. The paper invited views by 11 December 1987 and all the responses received are now being considered in detail before any final decisions are taken.

Right to Buy

Mr. Dover: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will make a statement on the abolition of the housing cost floor restrictions in relation to the right to buy.

Mr. Waldegrave: The White Paper "Housing: Government's Proposals" proposed that the cost floo under the right to buy should be abolished. The resp are still under consideration.

Westminster City Council

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State fo Environment if he will exercise his powers under se 22(2) of the Local Government Finance Act 198 require the Audit Commission to direct an extraord audit of Westminster city council with specific referen its sale of cemetaries at 5p each and their subsequent for £2 million; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Chope: Each local authority property transa is subject to audit in the normal course, and I under that these cases have been raised with the auditor Westminster elector. Extraordinary audit is not nec

Housing Benefit

Ms. Armstrong: To ask the Secretary of State fo Environment what percentage of householders livi council housing within the district of Derwentside receipt of housing benefit.

Mrs. Roe: The information supplied to the Char Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy Derwentside district council shows that at November 75 per cent. of their tenants were in receipt of ho benefit in the form of a standard or certificated rent re

Derwentside District Council

Ms. Armstrong: To ask the Secretary of State fo Environment how many people were employed b district council of Derwentside in 1979 and at the date available.

Mr. Chope: In September 1979 Derwentside di council employed 1,555 people; in September 1987 latest available date) it employed 1,316 people.

Residuary Bodies

Mr. Allan Roberts: To ask the Secretary of State fo Environment if he will publish in the *Official Repor* the total administrative costs to date from establishment of the residual bodies for the former G London council area and each of the metrop counties and *(b)* the expenses incurred by the chairpe and other members of all these residual bodies.

Mr. Chope: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the 19 annual reports and accounts of the residuary b published on 18 November 1986 and to the 1986-87 a reports and accounts of the six metropolitan resi bodies published on 25 November 1987. The Lo residuary body's 1986-87 annual report and acc should be published shortly. Costs in respect of 19 will not be known until the 1987-88 accounts have audited and certified.

Local Authority Services (Charges)

Mr. Andrew F. Bennett: To ask the Secretary of for the Environment, when and in what form he pro to introduce measures to give effect to the Governm

intention to seek enabling powers on charging for local authority services as announced in his statement of 22 July 1987, *Official Report* column *275*.

Mr. Chope: The Government will introduce the necessary enabling power at the earliest practical legislative opportunity.

Derelict Land

Mrs. Gorman: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what assessment he has made as to how much derelict land owned by local authorities and public bodies could be sold for private development.

Mr. Trippier: Under part X of the Local Government, Planning and Land Act 1980, a register of unused and underused land owned by certain public bodies, including local authorities, has been compiled. At the end of December 1987 about 91,000 acres of such land were entered on the register. In broad terms it is estimated that about 70 per cent. of this land has some potential for development.

Mrs. Gorman: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will provide a list of those local authorities and public bodies which currently own derelict land in excess of 1 sq mile.

Mr. Trippier: The amount of land entered on the registers of unused and underused land on 31 October 1987 owned by each of the following bodies exceeded 1 sq mile (640 acres) in total:

Blackburn Borough Council
Bristol City Council
British Coal
British Rail
British Steel Corporation
Central Electricity Generating Board
Commission for New Towns
Derwentside District Council
Department of Health and Social Services
Department of the Environment (including Property Services Agency)
Hampshire County Council
Kingston upon Hull City Council
Leeds City Council
Leicester City Council
Ministry of Defence
Nottinghamshire County Council
Plymouth City Council
Sunderland Metropolitan Borough Council
Tees and Hartlepool Port Authority
Telford Development Corporation
Thamesdown Borough Council
Thames Water Authority
Tyne and Wear Residuary Body
Wansbeck District Council
Warrington Development Corporation

Mrs. Gorman: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he has any plans to take action to reduce the amount of derelict land held by local authorities in the light of the report "Why Wasteland?" published by the Adam Smith Institute, a copy of which has been sent to him; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Trippier: A programme of forced disposals of unused and underused land owned by public bodies, using the power under part X of the Local Government, Planning and Land Act 1980 is under way. So far the statutory procedures have been initiated on 242 sites owned by local authorities, covering nearly 1,400 acres. I am considering what further action is necessary.

Mrs. Gorman: To ask the Secretary of S
Environment if he will introduce legislatio
local authorities to sell waste land for priv
development.

Mr. Trippier: Part X of the Local G
Planning and Land Act 1980 empowers me to
bodies, including local authorities to disp
entered on the register of unused and under
have no intention of extending those powe
disposal for a particular use.

Housing for Senior Managemen

Mr. Gareth Wardell: To ask the Secretary
the Environment if he has any plans to issue
a circular relating to housing for senior mana
the lines of Welsh Office circular 44/87.

Mr. Waldegrave: We have no plans for
policy guidance on housing for senior mana

Overseas Nuclear Incidents

Mr. Couchman: To ask the Secretary of
Environment when the proposals for impl
Government's national response plan for
overseas nuclear incidents are to be f
published.

Mr. Ridley: I am pleased to announce t
the Prime Minister's statement of 30 Ju
proposals for implementing the national r
have now been finalised. In the extremely u
of another accident like Chernobyl, the natio
monitoring network (Rimnet) which will be
of the plan will be able to detect and
consequences.

Rimnet will provide for radiation monitor
across the country to be assembled and ana
It will be linked into modern communication
enable information bulletins to be supplied
and the public in a routine and regular w
ensure that people are kept fully info
development of the incident and the consequ
nuclear incident overseas.

The first phase, of the system will be instal
half of this year. This will provide a full
radiation detection network and associated p
disseminating information about any incide
will be tested in an emergency simulation e
autumn. The network will be progressively u
the aim of having a fully automated system

It will also be possible to use Rimnet, alo
contingency plans, to help deal with the co
any nuclear accident in this country.

The Government's proposals have be
today in a booklet: "The National Respo
Radiation Incident Monitoring Network (
Statement of Proposals" published by H
have been placed in the Libraries of both H

Radioactive Waste

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary o
Environment how many licence applicatio
made to his Department in each of the pas
the discharge of radioactive waste.

Mr. Moynihan *[holding answer 13 January 1988]:* The total number of authorisations issued by this Department for the disposal or discharge of radioactive waste in each of the past five years is set out in the table. These have each been in response to a specific application from the organisation responsible for the waste generation.

Year	*Number of authorisations*
1983	249
1984	204
1985	232
1986	239
1987	280

Rates

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment, further to his reply of 16 December 1987, *Official Report*, columns *521-22*, what is the average cash figure paid in rates by the highest and lowest paid 10 per cent. of households under the current rebate system; and what is this figure expressed as a percentage of their incomes.

Mr. Howard *[holding answer 20 January 1988]:* The information requested is not available. Table 5 of the material placed in the Library on 13 January provides a comparison between net domestic rates and the community charge, on the basis of a 20 per cent. minimum payment by all ratepayers and community charge payers. This shows that households with net incomes of under £50 per week, for example, would on average pay 3·4 per cent. of their incomes in community charges, compared with 4·1 per cent. in rates.

TRANSPORT

A12 (M11-Aldgate)

Mr. William Powell: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what plans he has to improve the A12 trunk road between the M11 and Aldgate.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: The A12 trunk road c ends at the Green Man roundabout, Leytonstone. planning a new all-purpose dual carriageway fr M11-A12 junction at Redbridge roundabout wh extend it as far as the A102(M) at Hackney Wi relieve the traffic-congested shopping and res streets through Stratford, Leyton, Leytonstor Wanstead. Subject to completion of the ne statutory procedures, work should start in 1990 a at least three and a half years. Options for deali problems in the area between Aldgate and Hack being considered as part of the east London ass study.

Road Programme

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: To ask the Secretary for Transport how many schedules are in the forwa construction programme.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: There are 351 national s in the forward road construction programme. Fou of these are under construction and 306 in prepar

Vehicle Licences

Mr. Tony Lloyd: To ask the Secretary of St Transport how many public service vehicle licenc how many heavy goods vehicle licences of the classes have been in force over each of the last five c years; how many new public service vehicle and goods vehicle licences have been issued, and how withdrawn in each of those years; and how many licences in each category have been withdrawn reason of ill-health or incapacity of the licence-ho

Mr. Peter Bottomley: The following information heavy goods and public service vehicle driver lice available in respect of all traffic areas:

	1982-83	*[1]1983-84*	*1984-85*	*1985-86*
Heavy goods licence issues				
Provisional	52,700	28,719	57,041	60,632
First full	24,721	12,553	25,036	27,426
Renewals	291,652	131,392	258,735	263,043
HGV licences withdrawn for various reasons	2,668	1,333	2,281	2,772
Public service licence issues	58,958	56,699	12,360	13,612
PSV licences withdrawn for medical reasons	412	419	659	895

[1] The heavy goods vehicle driver licence data for this year reflect a change in the period of accounting.

Some 840,000 drivers held full HGV licences and 180,000 have full PSV entitlement.

CIVIL SERVICE

Job Dispersal

Mr. Sheldon: To ask the Minister for the Civil Service if he will make a statement on his policy for dispersal of Civil Service posts; if he will set out the number dispersed posts; and how many will be in the nort the north and Scotland.

Mr. Lawson *[holding answer 18 January 1988]* 1979 some 5,560 Civil Service posts have been di from London under the Government's di programme, including 1,930 posts to Scotland an 1,210 to the north-west; no posts have been dispe the northern region. Further moves to Scotland of 125 posts are planned under this programme.

In addition, Departments have, under the Government's wider location policy, dispersed staff on their own initiative. Forty staff of the Data Protection Registrar were located at Wilmslow, cheshire, in 1984; by the end of 1987-88, the Department of Health and Social Security will have created over 500 new jobs at its Newcastle central office and a net addition of around 350 posts at the family credit centre at North Fylde; plans have now been approved to move 60 Ministry of Defence posts to Cheadle Hulme in Cheshire; the Inland Revenue opened a new office in Cumbernauld in 1987 (32 posts) and will be dispersing later this year some London tax office and head office staff to Manchester (36 posts), to Stockport (17 posts) and to Glasgow (12 posts).

For the future, Departments will be encouraged to consider all suitable locations, including those for the north-west, the north and Scotland, on the basis mentioned in my right hon. Friend the Paymaster General's answer on 18 January, at columns *475-76*, to the hon. Member for East Kilbride (Mr. Ingram). Any specific plans will be announced as and when they are prepared.

NATIONAL FINANCE

Cost-sharing Agreements

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will provide his estimate of the total annual amount forgone by the Exchequer under the cost-sharing agreements and special arrangements with the United States, based on the difference between current practice and market interest rates and United Kingdom taxes applying.

Mr. Norman Lamont: I regret that the information is not held centrally and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Profit-sharing

Mr. Steel: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make it his policy to provide more information to the public about the tax reliefs available for share-based profit-sharing and about profit-sharing generally.

Mr. Lawson: This Government continue vigorously to promote awareness of the benefits of increased profit-sharing, whether in the form of employee share schemes or cash-based schemes. These efforts include the publication and dissemination by the Inland Revenue of a variety of leaflets and booklets providing information about the tax reliefs which are associated with schemes approved or registered under the Finance Acts of 1978, 1980, 1984 and 1987.

The success of this publicity is indicated by the growing popularity of these schemes. More than 1,400 all-employee share schemes have now been approved covering well over 10,000 companies; and 430 profit-related pay schemes, covering over 70,000 employees, have already been registered under the provisions of the Finance (No. 2) Act 1987.

Profit-related Pay

Mr. Steel: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he has any new proposals on profit-related pay.

Mr. Lawson: I cannot anticipate my Budget Statement.

Central Office of Informat

Mr. Chris Smith: To ask the Ch Exchequer if, pursuant to the reply to t for Holborn and St. Pancras (Mr. I *Report*, 15 January, column *406*, he reasons for the increase in total expenditu Office of Information, in constant pri million in 1982-83 to £141 million in 19

Mr. Brooke: Expenditure by the C Information increased between 1982-83 meet the policy requirements of Departm

EC (Budget)

Mr. Teddy Taylor: To ask the C Exchequer if he will publish a table contribution to the EEC in each fina 1981-82, together with the latest estimat financial year, on the same basis as the the answer of 18 November 1986, *Offici 176*; and if he will initiate an inquiry into Treasury estimates of net EEC co required upward revisions in many of t

Mr. Brooke: I see no need for Information on the United Kingdom's European Community institutions contained on page 68 of last year's p White Paper (Cm. 56-II) and for 1982-83 33 of the 1988 White Paper (Cm. 288-II the increase in the estimate of our net pa and later years were explained in my r Friend of 9 November 1987, at Information on differences between fore for past years is contained in previ expenditure White Papers and in the ann the Community budget.

Value Added Tax

Mr. Barry Field: To ask the C Exchequer if he will list the refunds o under section 20 of the Value Added Ta last five years per year for *(a)* county district councils, giving separate figu Wales and England.

Mr. Lilley *[holding answer 14 Jan* detailed analysis requested could be p disproportionate cost. However, the foll the net sums repaid annually to local g the bulk of which relates to refunds und Value Added Tax Act 1983 and unde legislation for each of the last five yea

Year	*To*
1982-83	707
1983-84	834
1984-85	957
1985-86	1,081
1986-87	1,198

THE ARTS

Departmental Costs

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Minister for the Arts what was the total cost to public funds of the Office of Arts and Libraries in the financial year 1987-88; and if he will publish corresponding estimates for the years 1979-80 to 1986-87.

Mr. Luce: The total cost to public funds of the central Government expenditure programme of the Office of Arts and Libraries in the financial year 1987-88 is estimated at £360·6 million. The corresponding figures for the years since 1983-84, when the OAL was established as a separate Department, are as follows. They include provisions for the British Museum (Natural History).

Year	*£ million*
1983-84	244·3
1984-85	267·5
1985-86	284·2
1986-87	337·3

AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FOOD

Council of Agriculture Ministers

Mr. Aspinwall: T ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what was the outcome of the Council of Agriculture Ministers meeting on 18 and 19 January in Brussels; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. MacGregor: Discussion at the Council concentrated almost exclusively on mechanisms for stabilising expenditure under the common agricultural policy and on new Commission proposals for a wider scheme for taking land out of agricultural production. Both would form part of the package of issues on the future financing of the Community that will be before the meeting of Heads of Government on 11 and 12 February. No conclusions were reached and the Council will resume on Saturday.

Considerable progress was made on working out the details on a satisfactory scheme for the set-aside of agricultural land, but there is still some work to be done to achieve a satisfactory scheme. I had to express my deep concern at some suggestions floated during discussion in relation to expenditure stabilisers. The German presidency will be producing new proposals for discussion at the weekend.

Dairy Farmers

Mr. Geraint Howells: To ask the M Agriculture, Fisheries and Food how many da there are in England, Scotland and Wales; wh corresponding figures in each of the three count and 1985; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Donald Thompson: The numbers of regi producers are as follows:—

Year	*England*	*Wales*
1980	35,494	7,864
1985	30,825	6,990
1987	29,428	6,720
In 1970, the comparable figures were:—		
	64,246	16,019

Figures relate to March of each year.
Source: Milk Marketing Boards.

Food Labelling

Mr. Hunter: To ask the Minister of A Fisheries and Food what has been the response industry to his guidelines on nutrition labellin published in July 1987.

Mr. Donald Thompson: Both food manufac food retailers have shown considerable i adopting the standard format for nutrition la out in the guidelines and in giving this infor consumers on the labels of their products. There two practical problems which have needed reso I am pleased to announce that adjustmen guidelines covering the category in which trans- should be declared and the way in which, fo being, dietary fibre shall be assessed have reso matters. I am, therefore, hopeful that th adjustments will result in a high level of upta industry of these guidelines.

Common Agricultural Policy

Dr. David Clark: To ask the Minister of A Fisheries and Food what estimate he has of the cost of fraud under the common agricultural each of the last three years in *(a)* the United Kin *(b)* the rest of the Community.

Mr. Donald Thompson *[holding answer 2 1988]:* Member states are obliged to report qu the Commission on irregularitiees in claims, e the money may be recovered. The number and irregularities reported in the last three years figures are available were:

	1984		*1985*		*1986*	
	Number	*£ million*	*Number*	*£ million*	*Number*	*£ million*
United Kingdom	46	0·3	59	0·7	68	0·5
Rest of EC	321	5·4	444	7·6	352	18·6

The vast majority of these irregularities relate to failures to meet conditions of scheme where fraud was not suspected. However, it seems likely that the relatively small number of likely frauds accounted for a significant part of the money.

It is not possible by definition to state th undetected fraud. The Government are con minimise fraudulent claims under the CAP and the Commission's recent initiative to dev resources to this important area.

Family Incomes

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will update to 1985 the reply given to the hon. Member for Kensington (Sir B. Rhys Williams) *Official Report*, 27 January, column *215*, showing the numbers of working and out-of- children, at different income levels number of wage earners.

Mr. Portillo: The information req tables. For statistical reasons, detaile kind should be treated as free stan and not as time series.

Number of working families with children at various income levels: Great Britain 1985

Gross weekly income excluding state benefits £	*Total*	*One parent families*	*Two parent families*	*One wage families*	*Two wage families*		*Number of 1*
Under 80	90	10	70	70	10	40	
80-89	20	[1]	20	20	[1]	20	
90-99	50	10	40	40	10	40	
100-109	100	10	90	70	30	40	
110-119	130	10	120	80	40	60	
120-129	130	20	110	100	30	70	
130-139	170	30	140	130	40	80	
140-149	150	10	140	100	60	70	
150-159	260	10	240	170	90	130	1
160-169	190	10	170	100	90	90	
170-179	230	10	220	110	120	120	
180-189	200	10	190	120	80	90	
190-199	250	10	240	130	110	120	1
200-219	480	10	470	220	260	170	2
220-239	440	10	430	170	270	170	1
240-259	370	10	360	120	250	130	1
260-279	360	[1]	360	110	250	130	1
280-299	290	10	280	100	190	110	1
300 and over	1,480	10	1,470	480	1,010	550	7
Total	5,390	220	5,180	2,460	2,940	2,240	2,3

[1] Less than 5,000.

Notes:

1. The figures are derived from the 1985 Family Expenditure Survey and are subject to sampling error. All figu the nearest 10,000 and so rows and columns may not sum exactly to the totals shown.
2. Gross weekly income is the income reported in 1985 without any updating.
3. A "working family" is defined as one where at least one parent is in full-time employment or self-employment. T where the head has been sick or unemployed for less than three months—in these cases income has be income when the head was in work.
4. The figures exclude any families not living in private households.
5. A "two wage family" is one where the second wage exceeds £4 a week.

Number of out of work families of working age children at various income levels—Great Britain 1985

	Gross weekly income including state benefits									
	Under £50	*£50 to £59*	*£60 to £69*	*£70 to £79*	*£80 to £89*	*£90 to £99*	*£100 to £109*	*£110 to £119*	*£120 to £129*	*£130 to £139*
Total	90	40	140	180	230	220	150	100	70	50
One parent families	70	30	120	110	110	90	60	30	30	10
Two parent families	20	10	20	80	120	140	90	70	40	40
Number of dependent children:										
One	80	20	110	110	110	60	30	20	10	10
Two	10	10	30	60	100	110	60	40	20	10
Three	*	10	*	10	20	30	50	20	10	10
Four or more	*	*	*	*	*	20	10	20	30	20
National Insurance benefits being received:										
None *(a)*	30	10	10	10	20	30	30	20	10	*
(b)	60	20	110	150	180	140	90	50	50	30
UB *(a)*	*	10	*	10	*	10	10	*	*	*
(b)	*	*	*	10	10	10	10	10	*	*
SB/SSP *(a)*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
(b)	*	*	*	*	*	10	*	*	*	*
IVB *(a)*	*	*	10	*	10	10	10	10	10	10
(b)	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Other *(a)*	*	*	10	*	*	10	10	10	10	10
(b)	*	*	*	*	10	*	*	*	*	*

ork families with
d according to the

ted is shown in the
information of this
g annual analyses

Thousands

endent children 3	4 or more
10	1
1	1
1	1
20	1
10	10
10	1
10	10
10	10
30	1
20	1
20	1
20	10
20	10
60	20
70	30
60	20
40	10
30	10
170	60
610	200

have been rounded to

figures include families
taken as the family's

Thousands

0 to £149	£150 and over	Total
30	150	1,450
10	30	690
20	110	760
10	50	630
10	60	510
10	20	180
10	10	130
10	90	260
10	10	890
*	*	50
*	*	60
*	*	10
*	*	10
10	20	80
*	*	10
10	10	60
*	*	20

* Less than 5,000.
(a) Without supplementary benefit.
(b) With supplementary benefit.

Notes:
1. The figures are derived from the 1985 Family Expenditure Survey and are subject to sampling error. All figures have been rounded to th so rows and columns may not sum exactly to the totals shown.
2. The totals do not coincide exactly with other published statistics. This is due to the different data sources.
3. Gross weekly income includes housing benefit and is the income reported in 1985 without any updating.
4. An "out of work family" is defined as one where neither parent is in full-time employment or self-employment, except that families whe sick or unemployed for less than 3 months are excluded.
5. The figures exclude any families not living in private households.
6. "Other" National Insurance benefits include industrial disablement, maternity and widows benefit.

Out-of-work families of working age with children not in receipt of supplementary benefit (Great Britain 198

Gross weekly income including state benefits £	*Not entitled to supplementary benefit*	*Entitled but not claiming supplementary benefit*	*Total*
Under 50	—	30	30
50-59	10	10	20
60-69	20	10	30
70-79	10	10	20
80-89	30	10	40
90-99	40	10	50
100-109	40	—	40
110-119	40	—	40
120-129	20	—	20
130-139	20	—	20
140-149	30	—	30
150 and over	130	—	130
Total	380	80	460

Notes:
1. The figures are derived from the 1985 Family Expenditure Survey and are subject to sampling error. All figures hav the nearest 10,000 and so rows and columns may not sum exactly to the totals shown.
2. Gross weekly income includes housing benefit and is the income reported in 1985 without updating.
3. An "out of work" family is defined as one where neither parent is in full-time employment or self-employment, except t the head has been sick or unemployed for less than 3 months are excluded.
4. The figures exclude any families not living in private households.
5. Inferences cannot be drawn from the number of out of work families with children entitled but not claiming supplemen the take-up of supplementary benefit.

Day Nurseries

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what research his Department has done on the correlation between levels of day nursery provision and the numbers of children in care.

Mrs. Currie: The Department has not commissioned any research specifically on this issue. However, some research studies have addressed it in passing. For example, a study of local authority day nurseries in England in the period 1975-83 showed that children of families in contact with social services departments were accorded priority for admission to day nurseries.

NHS (Funding)

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will list the amount of Government funding for each year since 1979 to *(a)* Waltham health authority and *(b)* North East T health authority, based on (i) actual amo terms at current years prices and (iii) i current years prices based on information Health Service inflation and costs.

Mrs. Currie: The available information table. Information is not available on a d the years prior to the 1982 reorganisation Health Service. Comparable information not be available until after the end of the

It is inappropriate to revalue district h expenditure by reference to centrally asse in hospital and community health services as the local composition of that expendi substantially from the national average.

	North East Thames Region Net Revenue Expenditure[1] (£000) 1987-88 Prices			Waltham Forest District Net Revenue Expenditure[1] (£000) 1986-87 Prices	
	Cash	Using gross domestic product deflator	Using HCHS pay and price deflator	Cash	Using gross domestic product deflator
1978-79	408,958	795,654	909,114	not available	
1979-80	483,090	804,172	890,818		
1980-81	629,213	883,466	906,696		
1981-82	691,836	884,689	921,526		
1982-83	788,936	941,114	986,170	55,436	66,129
1983-84	829,151	945,602	986,690	56,838	64,821
1984-85	869,167	949,432	977,813	58,862	64,298
1985-86	902,631	929,828	964,913	52,512	54,094
1986-87	965,116	965,116	965,116	54,796	54,796

Notes:

[1] As shown in health authorities' summarised accounts.

[2] The 1982 reorganisation of the NHS resulted in substantial and complex boundary changes and changes in management responsibility. Figures for pre- and post- 1982 authorities are not directly comparable.

[3] District expenditure figures are distorted by a change in the region's accounting methodology which was introduced in 1985-86. Districts in North East Thames are now charged for the cost of "their" patients in large mental illness hospitals outside their boundaries.

Mr. Hanley: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what has been the allocation of funds to the South West Thames area authority and to the Richmond, Twickenham and Roehampton district health authority for each of the last 10 years; and what has been the percentage increase in each year.

Mrs. Currie *[holding answer 20 January 1988]:* The available information is shown in the table. Information is not available on a district basis for the years prior to the 1982 reorganisation of the National Health Service. Comparable information for 1987-88 will not be available until after the end of the financial year.

Growth in net revenue expenditure 1978-79 to 1986-87

	South West Thames region		Richmond, Twickenham and Roehampton district	
	Net revenue expenditure[1] cash £000	Percentage increase over previous year per cent.	Net revenue expenditure[1] cash £000	Percentage increase over previous year per cent.
1978-79	301,143	—	[3]	—
1979-80	358,664	19·1	[3]	—
1980-81	461,750	28·7	[3]	—
1981-82	510,712	10·6	[3]	—
1982-83	525,671	[2]—	30,649	—
1983-84	554,012	5·4	32,865	7·2
1984-85	580,905	4·9	33,104	0·7
1985-86	603,799	3·9	34,653	4·7
1986-87	645,521	6·9	37,076	7·0

[1] As shown in health authorities' summarised accounts.

[2] The 1982 reorganisation of the National Health Service resulted in substantial and complex boundary changes and changes in management responsibility. Figures for pre and post 1982 authorities are not directly comparable.

[3] Not available.

Costs of Treatment

Mr. Nicholas Bennett: To ask the secretary of State for Social Services what information he has as to the relative costs of different treatments and operations in *(a)* each regional health authority, *(b)* each district health authority and *(c)* each hospital; what actions he intends to take in order to obtain more detailed information; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Currie: I refer my hon. Friend to my reply to him on 12 January, at column *253*. The initiative is currently being piloted at five acute hospital sites in England.

Stockpiled Drugs

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what are the quantities and the monetary value of drugs stockpiled for use in the event of war *(a)* in the current financial year and *(b)* cumulatively, in the United Kingdom.

Mrs. Currie: National Health Service drug stocks are kept at a level commensurate with short-term peacetime needs: there is no stockpile dedicated for use in the event of war.

A working group of officials within the Department is considering stockpile requirements for medical supplies to be used in emergencies. The cost of providing stores of essential items is likely to be high and so may have to be built up over a period of time. Guidance will be issued following completion of the study.

NHS (War Planning)

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services whether plans for the National Health Service in the event of war indicate the number and the method by which patients will be discharged from National Health Service hospitals to make way for casualties; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Currie: During a period of tension and when directed by the Secretary of State, health authorities would cease to admit all but emergency cases and arrange to send home as many as possible of the patients in hospitals and nursing homes whose retention was not medically essential. The selection of patients for discharge would be made on medical advice and would take account of the availability of accommodation and facilities for care in the community. Contingency plans do not refer to numbers of patients since these would depend on the prevailing circumstances.

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services whether plans for the National Health Service in the event of war indicate in detail the role of doctors and how they are expected to choose between the injured who may be treated and those who will be left to die; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Currie: We are at present considering revised guidance on civil defence planning in the National Health Service but it will not attempt to detail the role of doctors. Planning officers whom we expect to respond to the guidance are aware of the need to take account of all available resources in drawing up detailed plans, and that the sorting of casualties is a matter for professional judgment in the light of the particular circumstances.

After any disaster the responsibility for sorting casualties and allocating priorities for treatment lies with doctors or ambulance personnel attending the injured at the material time. This principle applies in both peacetime and wartime emergencies.

Peterlee Community Hospital

Mr. Cummings: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what are his proposals, and their timing, for the provision of a community hospital in Peterlee.

Mrs. Currie: The provision of capital schemes in the northern region is for the regional health authority to determine in the light of its available resources and competing priorities.

Claybury Hospital, Ilford

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what is the policy towards heating the corridors of Claybury hospital, Ilford; whether any recent change has been made to this policy; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Currie: The hon. Member may wish to approach the chairman of Waltham Forest health authority, which is responsible for managing services at Claybury hospital, for this information, which is not held centrally.

Waltham Forest

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) what information he has received from Waltham Forest district health authority about its projected deficits for 1987-88 and 1988-89; and what action he proposes to take in response;

(2) why Waltham Forest has suffered a greater cumulative loss of revenue to hospital services between 1982-83 and 1985-86 than any other district health authority within the North East Thames regional health authority; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Currie: The hon. Member may wish to approach the chairman of North East Thames regional health authority, which is responsible for the allocation of resources to its district health authorities, about these matters.

Donor Card Scheme

Mr. Lawrence: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services whether he has made any assessment of the effectiveness of the donor card scheme: and whether he has plans to improve its effectiveness.

Mrs. Currie: Organ donation is influenced by a number of factors, many of which cannot readily be quantified. It is therefore difficult to estimate separately the effect of donor cards on the number of organs donated. However, our view is that the donor card scheme has played a valuable role, especially when used in conjunction with other publicity initiatives.

We are currently following up a number of recommendations made by a medical royal colleges working party. For further details I refer my hon. Friend to my reply to my hon. Friend the Member for Tynemouth (Mr. Trotter) on 18 December 1987 at column *934*.

Geriatric Patients

Mr. Cummings: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what are the levels of staffing dealing with geriatric patients in the Sunderland, Durham and Hartlepool health authorities over each of the last three years.

Mrs. Currie: The figures are shown in the table.

NHS medical and nursing staff in post[1] Geriatric medicine specialty/area of work Sunderland, Durham and Hartlepool district health authorities
Whole-time equivalents[2]

30 September	*Sunderland DHA*	*Durham DHA*	*Hartlepool DHA*
1984	240	150	110
1985	280	160	120
1986	270	160	130

Source: DHSS Annual censuses of NHS medical and non-medical manpower.

[1] Includes permanent paid and honorary staff. Excludes Senior Registras and Consultants whose contracts are held by the Regional Health Authorities. Excludes Locum Medical and Agency Nursing Staff.

[2] Figures are independently rounded to the nearest ten (10) whole-time equivalents.

Mersey Regional Health Authority (Contracting Out)

Mr. Butler: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what services have been contracted out within the Mersey regional health authority to date; and what savings have been made or are expected from such contracting out.

Mrs. Currie: As at 30 September 1987, 94 per cent. of domestic cleaning services, 89 per cent. of catering services and 93 per cent. of laundry services in the Mersey region had been put out to competitive tender. Estimated annual savings generated from contracts awarded in the region currently total £5·9 million.

Schizophrenia (Homeless Persons)

Mr. David Atkinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he has any estimate of the total number of homeless schizophrenia sufferers who are in bed and breakfast accommodation in England and Wales; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Currie: I regret we do not have information on which to base an estimate.

Electorates

Mr. Simon Coombs: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will list the 20 largest parliamentary constituencies by electorate, with their electorates on the current register; and what is the average constituency electorate in the United Kingdom and England.

Mrs. Currie: The information requested is as follows:

Parliamentary constituency	*1987 Electorate*
Isle of Wight	99,760
Milton Keynes	98,215
East Berkshire	88,884
Eastleigh	88,664
East Hampshire	87,476
Horsham	87,229
Huntingdon	87,195
Devizes	87,145
Swindon	87,140
Wokingham	86,587
Westbury	85,708
South Colchester and Maldon	85,302
Peterborough	85,244
Cirencester and Tewkesbury	85,181
Crosby	85,099
North West Surrey	84,295
Ryedale	84,205
The Wrekin	83,796
Chelmsford	83,696
Woking	83,453
Average Constituency Electorate	
(i) United Kingdom	67,178
(ii) England	69,585

Mr. Simon Coombs: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will list the 20 English non-metropolitan counties which have shown the greatest percentage growth in electorate since 1982; and what has been the percentage growth and actual figures in each case.

Mrs. Currie: The information requested is as follows:

Non-metropolitan county (ranked by percentage growth)	*Total electors 1982 register*	*1987 register*	*Difference*	*Percentage growth*
Buckinghamshire	420,555	461,231	40,676	9·7
Cambridgeshire	433,595	473,880	40,285	9·3
Berkshire	508,444	549,929	41,485	8·2
Cornwall	329,221	355,049	25,828	7·8
Dorset	475,531	512,612	37,081	7·8
Wiltshire	388,534	418,591	30,057	7·7
Northamptonshire	392,450	422,515	30,065	7·7
Somerset	327,209	352,233	25,024	7·6
Shropshire	280,002	300,565	20,563	7·3
Lincolnshire	414,297	441,737	27,440	6·6
Hereford and Worcester	478,901	510,007	31,106	6·5
Devon	725,287	771,680	46,393	6·4
Hampshire	1,101,139	1,171,534	70,395	6·4
Suffolk	441,258	469,258	28,000	6·3
Norfolk	538,410	568,290	30,880	5·7
North Yorkshire	513,391	542,198	28,807	5·6
Gloucestershire	383,616	404,423	20,807	5·4
Oxfordshire	391,961	412,734	20,773	5·3
Isle of Wight	94,771	99,739	4,968	5·2
Essex	1,123,177	1,181,244	58,067	5·2

Ethnic Minorities

Miss Mowlam: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services how many leaflets his Department publishes concerning benefits and benefit entitlement; how many of these are available in minority languages; what are those languages; when such minority language leaflets were published; and how many changes in the benefit system have occurred since that date.

Mr. Portillo: The Department currently publishes about 120 leaflets on social security benefits. Only one leaflet is translated into the main ethnic minority languages. This is FB22, a version of the English language leaflet FB 2 "Which benefit?", translated into Chinese, Urdu, Hindi, Gujerati, Bengali and Punjabi.

Five translations were made in March 1985. The Chinese version was translated in November 1984 and revised in July 1985. There have been several reprints of these translations.

Because leaflet FB 22 was worded in broader terms than the English version of the leaflet, the numerous changes in the benefit system since the translations have not dated the leaflets. However, following this April's social security reforms, it is intended to publish revised editions of FB 22 as soon as possible.

Miss Mowlam: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what measures are taken to assist ethnic minority claimants who cannot speak English in his Department's offices where there are no officers who can communicate with these claimants.

Mr. Portillo: In offices where there are no staff who can communicate with a claimant who has little or no English, his family, friends, and supporters in the community will act for him. In practice this works well.

Local Offices (Multilingual Staff)

Miss Mowlam: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services how many bilingual or multilingual staff are employed in his Department's local offices in Middlesbrough, Stockton, Hartlepool, Redcar and Eston.

Mr. Portillo: Stockton local office has one bilingual member of staff. The other offices — Middlesbrough, Hartlepool, Redcar and Eston—have none.

Benefits

Miss Mowlam: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services when his Department's leaflet "Which Benefit—FB2" is to be reprinted to incorporate the replacement of supplementary benefit and family income supplement by income support and family credit.

Mr. Portillo: A new edition of leaflet FB2 "Which Benefit?" is being prepared for publication by April 1988. The new edition will cover references to all the new social security benefits, including family credit and income support, and give details on where further information on these benefits can be found.

Mr. Ieuan Wyn Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what is the number of people partially dependent or totally dependent on *(a)* supplementary benefit, *(b)* housing benefit and *(c)* family income supplement in (i) Wales and (ii) the United Kingdom.

Mr. Portillo *[holding answer 15 January 1988]:* The readily available information is as follows:

Income related benefit recipients, their partners and dependants
Thousands

Benefit	*Great Britain*	*Wales*	*Northern Ireland*
Supplementary benefit[1]			
Number of recipients	4,938	291	184
Number of partners and dependants	3,353	207	188
Family income supplement[2]			
Number of recipients	200	12	15
Number of partners and dependants	530	34	55
Standard housing benefit[3]			
Number of recipients	3,730	170	67
Number of partners and dependants	n/a	n/a	n/a

[1] February 1986.
[2] Summer 1986.
[3] Autumn 1986.

Notes:
1. n/a: Figures not available.
2. Recipients of one benefit may also be in receipt of another. For example, in the British figures, approximately 20,000 FIS recipients also receive supplementary benefit and about 120,000 FIS recipients also receive standard housing benefit.
3. Supplementary benefit recipients who are householders are also entitled to certificated housing benefit.
4. Supplementary benefit figures were obtained from annual statistical inquiries. FIS figures were obtained from administrative statistics and the figures on housing benefit are from the annual standard housing benefit inquiries and local authority returns. The figure for the number of housing benefit recipients in Wales is for rate rebate and excludes a small number of people who receive rent rebate or rent allowance only.

North Tees General Hospital

Mr. Devlin: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he has any plans to visit North Tees general hospital.

Mrs. Currie: We have no plans to do so at present.

Artificial Limb Centre, Roehampton

Mr. Ashley: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what provision there was for inspection of repairs at the artificial limb fitting centre at Roehampton before the recent strike; what provision there is now; what change there has been in the number of inspectors; if he will ascertain from the companies supplying artificial limbs if there has been any increase in complaints; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Scott: The strike to which the right hon. Member refers was settled in May last year. It did not, as the right hon. Member's question may imply, take place at the Roehampton artificial limb fitting centre, but at the nearby factory of J. E. Hanger and Co. Ltd., one of the manufacturers of artificial limbs.

As the right hon. Member will be aware, from 1 July 1987 the Disablement Services Authority has taken over full responsibility for the artificial limb service, and for dealing with the suppliers of artificial limbs. I understand that the Disablement Services Authority is strengthening controls on the quality and cost of contractors' work.

Income-Related Benefits

Mr. Clay: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what figure from the annual statistical inquiry was used for supplementary benefit claimants' average water rates in compiling the tables on the estimated impact of the reformed structure of income-related benefits, published in October 1987.

Mr. Scott: The average water rate payment by supplementary benefit claimants was calculated from table 6.14 of the annual statistical inquiry for February 1986. The overall cost in supplementary benefit of water charges was updated to estimated amounts for 1988-89 and this figure was used in setting the income support levels for April 1988 and in compiling the tables on the estimated impact of the reformed structure of income-related benefits.

Income Support

Mr. Clay: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will give a breakdown of estimated expenditure on income support for 1988-89 by claimant group *(a)* including the compensation for 20 per cent. contribution to rates and *(b)* excluding the 20 per cent. rates compensation.

Mr. Scott: The information requested is as follows:

	(a) Including compensation for 20 per cent. rates contribution (£ million)	(b) Excluding compensation for 20 per cent. rates contribution (£ million)
Pensioners age 80+	190	160
Pensioners age 60-79	1,160	1,080
Sick or Disabled	510	500
Lone Parents	1,830	1,790
Couples with Children	2,030	2,010
Others	2,850	2,760
Total (figures do not add owing to rounding)	8,570	8,290

Mr. Young: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if Her Majesty's Government plan to withhold income support from Easter school leavers.

Mr. Scott: Young people who leave school this Easter will, subject to satisfying the normal conditions, be entitled to receive income support.

It is the Government's intention that from September 1988 there will be no general entitlement to income support for 16 and 17-year-olds. Only certain groups of people, to be prescribed in regulations and expected to include such groups as lone parents and the severely disabled, will be entitled in their own right. We also intend to provide benefit for a limited period for those young people who are unable to live at home, because, for example, of risk of physical or sexual abuse, and who would otherwise suffer severe hardship.

North West Durham District Health Authority

Ms. Armstrong: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services how many people were employed by North West Durham district health authority in 1979 and at the latest date available.

Mrs. Currie: Such information as is available is shown in the table.

Because of the 1982 National Health Service reorganisation consistent data at district health authority level are not available for 1979.

The figures exclude consultants and senior registrars whose contracts are held by the regional health authorities. The district health authorities where these staff work cannot be separately identified centrally. There will therefore be more medical and dental staff actually working in North West Durham district health authority than accounted for in the table.

NHS directly employed staff in post at 30 September[1]	North West Durham District Health Authority Wholetime equivalents[2]
1982	1,400
1986	1,370

Source: DHSS Annual censuses of NHS medical and non-medical manpower.

[1] Includes permanent paid, honorary and locum medical staff. Includes agency nursing and midwifery staff.

[2] Figures are independently rounded to nearest ten (10) whole time equivalents.

Derwentside

Ms. Armstrong: To ask the Secretary of State for S Services what was the number of people in recei supplementary benefit and supplementary allowanc the district of Derwentside, for each of the last eight y

Mr. Portillo: The table sets out the inform requested giving the earliest data available. The distr Derwentside is served by Stanley local office bu boundaries are not conterminous.

Stanley local office

Date	Number of people receiving Supplementary benefit	Number of re Supplem allo
February 1982	8,970	
February 1983	11,014	
February 1984	11,318	
February 1985	11,601	
February 1986	11,514	
February 1987	10,795	

Source: 100 per cent. count of cases in action.

Ms. Armstrong: To ask the Secretary of State for S Services how many people were in receipt of family in supplement in the district of Derwentside, for each last eight years.

Mr. Portillo: I regret this information is not avai Family income supplement claims are dealt with b centre at Blackpool and no information is maint about claims from particular local areas.

Maternal Deaths

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for S Services how many *(a)* direct and *(b)* indirect ma deaths in England and Wales in each year from onwards occurred in isolated general practioners' and how many were associated with anaesthesia.

Mrs. Currie: In order to identify those maternal d occurring in isolated general practitioners' units it be necessary to refer to the copies of the death certif of all registered maternal deaths. I regret that this be done for all the years requested only at dispr tionate cost.

Social Fund

Mr. Robin Cook: To ask the Secretary of Stat Social Services if he will publish a table in the *O Report* showing the social fund grant allocations to office of his Department as a sum per head o claimants registered with each office.

Mr. Scott: Information on each local office's fund grants budget and live load at 28 July 19 available in the Library.

Hypothermia

Mrs. Beckett: To ask the Secretary of State for S Services what are the total costs of advertising administration for the Government campaign of h education on the links between diet, warmth an dangers of hypothermia.

Mrs. Currie: I assume the hon. Member is asking about the "Keep Warm Keep Well" campaign and I refer her to my reply to the hon. Member for Liverpool, West Derby (Mr. Wareing) on 16 December 1987, at columns *598-599*.

The cost of the campaign to the Department is now estimated at £610,000. This includes production and distribution of the government booklet, television films, press advertisements and the telephone helpline. The increase in estimated costs is a reflection of the success of the campaign which has generated more telephone calls to the helpline and more requests for the booklet than was originally anticipated. I will arrange for the hon. Member to receive a copy of the booklet. Copies have already been placed in the Library.

Disabled People

Mrs. Beckett: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services when he expects to receive the report of the Office of Population Censuses and Surveys survey of disabled people; and whether he will place a copy in the Library in advance of publication.

Mr. Scott: The OPCS expects to publish the results of the survey of disabled people in a series of reports, beginning later this year. A copy of each report will be placed in the Library at the time of publication, in accordance with normal practice.

Mrs. Beckett: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what arrangements will be made for consulting disabled people and organisations representing them in connection with the review of social security provision for disability.

Mr. Scott: An announcement will be made in due course about consultation with interested organisations on the implications for disability benefits of the results of the OPCS survey.

Trent Health Authority

Mr. Blunkett: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if in the light of the closure of Middlewood hospital, in the Trent health authority, he will provide bridging funds to avoid damage to other services.

Mrs. Currie: Middlewood mental illness hospital is being run down on a phased basis and is due to close in 1994 by which time more community-orientated replacement services will have been developed. Bridging funds to support the build-up of the new service are already being provided by the Trent regional health authority within its existing allocation. The regional and district health authorities are keeping both the financing arrangements and the pace of service change under review.

NHS (Staff)

Mrs. Gorman: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) what has been the increase in staff employed in the National Health Service since 1958;

(2) what is the percentage of Health Service employees who at present are involved in an administrative and clerical capacity and what was the comparable figure in 1958;

(3) what percentage of National Health Service staff are employed at present to carry out ancillary duties compared with 1958.

Mr. Newton: I regret that staffing figures prior to 1974 are not comparable with those for later years, due mainly to the effects of the 1974 reorganisation. Comparisons from 1974 to the latest available date are in the table.

National Health Service Staff in Post[1] at 30 September

	Whole-time[1] Equivalents		*Change 1974-86[2]*		*Percentage of All Staff[3]*	
	1974	*1986*	*(WTE)*	*Percentage*	*1974*	*1986*
Total Directly Employed[3]	675,800	801,600	+125,800	+18·6	100·0	100·0
Administrative and Clerical	[5]82,800	111,400	+28,600	+34·6	12·2	13·9
Ancillary[4]	163,400	124,300	−39,200	−24·0	24·2	15·5

Source: DHSS Annual censuses of NHS medical and non-medical manpower.

[1] Figures are independently rounded to the nearest one hundred (100) whole-time equivalents. No adjustments have been made for various changes in contractual hours during this period.

[2] All changes and percentages have been calculated on un-figures.

[3] Includes locum medical and dental and agency nursing and midwifery staff.

[4] Part of the decrease is due to the transfer of Operating Department Assistants (ODAs) from Ancillary to Professional and Technical staff group on 1 April 1984 (some 2,600 wtes at 31 March 1984).

[5] Figure may not reflect the full effects of the 1974 NHS reorganisation.

Ms. Harman: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will make a statement on the turnover rates in the National Health Service of *(a)* administrative staff and *(b)* district general managers.

Mr. Newton: Information on the turnover rate of administrative staff is not available centrally. We do not at present have full information on movements of district general managers within the National Health Service, but in the three years since the first appointments were made, 10 district general managers have left for outside employment. This represents a rate of about 1·7 per cent. per annum.

Private Health Insurance

Mrs. Gorman: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will make it his policy to facilitate employee and individual enrolment in private health insurance schemes.

Mrs. Currie: I welcome the fact that the number of people covered by private medical insurance has almost doubled since 1979—from 2·75 million to 5·25 million in 1986. This record clearly demonstrates the ability of the medical insurance industry to respond to the growing demand for greater choice in health care.

The Government are determined to encourage the industry's continuing expansion. Tax concessions have been given on employer-paid medical insurance premiums for people earning less than £8,500 p.a. since 1980.

District Health Authorities

Mrs. Gorman: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will make it his policy to put out to tender the management of district health authorities; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Newton: Management arrangements at local level are a matter for individual district health authorities to consider in conjunction with their regional health authority.

Mrs. Gorman: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will introduce legislation to transform district health authorities into competing health maintenance organisations; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Newton: We have no plans to do so.

Health Vouchers

Mrs. Gorman: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what representations he has received concerning the introduction of health vouchers.

Mrs. Currie: We have received a small number of representations commending the introduction of health vouchers.

Local Offices (Budget Allocations)

Mr. Blair: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will list the names of his Department's local offices raising operational questions relating to their budget allocations, referred to in the answer of 11 January, *Official Report*, column *167*, and if he will indicate the subject matter of the questions raised.

Mr. Scott: I refer the hon. Member to my reply to the hon. Member for Derby, South (Mrs. Beckett) on 13 January, at column *400*.

Pensions

Mr. Patrick Thompson: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what plans he has to publicise the new pension choices introduced by the Social Security Act 1986.

Mr. Portillo: The Government wish to ensure that employers and employees are made aware of the new pensions choices available to them as a result of the Social Security Act 1986. While the promotion of particular products and advice on the type of pension suitable in any given case are the responsibilities of pensions providers and professional advisers, the Government intend that the new framework created by the Act should be as widely understood as possible. We will, therefore, be taking the following measures.

First, we will be mounting a public awareness campaign, making use of television and press advertising. The major effort will be concentrated in the weeks preceding the start of the new personal pension arrangements on 1 July 1988, since it is only at that point that the full range of choices becomes available. This will be preceded by a shorter press advertisement ca March 1988, directed towards employers, which attention to the new options for occupation schemes starting on 6 April 1988.

Second, the Department will shortly be issui explanatory leaflets. The television and press ments are designed to lead people who are in obtain a leaflet entitled "New Pensions Choic will give an overview of the new options. This le attention in turn to two further leaflets, one employers and the other at employees. Sup detailed fact sheets, the two leaflets will descril new arrangements work.

South Yorkshire Ambulance Service

Mr. Blunkett: To ask the Secretary of State Services if he will make a statement rega implications of the case of the late Mr. Thom of 90 Raisenhall road, Sheffield, for the future p procedures of the South Yorkshire ambulance

Mrs. Currie *[holding answer 18 January 19* regional health authority is responsible for ma South Yorkshire metropolitan ambulance understand that the incident involving Mr. Joh December referred to in the hon. Member's l January to my right hon. Friend the Secretary o already been investigated. I have asked Si Carlisle, the regional health authority chairma urgently into the second case involving Mr on 4 January and to write to the hon. Member incidents at the same time as reporting to me.

Mentally Ill Patients (Durham)

Mr. Cummings: To ask the Secretary of State Services if he will publish the levels of sp mentally ill patients who have received or ar treatment in the Durham health authority durin 1985-86, 1986-87 and 1987 to date.

Mrs. Currie *[holding answer 18 Janua* Information on health authority expenditure patient is not collected centrally. Hospital c submitted to the Department show exper hospitals of different types and cost returns in community health services show expenditure the major areas of activity.

Total current expenditure on hospitals cat mental illness in the Durham health authority £1,017,556 in 1985-86 and £1,169,398 in Information for 1987-88 is not yet available.

Maternity Units

Mr. Buchanan-Smith: To ask the Secretary Social Services (1) how many small mater particularly in rural areas, have been closed in past five years; and what was the total maternity beds involved in each year;

(2) how many small maternity units, part rural areas, are currently subject to formal pr closure; and how many maternity beds are in

Mrs. Currie *[holding answer 20 January 198* the information requested is not available ce

cannot be obtained except at disproportionate cost. Day-to-day management decisions on closures are a matter for individual health authorities in England.

Hospital Beds

Mr. Fearn: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services, pursuant to the reply of 11 December 1987, *Official Report*, columns *297-98*, if he will investigate the failure of Birmingham and Worcester district health authorities to consult community health councils when they made substantial reductions in the number of hospital beds in 1987.

Mrs. Currie *[holding answer 20 January 1988]:* I am satisfied that the Central Birmingham and Worcester district health authorities have followed the procedures for consultation as set out in the National Health Service (Community Health Council) Regulations 1985. Urgent and temporary closures do not require pre-closure consultation.

Markets

Mr. Burns: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) whether the regulations governing the hygiene standards for retail covered markets and market stalls are the same as for wholesale covered markets and market stalls;

(2) whether there is any provision under the Food Hygiene (Market Stalls and Delivery Vehicles) (Amendment) Regulations 1966 or any other legislation to prohibit the sale of fresh meat, fish, cheese and vegetables in a covered market unless the stalls are located in a separate food hall;

(3) what guidelines his Department issues governing the maximum levels of pollution acceptable from motor vehicles delivering goods to covered retail or wholesale markets.

Mrs. Currie *[holding answer 20 January 1988]:* The Food Hygiene (Market Stalls and Delivery Vehicles) Regulations 1966, as amended, apply to food trading undertaken at covered retail or wholesale markets, or otherwise away from fixed premises. The regulations cover all food intended for human consumption and require that food traders should take all reasonable steps to ensure that food is protected from the risk of contamination. No guidelines have been issued centrally.

It is a matter for local decision as to where such markets are held and the local environmental health department should be able to advise on the implementation of the regulations.

ENERGY

Magnox Reactors

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what information he possesses regarding the availability for examination by independent civil engineering consultancy organisations of the full design plans of each of the Central Electricity Generating Board Magnox nuclear plants in advance of the beginning of decommissioning of the older reactors.

Mr. Michael Spicer: It is the responsibility of the Central Electricity Generating Board to make detailed plans for the decommissioning of its Magnox reactors. board's plans will be assessed by the independent nu installations inspectorate, and will need to be approve it before they can be implemented.

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for En if he will make a statement on current government p on the time period over which the decommissionin older Magnox reactors is expected to take place.

Mr. Michael Spicer: This is a matter for the Ce Electricity Generating Board. I have asked the chair to reply direct to the hon. Member.

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for En (1) how many applications have been made to the nuc installations inspectorate of the Health and Sa Executive by the Central Electricity Generating Boar operate a Magnox nuclear power station in experimental way to test reactor cooling by convect and if he will make a statement;

(2) on how many occasions his Department has notified by the Central Electricity Generating Board it intended to operate Magnox nuclear power station an experimental way to test reactor cooling by convecti and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Michael Spicer: This is the first occasion that CEGB has decided to carry out a test of the kind propo at Trawsfynydd. Similar tests have been successf carried out, by the South of Scotland Electricity Boar Hunterston A in 1981, and by BNF plc at Calder Ha 1985 and 1986, with the full approval of the NII. proposed test will proceed only if the HSE's NII is tot satisfied as to safety.

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Ene what papers have been commissioned *(a)* within Department, *(b)* from external consultants, *(c)* from Central Electricity Generating Board and South Scotland Electricity Board and *(d)* from the Uni Kingdom Atomic Energy Authority on the implicati for privatisation of the electricity supply industry of decommissioning of the Magnox reactors.

Mr. Michael Spicer: My right hon. Friend the Secret of State has asked for advice from a wide range of sour on many issues concerned with the proposed privatisat of the electricity supply industry. Advice given Ministers on this basis is confidential.

Trawsfynydd Nuclear Reactor

Mr. Martyn Jones: To ask the Secretary of State energy when he was informed that an emergency sh down procedure is to be performed on Trawsfyny nuclear reactor on 12 February; if he is satisfied with safety precautions to be taken to protect the residents the surrounding area during this procedure; and if he w make a statement.

Mr. Michael Spicer: The proposed test at Trawsfyny does not involve an emergency shutdown and will ta place only afte the reactor has been safely shut down in normal manner. It will proceed only if the Health a Safety Executive's nuclear installations inspectorate totally satisfied as to safety.

Mr. John D. Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State Energy when he was first advised of the propos

experimental shutdown at Trawsfynydd power station; whether this experiment has his approval; what emergency arrangements are being organised along the west coast of Wales and England; whether he has received objections to this experiment; and if he will now instruct the Central Electricity Generating Board to abandon this experiment.

Mr. Michael Spicer: This is a matter for the Health and Safety Executive's nuclear installations inspectorate which received on 30 November last year the CEGB's proposal for a test of natural cooling following the routine shutdown of a reactor at Trawsfynydd. The NII is presently considering the proposal, and the test will proceed only if it is totally satisfied as to safety. Details of emergency arrangements for nuclear power stations are to be found in the reply given on 22 April 1987 at columns *547-51* by my hon. Friend the Member for Eddisbury (Mr. Goodlad).

Monergy (Condoms)

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy if his Department's "Monergy" campaign to save energy in industrial processing has included any departmental assessment of the energy-saving possibilities in the production of condoms in support of the anti—AIDS campaign.

Mr. Peter Morrison: No.

Chernobyl Accident

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy if he will make a statement on his recent meeting with Soviet trade union officials on the implications of the Chernobyl accident for the safe operation of nuclear power stations.

Mr. Michael Spicer: My right hon. Friend's discussions with the Soviet trade union delegation on 2 December covered a range of nuclear safety issues, including international initiatives since the Chernobyl accident and opportunities for bilateral and multilateral co-operation. The discussions complement existing links with the USSR at Government and industry level.

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what is his latest estimate of the financial and economic cost of the Chernobyl accident to *(a)* the United Kingdom nuclear industry, *(b)* United Kingdom farmers and *(c)* the United Kingdom tourist industry.

Mr. Michael Spicer: The United Kingdom industry was widely involved in monitoring the effects of the Chernobyl accident and in assessing its implications. The cost of this involvement is not readily quantifiable. The Government have so far paid out over £5·2 million in compensation to sheep farmers for the effect on their enterprises of the controls arising from the Chernobyl accident. It is not possible to quantify any effect on tourism.

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what is his latest information on the evaluation made by the Soviet Union of the total economic cost of the Chernobyl accident.

Mr. Michael Spicer: I understand that the 15 January edition of *Pravda* reported that at a Politburo meeting the previous day the direct cost of the Chernobyl accident was estimated at 4 billion roubles (£4 billion). According to the report, this cost doubles if economic loss is taken into account.

Sellafield (Safety)

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of St
whether he has received any invitation fro
Parliament's energy committee to appe
discuss safeguards facility attachments for
Fuels plc Sellafield reprocessing plant.

Mr. Michael Spicer: No.

Transnuklear (Bribery Allegat

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of St
what are the implications of the Transnuk
of bribery and cover-up involving the Fed
Germany, Belgium, Sweden, the EEC Ener
and EURATOM for further confidence in
application of *(a)* EURATOM and *(b)* t
Atomic Energy Agency safeguards in the U
and in the European Economic Commun

Mr. Michael Spicer: Euratom and th
Atomic Energy Agency are currently in
reports. We await their conclusions.

Overhead Transmission Lin

Mr. Frank Cook: To ask the Secreta
Energy if he will place in the Library all c
the annual report on research into the pos
characteristics of high-voltage overhea
lines, first requisitioned by him fro
Electricity Generating Board in February

Mr. Michael Spicer: The Secretary of St
from the Central Electricity Generating Bo
on research into the possible effects on h
high-voltage overhead transmission lin
arranging for copies to be placed in the L
report was received in January 1986 whe
that the practice of reporting annually wo
by reports from the board whenever signif
the position occurred. There have
discussions between my own officials and t
and the board has published a number of
on the subject.

Acid Rain

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of Sta
he will make a statement on the progress
Electricity Generating Board in equip
power plants with desulphurisation ac
technology; and what was the time
envisaged.

Mr. Michael Spicer: The Central Electr
Board announced in October last year its
flue gas desulphurisation equipment to co
at Drax and Fiddlers Ferry in a progra
until 1997. The board inform me that the
a position to submit an application for co
stage of this programme at Drax immine

Electricity Council (Chairm

Mr. Devlin: To ask the Secretary of St
he intends to reappoint Sir Philip Jones as
Electricity Council; and what his objecti

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Mr. Parkinson: I have reappointed Sir Philip Jones as chairman of the Electricity Council for a further three years from 1 April 1988, and in my letter of 20 January I agreed the following revised objectives with him:

"This letter sets out the objectives which the Government wish you to pursue as Chairman of the Electricity Council. The objectives elaborate the responsibilities and obligations placed by Statute on the Electricity Council, and in particular the duty to promote and assist the maintenance and development by Electricity Boards in England and Wales of an efficient, co-ordinated and economical system of electricity supply.

1. The Government has announced its intention to bring forward proposals to privatise the Electricity Supply Industry. Your specific objective as Chairman of the Council will be to assist the Government in implementing those proposals, and in bringing about an orderly and timely transfer of the Industry to the private sector.

2. Meanwhile you should by all practicable means promote and encourage maximum efficiency throughout the Industry including sustained and detailed attention to cost control by the various Boards in England and Wales through all aspects of their activities. In this context:

(a) you should advise me on the setting of financial targets and performance aims for the Electricity Supply Industry in England and Wales and each Board individually; you should keep me informed, in accordance with guidance which I shall give you from time to time, on matters relevant to the setting of those targets and aims and on progress towards their achievement;

(b) you should encourage Boards to develop a wide range of challenging targets for cost control, efficiency and standards of service and to publish information about performance against targets.

3. It must also be your objective to encourage the Boards to develop co-operation with private generators of electricity, within the framework laid down in the Energy Act 1983, and ensure that effective commercial and technical arrangements exist to take full economic advantage of their potential contribution to supply. You should also encourage the Boards to adopt and support schemes for the combined production of heat and power in accordance with the provisions in the Energy Act.

4. I shall require Boards to set out their capital investment proposals comprehensively for my approval, explaining the proposals in relation to business plans and the achievement of financial targets and performance aims. I shall also require them to continue to pay close attention to the methodology used in capital investment appraisal. In advising me on these proposals it should be your objective to promote the production and distribution of electricity at the lowest possible cost consistent with maintaining adequate standards e.g. of security of supply.

5. To support the Boards' capital investment proposals and the Council's returns for the Investment and Financing Review, the Council should set them in the context of CEGB and Area Board business and trends, in a manner specified by the Department. The Boards' plans should also take full account of the objectives agreed with Government as well as the financial and performance targets agreed and the Industry's external financial limits. Bearing in mind the requirements of S.8(5) and S.8(6) of the Electricity Act 1957, you should ensure regular, timely, and effective information flows from the Boards to assist the Government and the Electricity Council in setting those objectives, targets and limits and in monitoring performance.

6. You should, in consultation with the Boards, and as appropriate with Government, develop and promote a framework of electricity pricing principles, within which the Boards set their prices so as to reflect the costs at the margin of meeting demands on a continuing basis, and so as to be consistent with the financial framework set by Government.

7. You should seek to ensure that contracting, sales of appliance and appliance repair activities of the Area Boards are carried out effectively and economically so as to yield a proper return on the assets employed.

8. Subject of course to European Community and other international obligations, you should encourage the Boards to assist United Kingdom manufacturing industr orders in export markets, in particular through th of support services through British Electricity Int

9. You should ensure that the Industry remai to the impact of its policies and prices on consume these are properly presented to the Industry's representative bodies and to the public at large.

10. Until the Industry is privatised you should practicable means to promote close working re within the Industry. In this connection I draw a David Howell's statement of July 1980.

11. Finally, I should make clear that the Gover wish to give further guidance to you at a later impose constraints from time to time, for wider your ability to achieve one or other of these obje

NORTHERN IRELAND

Earnings

Mr. Jim Marshall: To ask the Secretary of Northern Ireland if he will give the latest es average adult earnings in Northern Ireland; and also show the proportion of workers in *(a)* ret *(b)* hairdressing who earn less than £2 per hou

Mr. Viggers: The latest results from the new survey for Northern Ireland show that in A average weekly earnings for all full-time emp adult rates were £176·4. Results also sh approximately 25 per cent. of full-time employ survey working in retail distribution sectors e than £2 per hour. Estimates of average hourly ea persons working in hairdressing occupations available.

High Sheriff (Belfast)

Sir John Biggs-Davison: To ask the Secretary for Northern Ireland when an appointment of hi for the city of Belfast is to be made; and why i accompanied those for the six counties and th Londonderry.

Mr. Tom King: The nomination for the pos sheriff for the city of Belfast by the outgoing hi is normally made only after consultation with th city council. However, the council declined to c and no nomination for 1987 or 1988 was receiv

As the duties of the office of high sheriff a ceremonial, it was decided that in the meantime should be left unfilled until a nomination is rece

Pig Grading Officers

Mr. John D. Taylor: To ask the Secretary of Northern Ireland why he is proposing to make t grading officers redundant; who will become res for administering this service at the pig processin what are the implications for quality control of U products; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Viggers *[holding answer 18 January* Industry and trade union interests are being consu a view to establishing effective and economic ments transferring responsibility for operat Northern Ireland pig carcase classification schem private sector. Implications for redundancy and requirements will be among the matters consi consultations progress.

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Members (Imprisonment)

Mr. John D. Taylor: To ask the Lord President of the Council on how many occasions in 1987 the House was notified of the imprisonment of a right hon. or hon. Member or Members; how many M subject of such a notification; and i statement.

Mr. Wakeham: The House was imprisonment of a Member on three oc

28 January — Mr. Harold M
25 June — Mr. Ken Magi
21 October — Mr. Peter Robi

Written Answers to Questions

Friday 22 January 1988

CHURCH COMMISSIONERS

Mr. Terry Waite

Mr. William Powell: To ask the right hon. Member for Selby, as representing the Church Commissioners, whether the money paid by the Church of England to Charles Armstrong and John Entwistle in order to help secure the release of Mr. Terry Waite was paid from funds provided by the Church Commissioners; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Alison: The money paid to Charles Armstrong and John Entwistle for travelling and related expenses for the purpose of trying to secure the release of Mr. Terry Waite and other hostages has been paid entirely from discretionary funds at the disposal of the Archbishop of Canterbury, none of which was provided by the Church Commissioners.

EDUCATION AND SCIENCE

Sexual Harassment

Ms. Richardson: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what is his Department's policy on sexual harassment at work; whether guidance on reporting complaints has been issued to all staff; how many complaints have been reported in the past five years; and what disciplinary action has been taken.

Mrs. Rumbold: The Civil Service policy on sexual harassment is set out in the programme of action to achieve equal opportunities for women in the Civil Service which was published by the Cabinet Office (Management and Personnel Office) in 1984. Sexual harassment at work is not tolerated and is dealt with as a disciplinary matter through the usual Civil Service complaints procedures. Guidance on reporting complaints was issued to all staff in 1984.

Five formal complaints have been reported centrally to personnel division in the last five years. In the four proven cases appropriate disciplinary action was taken.

OVERSEAS DEVELOPMENT

Ethiopia

Mr. Robert G. Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what is his assessment of the current food situation in Ethiopia.

Mr. Chris Patten: The food situation in Ethiopia is serious: over 1 million tonnes of food aid is needed to feed people until the next harvest in November. Donors have responded promptly with pledges of food aid which at present total over 600,000 tonnes. Shipments are well under way and will meet requirements for the earlier part of the year. Rebel action in Eritrea and Tigre is severely hampering delivery of this food to those in need.

Nicaragua

Mr. Galloway: To ask the Secretary of St and Commonwealth Affairs if he will list th from non-governmental organisations for jo projects in Nicaragua in 1985-86 and 19 applications were successful; and what wer for rejecting the applications that failed.

Mr. Chris Patten: There have been applications from non-governmental requesting ODA support for projects in Nica received in 1985-86 and the 10 received in 19 criteria for a 50 per cent. ODA contributi terms of the joint funding scheme. The d follows:

Agency	*Project*
1985-86	
OXFAM	Technical assistance for project eval
OXFAM	Health Education Programme
OXFAM	Food Production
CAFOD	Tool Bank
CAFOD	Poultry raising Co-op
CAFOD	Community housing programme
CAFOD	Piggery for rural Co-op
Christian Aid	Drinking water project in Trapiche
Christian Aid	CIIR water project
Christian Aid	Tools and building material for Mis Rio Coco
CAFOD	Multiple Services Centre
CAFOD	Integrated Development
OXFAM	Agricultural Development Programm
OXFAM	Appropriate Housing Programme
1986-87	
OXFAM	Mechanical Workshop, Malpaisillo,
OXFAM	Integrated pest management progra
Christian Aid	Mother and child health care in Las
OXFAM	Agricultural Development Programm
OXFAM	Agricultural Development Rama Ind
OXFAM	Literacy Training
OXFAM	Appropriate housing, Special Zone N
OXFAM	Assistance to displaced people
OXFAM	Training health promoters
CAFOD	Integrated Development Programme

Overseas Aid

Mr. Fearn: To ask the Secretary of State and Commonwealth Affairs if the Governme plans to review their policy on overseas d assistance; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Chris Patten: Policy on overseas aid is continuous review. The 1988 public expend Paper (Cm. 288 i. and ii.) published on 20 Jan that aid is now planned to grow in real t 1990-91. The Government's observations on Affairs Committee's Second Report, Session bilateral aid (Cm. 225) published in October in detail the Government's aid policies and p

Mr. Fearn: To ask the Secretary of State and Commonwealth Affairs if his Departme plans to produce a new White Paper on overse the last one was produced; and if he will make

Mr. Chris Patten: The Government's obse the Foreign Affairs Committee's report on b (Cm. 225) are a detailed statement of aid p objectives. The last White Paper on overs

"Overseas Development: The Changing Emphasis in British Aid Policies (Cmnd. 6270)"—was published in 1975.

Population Projects

Mr. Terry Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many requests for assistance with population projects were outstanding at 31 December 1987.

Mr. Chris Patten: At 31 December 1987, following requests received, preparatory work was in hand on eight population projects or projects component. These are in India, K Tanzania.

TRADE AND INDU

Weights

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Duchy of Lancaster whether he will p *Official Report* giving for 1986 and t information in tables B6, B12, C7 and review of external trade statistics, usi

Mr. Alan Clark: The information

Exports finished manufactured goods less erratics current weighted volume indices
1980 = 100 OTS

	Consumer goods					*Intermediate goods*		
	Total	*Machinery*	*Passenger motor cars*	*Miscellaneous*	*Total*	*Machinery*	*Miscellaneous*	*Total*
1986	104	66	89	116	108	111	128	101
1986								
First quarter	98	58	86	110	109	112	121	98
Second quarter	102	62	91	115	107	110	125	100
Third quarter	107	68	93	120	107	109	134	97
Fourth quarter	107	76	87	121	111	114	132	107
1987								
First quarter	117	72	109	130	108	110	134	106
Second quarter	118	71	114	130	104	106	136	105
Third quarter	128	81	121	142	107	108	142	111
1986								
January	98	53	90	109	106	111	115	99
February	100	62	89	112	109	112	123	96
March	96	59	79	109	110	114	126	98
April	103	61	96	114	106	109	122	99
May	103	59	90	116	109	113	125	105
June	101	65	86	114	107	109	129	96
July	107	70	83	123	111	113	136	100
August	108	65	105	118	103	105	133	94
September	106	68	90	120	106	110	133	98
October	102	74	93	111	111	114	130	105
November	110	77	95	131	110	111	134	104
December	108	78	93	120	113	117	133	111
1987								
January	112	70	115	120	104	105	131	104
February	125	75	96	146	113	115	141	110
March	115	72	117	124	107	111	128	103
April	128	75	129	140	105	107	140	105
May	114	70	108	126	103	107	132	104
June	113	69	106	125	104	103	137	105
July	131	78	134	142	106	106	133	108
August	115	76	108	127	104	104	137	107
September	138	88	122	156	111	113	155	118

Exports finished manufactured goods less erratics
£million, OTS ba

	Consumer goods				*Intermediate goods*			*Capital goo*
	Total	*Machinery*	*Passenger motor cars*	*Miscellaneous*	*Total*	*Machinery*	*Miscellaneous*	*Total* *Mac*
1986	7,074	513	1,362	5,141	13,682	10,097	1,365	10,183
1986								
First quarter	1,615	106	299	1,197	3,343	2,472	320	2,453
Second quarter	1,732	117	340	1,261	3,353	2,467	334	2,523
Third quarter	1,832	133	362	1,324	3,407	2,506	356	2,467
Fourth quarter	1,896	157	361	1,360	3,579	2,652	355	2,740

	Consumer goods				Intermediate goods			Capital goods	
	Total	Machinery	Passenger motor cars	Miscellaneous	Total	Machinery	Miscellaneous	Total	Mach
1987									
First quarter	2,119	156	459	1,485	3,542	2,600	362	2,745	
Second quarter	2,141	154	488	1,478	3,517	2,564	374	2,722	
Third quarter	2,396	175	533	1,641	3,613	2,638	380	2,918	
1986									
January	528	32	103	389	1,084	801	103	817	
February	550	38	101	405	1,115	820	108	806	
March	538	36	94	403	1,144	851	110	830	
April	579	39	117	419	1,096	809	108	834	
May	580	37	113	426	1,133	837	112	876	
June	572	41	111	416	1,124	821	113	813	
July	603	45	106	449	1,165	853	120	839	
August	613	43	136	430	1,101	809	116	801	
September	616	45	120	445	1,141	844	120	828	
October	602	50	127	418	1,185	885	117	900	
November	655	54	105	491	1,179	860	120	889	
December	640	54	129	450	1,215	908	118	952	
1987									
January	674	50	161	456	1,115	816	118	897	
February	748	53	133	555	1,235	902	128	953	
March	697	53	165	473	1,192	883	116	895	
April	773	54	182	530	1,175	858	127	913	
May	690	51	156	476	1,165	863	123	900	
June	677	50	150	472	1,178	843	125	909	
July	794	56	192	540	1,183	865	120	943	
August	714	55	139	492	1,175	848	122	937	
September	861	63	183	609	1,254	925	138	1,038	

Inports finished manufactured goods less erratics current weighted volume indices

1980 = 100 OTS basis

	Consumer goods				Intermediate goods			Capita	
	Total	Machinery	Passenger motor cars	Miscellaneous	Total	Machinery	Miscellaneous	Total	Machin
1986	142	189	134	145	169	167	158	168	
1986									
First quarter	132	173	128	132	158	155	150	162	
Second quarter	138	181	127	141	164	163	153	157	
Third quarter	150	194	144	151	172	171	159	170	
Fourth quarter	149	208	136	153	181	179	168	183	
1987									
First quarter	129	180	106	141	166	165	150	167	
Second quarter	147	192	124	161	182	178	164	173	
Third quarter	162	214	149	168	203	199	178	194	
1986									
January	128	177	122	128	154	150	142	162	
February	131	177	124	131	158	154	152	164	
March	137	166	138	136	162	159	155	161	
April	127	170	112	134	153	152	146	152	
May	143	198	135	142	169	168	156	157	
June	143	176	135	148	169	168	155	161	
July	149	194	142	150	172	170	164	166	
August	157	197	158	155	178	177	156	173	
September	145	192	132	149	167	166	157	171	
October	143	191	142	139	170	167	161	175	
November	157	228	141	162	197	194	181	190	
December	148	204	126	158	177	175	163	183	
1987									
January	124	159	113	130	167	165	147	179	
February	130	219	93	143	162	161	155	167	
March	133	161	111	149	168	169	147	156	
April	136	185	115	146	179	177	161	166	
May	151	205	127	165	193	188	174	185	
June	155	185	131	172	174	169	157	167	
July	157	211	145	162	202	199	174	195	
August	175	226	175	173	210	207	185	192	
September	153	205	127	167	196	191	176	195	

Imports finished manufactured goods less erratics

£ million OTS basis seasonally adjusted

	Consumer goods				Intermediate goods			Capital goods		
	Total	Machinery	Passenger motor cars	Miscellaneous	Total	Machinery	Miscellaneous	Total	Machinery	Miscellaneous
1986	14,987	1,903	4,809	8,166	12,706	8,967	1,609	11,067	8,526	1,616
1986										
First quarter	3,391	429	1,116	1,820	2,862	2,029	369	2,619	2,002	383
Second quarter	3,547	460	1,136	1,927	2,979	380	2,537	1,941	384	—
Third quarter	3,932	488	1,279	2,134	3,268	2,307	412	2,792	2,190	402
Fourth quarter	4,116	525	1,279	2,285	3,597	2,509	449	3,118	2,433	446
1987										
First quarter	3,630	456	1,054	2,086	3,289	2,290	405	2,952	2,334	399
Second quarter	3,981	482	1,196	2,275	3,549	2,453	440	2,967	2,336	406
Third quarter	4,445	523	1,447	2,442	3,925	2,726	475	3,308	2,586	474
1986										
January	1,067	141	342	575	916	647	115	839	643	120
February	1,124	146	360	606	955	675	125	893	679	132
March	1,200	142	413	639	992	707	128	887	680	131
April	1,105	144	332	621	933	668	120	824	636	123
May	1,221	168	405	638	1,015	723	129	844	648	129
June	1,221	148	398	667	1,031	731	131	869	656	132
July	1,285	165	420	690	1,055	743	139	899	681	133
August	1,364	164	465	725	1,136	801	137	947	733	136
September	1,283	159	394	719	1,076	762	136	947	735	133
October	1,294	160	433	691	1,112	770	143	984	762	145
November	1,445	194	440	802	1,305	912	160	1,077	827	159
December	1,377	171	405	792	1,179	828	146	1,057	843	142
1987										
January	1,163	131	375	646	1,111	774	131	1,046	835	134
February	1,211	186	307	705	1,077	744	142	986	776	137
March	1,257	139	372	735	1,101	772	133	920	723	128
April	1,236	155	366	706	1,166	807	146	961	761	132
May	1,365	174	414	768	1,253	863	156	1,056	821	144
June	1,380	153	416	801	1,131	784	139	950	753	130
July	1,427	171	468	779	1,307	916	156	1,104	870	151
August	1,609	184	569	844	1,364	947	165	1,092	843	165
September	1,409	168	410	819	1,254	862	154	1,112	872	158

Based on the United Nations broad economic categories analysis.

Clywd (RDG)

Mr. Barry Jones: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if he will list the amounts of regional development grant in Clwyd for each year since 1975; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Walker: I have been asked to reply. The information requested, which is only readily available for the financial years 1976-77 onwards, is as follows:

	£ million
1976-77	3·3
1977-78	7·4
1978-79	9·5
1979-80	4·9
1980-81	8·6
1981-82	15·8
1982-83	17·8
1983-84	12·2
1984-85	23·4
1985-86	22·8
1986-87	27·9

Expenditure in 1985-86 and 1986-87 included payments respectively of £1·5 million and £8·7 million under the revised regional development grant scheme introduced in November 1984.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Government Data Network

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether his Department is considering a network as an alternative to his Department's participation in the Government data network; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Hurd: The Home Office has a number of current and future requirements for data communications, some of which are already served by networks. The proposed Government data network is one option to be considered in fulfilling each of these requirements.

Parole

Mr. Wheeler: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what is the estimated effect on the prison population of abolishing parole for prisoners serving under *(a)* two and *(b)* three years and replacing this with supervised or conditional release after one-half and one-third of the sentence, respectively.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: The information requested is as shown. The estimates assume no compensatory change in

sentencing practice. The effect also depends on the precise nature of the supervisory scheme and in particular the extent to which persons might be recalled to prison while under supervision. The estimates assume no offsetting increase due to such recalls or due to any additional reconvictions occurring as a result of earlier release.

Estimated reduction[1] in the England and Wales prison population[2] from replacing parole with supervised or conditional release after one-third and one-half of sentence.

Number

Sentence lengths affected	*One half sentence*	*One third sentence*
Under two years	[3] 300	5,900
Under three years	[3] 400	7,900

[1] It has been assumed that release would be contingent upon good behaviour and that, as with the existing remission scheme, offences against prison discipline would cause release to be deferred by the equivalent of 1 per cent. of sentence on average.

[2] Estimates based on statistics for 1986, adjusted to reflect the subsequent increase in remission to one half for sentences up to 12 months (August 1987). Excluding fine-defaulters, non-criminal prisoners, lifers and those prematurely released from prison whose numbers are unlikely to be affected by the scheme. Estimates rounded to nearest 100.

[3] No contribution made by sentences up to 12 months which are already eligible for remission of one half sentence.

Metropolitan Police

Rev. Martin Smyth: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what information he has as to the number of days off work sick reported for members of the Metropolitan police force for each of the last five years; and if he will express this as an average figure.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: The information supplied by the Metropolitan police is as follows:

[1] *Year*	*Number of days*	*Average per officer*
1984	292,156	10·9
1985	329,114	12·3
1986	346,135	12·8
1987	334,364	12·2

[1] Information for 1983 is not available.

Firearms Certificates

Mr. Ron Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will call for a report from the chief constable of Thames Valley on the average time taken, from application to determination, in processing applications for firearms certificates, since December 1986.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: I understand from the chief constable of the Thames Valley police that this information is not available, though a rough estimate suggests that the normal procedures are completed in between two and six weeks.

Michael Ryan

Mr. Ron Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will call for a report from the chief constable of Thames Valley as to the reasons for the speed with which Michael Ryan was granted a firearms certificate in December 1986.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: I understand from the chief constable of the Thames Valley police that Michael Ryan's application for a firearms certificate was received at divisional level on 25 November 1986 and on completion of the necessary inquiries a certificate was issued on 11 December. Information that the application was received on 10 December relates to the date of its receipt at headquarters, after it had been processed at divisional level.

Nuclear Safety

Mr. Cryer: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will publish the report of the working group on nuclear safety established after the Chernobyl disaster; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. John Patten: I take it that the hon. Member is referring to the joint working group on Chernobyl which was set up jointly by my right hon. Friends the Secretaries of State for the Home Department and for Scotland following representations from the Central Fire Brigades Advisory Council for England and Wales and the Scottish Central Fire Brigades Advisory Council. The group is not concerned with nuclear safety generally but with the implications of Chernobyl for the fire services of Great Britain. It will in due course report to the two councils which will then advise my right hon. Friends what further action should be taken in the light of the report. The question of publication will be considered at that stage.

Nuclear Power Stations (Access)

Mr. Cryer: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department on how many occasions fire officers have been denied access to nuclear power stations to investigate a fire during the past 10 years; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. John Patten: The Department does not routinely collect information of this kind. I understand, however, that two incidents were reported to the joint working group on Chernobyl but that any difficulties there may have been have been resolved.

ENVIRONMENT

Winget-type Houses

Mr. David Marshall: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list in the *Official Report* the total numbers of Winget-type houses in each housing authority area in England where such houses exist.

Mrs. Roe: Information on the distribution of all designated dwellings by local authority was obtained in 1983 and updated in July 1986; copies of this are in the Library. Further updated information is being assembled and I shall arrange for this to be placed in the Library shortly. The following local authorities reported Winget properties in their area:

	Dwellings
Kingston-upon-Hull City Council	889
Norwich City Council	469
Wakefield City Council	1210

All but nine of these were in council ownership.

Urban Programme Schemes

Ms. Ruddock: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will itemise, by borough, approved current urban programme schemes in Greater London which utilise Manpower Services Commission community programme placements in their operation.

Mr. Trippier: The Department does not hold the information in the form requested, but the following schemes involving community programme placements have been identified in the current inner area programmes.

Brent
- Kensal Green Day Centre
- Roundwood Community Association Play Areas
- United Indian Youth Centre
- Brent Energy Services Team
- Community Task Force
- NACRO city Farm
- Pakistani Workers Association
- Lincoln Parade Employment Resource Centre
- Neasden Community Workshop
- Rutland Park Renovation Scheme
- Kilburn Building and Training Centre Renovation
- Women's Home Improvements Scheme

Hammersmith and Fulham
- Family Welfare Association
- Colebrooke Community Programme Project
- Burnbake Trust
- Papersaver
- South Press for the Blind
- Family Welfare Association C P Vehicle
- Hammersmith and Fulham Amenity Trust Block Allocation
  - —Hammersmith Bridge Road
  - —101 Community Centre
  - —Distillery Road
  - —College Park Campaign
  - —Dalling Road Nursery
  - —Peabody Estate, Lillie Road

Islington
- CSV Kings Cross Environmental Improvements Project
- Stoppers Inflatables
- Bentham Court Community Scheme

Kensington and Chelsea
- Richard Costello Day Centre
- Alan Lennox Boyd Centre

Wandsworth
- Doddington and Rollo Community Association Workshops
- Battersea Boatyard
- Balham Seventh Day Adventist Community Resource Centre
- Wandsworth Heatwise
- Southfields Sikh Community Centre

Rates

Dr. Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will publish details, using the most recently available figures, of how many non-domestic properties in England, Wales and Scotland paid annual rate bills of *(a)* less than £500, *(b)* less than £750 and *(c)* less than £1,000.

Mr. Ridley: This information is not collected centrally.

THE ARTS

Wales Railway Centre

Mr. Adley: To ask the Minister for the Arts if he wi arrange to visit the site of the Wales railway centr Cardiff, to discuss future funding.

Mr. Luce: I have no such plans. I understand th project has received financial assistance from a number o organisations sponsored by the Secretary of State fo Wales.

NATIONAL FINANCE

VAT

Sir Fergus Montgomery: To ask the Chancellor of th Exchequer how much revenue was raised during the las year for which figures are available from value added ta on donations of equipment to higher educationa institutions.

Mr. Lilley: I regret that the information is no available.

Sir Fergus Montgomery: To ask the Chancellor of th Exchequer on what basis value added tax on donations o equipment to higher educational establishments i calculated; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Lilley: I refer my hon. Friend to my replies to my hon. Friend the Member for Arundel (Mr. Marshall) on 19 January at columns *652-53.*

Growth Rates

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what was the annual average compound growth rate in 1960 to 1969, 1970 to 1979 and 1980 to date for *(a)* the United Kingdom, *(b)* West Germany, *(c)* Japan, *(d)* France, *(e)* Italy and *(f)* Sweden.

Mr. Lilley: The figures are given in the following table:

Annual average compound growth rates[1]

	1960-69	*1970-79*	*1980-86*
United Kingdom	3·0	2·1	2·2
Germany	4·4	2·9	1·4
Japan	10·6	4·7	3·7
France	5·5	3·9	1·6
Italy	5·8	3·0	2·0
Sweden	4·4	2·0	1·6

Sources: OECD, CSO.
[1] Using expenditure measure of GNP/GDP at market prices except United Kingdom (GDP(A) at factor cost).

Co-operative Retail Societies

Mr. Barry Field: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) if he will list the co-operative retail societies registered at the Registry of Friendly Societies;

(2) if he will list the trading subsidiaries of those co-operative retail societies that do not include the word co-op in their title.

Mr. Lilley: A list of the co-operative retail societies registered at the Registry of Friendly Societies has been placed in the Library. Particulars of the trading subsidiaries for all these societies could only be extracted

from their annual returns at disproportionate cost. If my hon. Friend has a specific point in mind, perhaps he would write to me.

EC (Budget)

Ms. Quin: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) what information he has on the percentage of the annual EEC budget contributions of member states, other than the United Kingdom, which is made up from *(a)* value added tax contributions, *(b)* agricultural levies and *(c)* customs duties; and if he will give the figures for each of the last five years;

(2) what percentage of the United Kingdom's annual EEC budget contribution is made up from *(a)* value added tax contributions, *(b)* agricultural levies, and *(c)* customs duties; and if he will give the figures for each of the last five years.

Mr. Brooke: Information concerning all member states' gross contributions to the EEC budget is contained in the "Official Journal of the European Communities—Court of Auditor's Report", OJ 87/C336, 15 December 1987, a copy of which is available in the Library. Table 19 of the report (on page 177) presents information on gross contributions made by individual member states for the period 1982 to 1986 inclusive, broken down into the categories requested. Similar information is contained in the annual statements on the Community budget, the most recent of which was published last July as Cm. 194.

Money Supply

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will set out in tabular form the relationship between the rate of increase in M3 and the level of inflation 18 months later.

Mr. Lilley: Figures for the 12-month growth rates of M3 and the retail prices index are shown in the "Bank of England Quarterly Bulletin", table 11.3, and the *Monthly Digest of Statistics*, table 18.5, respectively.

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he will publish in the *Official Report* a table showing for each year since 1958 the velocity of monetary circulation in the United Kingdom, the reserve ratio of the banks and the banks' holdings of *(a)* Treasury bills, *(b)* other short-dated securities and *(c)* other gilt-edged securities, and the level of bank advances to (i) manufacturing industry, (ii) home loans and (iii) other purposes.

Mr. Lilley: The available information is not always in the form requested, nor back to 1958. Annual information on the velocity of circulation from 1963 is given in the table. Information on reserve ratios for the period in which they were in force may be found in the "Bank of England Statistical Abstract, No. 2", the "Bank of England Quarterly Bulletin" and "Financial Statistics". The most appropriate source for the other items requested is the monetary sector end-year balance sheets. These give information on outstanding levels of, inter alia, Treasury bills, British Government and Government-guaranteed securities, loans for house purchase and total bank lending. Such information as is available is contained in the appropriate tables of "Financial Statistics" or the "National Income Blue Book" or on the central databank. Information on lending to manufacturing industry is available in the "Bank of England Statistical Abstract, No.1", the "Bank of England Quarterly Bulletin" and in "Financial Statistics".

	[1] *Velocity of circulation*
1963	2·94
1964	3·01
1965	3·04
1966	3·06
1967	3·01
1968	3·00
1969	3·13
1970	3·23
1971	3·20
1972	2·89
1973	2·63
1974	2·56
1975	2·98
1976	3·26
1977	3·53
1978	3·53
1979	3·66
1980	3·67
1981	3·40
1982	3·14
1983	3·06
1984	3·00
1985	2·93
1986	2·64

[1] Derived as ratio of GDP(A) at current market prices to money stock M3, both series in seasonally adjusted form.

Licensed Deposit Takers

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he will publish in the *Official Report* a list of licensed deposit takers.

Mr. Lilley: The Banking Act 1987 eliminates the distinction under the Banking Act 1979 between recognised banks and licensed deposit takers. The Bank of England is required to list authorised institutions in its annual report, under the Banking Act, which is laid before Parliament. It also periodically produces updated lists of authorised institutions, and I am placing a copy of the list as at 8 January 1988 in the Library.

Small Firms (VAT)

Sir Anthony Grant: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what discussions he has had in the EEC with a view to raising the level at which small firms become liable for value added tax and with what result; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Lilley *[holding answer 19 January 1988]:* The EC Sixth VAT directive restricts increases in the VAT registration threshold to those which maintain its value in real terms. Removal of this restriction would require an amendment to article 24 of the directive, which would require the unanimous approval of the member states.

In her address to the European Council in March 1985 the Prime Minister launched an initiative for deregulation to encourage the growth of small businesses. Late in 1986 the Commission produced a draft directive for small and medium-sized enterprises which proposes, among other things, a mandatory lower threshold of 10,000 ecu (about £7,000) and a higher optional threshold of 35,000 ecu (about £24,500).

The European Parliament has given general support for the draft. The United Kingdom will maintain its insistence

that the optional higher threshold be no less than 35,000 ecu and will continue to argue vigorously for it to be increased. It is not possible to forecast when and in what form the directive will be adopted.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Electricity Disconnections

Mr. Jim Marshall: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on the level of domestic electricity disconnections in Northern Ireland; and whether he has any plans to overcome this problem.

Mr. Viggers: In the 12 months to 31 December 1987 the total number of disconnections for debt in Northern Ireland was 2,439, which is less than one half of 1 per cent. of the average total number of consumers on supply.

Northern Ireland Electricity adheres to the electricity supply industry's voluntary code of practice in relation to disconnections, and as the rate of disconnections for debt has fallen in recent months no specific action is planned.

ACE Schemes

Mr. Jim Marshall: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on *(a)* the likely uses of the increased funding for ACE schemes in Northern Ireland and *(b)* the use of ACE projects in activities relating to the community care initiative.

Mr. Viggers: The ACE programme will increase from the current average level of 6,200 to 8,000 places during 1988-89. In allocating the additional places, priority will be given to projects which have the potential to create self-sustaining jobs, to those which further the development of community health and social care and to environmental measures. Special attention will also be given to projects in areas where the level of ACE provision is lower than the local incidence of long-term adult unemployment would warrant. Four hundred of the additional places have been specifically allocated to support the Northern Ireland 2000 programme, which seeks to provide more and higher quality environmental projects.

Sympathetic consideration is always given to proposals from sponsors seeking places for community care activities. Approximately 30 per cent. of ACE scheme places currently support such activities.

Kilroot Power Station

Mr. Alton: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what is the expected completion date of the Kilroot power station.

Mr. Viggers: Northern Ireland Electricity expects to complete the conversion of phase I of the Kilroot power station to dual coal-oil firing by July 1989. The first of the two generating sets undergoing conversion should be operational by the end of January 1989.

Hospital Beds

Rev. Martin Smyth: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if the Department of Health and Social Services for Northern Ireland will encourage health boards to conduct audits of beds available at 12 noon on each day; what information he has as to the likely information to be gained from this, and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Needham: Under the current arrangem information on daily bed availability is already colle in each hospital, summaries of which are provide boards to the Department of Health and Social Serv This count of bed availability is measured at midnight day.

Information derived from this source prov indicators for measurement of performance and ena the continuous monitoring of levels of service provid

Industrial Pollution

Sir John Biggs-Davison: To ask the Secretary of S for Northern Ireland if, in the light of recent inciden Carrickfergus and elsewhere, he is satisfied that there adequate measures and supervision to control indus pollution in the Province; and if he will make a statem

Mr. Needham *[holding answer 21 January 1988]:* they are broadly in line with those which apply elsew in the United Kingdom. The resources required supervise the control of industrial pollution are kept u regular review.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAI

Israel

Mr. Lawrence: To ask the Secretary of State Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will now inst Her Majesty's ambassador to the United Nations to against the resolution which demands that Israel de from the removal from camps and the resettlemen Palestinian refugees in the Gaza strip.

Mr. Mellor: No. Israeli policy in the occu territories has involved unacceptable pressure Palestinian refugees to move against their will, and forced demolition of their shelters. We and overwhelming majority of the international commu oppose this.

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Scottish Standing Committees

Mr. Home Robertson: To ask the Lord President of Council if he has anything to add to his answer of January, *Official Report*, column *486*, regarding membership of Scottish Standing Committees; and i will make a statement.

Mr. Wakeham: I refer the hon. Gentleman to pursuant answer to that question on Wednesday January, at column *740*.

Parliamentary Salaries

Mr. Dykes: To ask the Lord Privy Seal w information he posseses on comparable parliament salaries exclusive of allowances in *(a)* the Uni Kingdom, *(b)* France, *(c)* Germany, *(d)* Australia *(e)* the United States of America, for the latest publis figures available.

Mr. Wakeham *[holding answer 19 January 1988]:* information requested is as follows:

Country	Salary (per annum)
United Kingdom	
Member of the House of Commons	Basic salary of £22,548. Maximum salary of £23,614 for those who draw the London allowance of £1,066 per annum, which is taxable. Whole of salary taxable.
France	
Deputy in the National Assembly	410,634 Fr (£40,863) of which 45 per cent. 184,785 Fr (£18,388) is tax-free
Federal German Republic	
Member of the Bundestag	DM 104,748 (£35,166). All taxable
Australia	
Federal Member of the House of Representatives	A$ 46,065 (£18,326). All taxable.
United States of America	
Member of the House of Representatives	US$ 89,500 (£49,958). All taxable.

Note: The sterling figures are calculated using rates of exchange at the close of business on Wednesday 20 January.

SCOTLAND

Hospital Beds

Rev. Martin Smyth: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if his Department will encourage health boards to conduct audits of beds available at 12 noon on each day; what information he has as to the likely information to be gained from this; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: No. The "bed count" is taken at midnight because at that time there is the least amount of patient movement and greater statistical accuracy is assured. A count at midday would disrupt the work of the ward and be a less accurate reflection of ward work. The information derived from the bed count is published in "Scottish Health Statistics," copies of which are held in the Library.

Homeless Persons

Mr. Home Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will revise the guidance to local authorities concerning homeless persons which is given under section 37 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987; and if he will make a statement.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: Although the code of guidance has been well received generally I am aware from voluntary organisations in the field that some revision of the code might be desirable. I have asked for details of proposed amendments and when these are received I shall consider the position further.

The very difficult problems which can arise when dealing with homeless people call for the exercise of good housing management and close co-operation between all agencies involved. We are committed for our part to maintaining an effective legislative framework to help the homeless.

Local Authorities (Staff)

Dr. Godman: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will give the most recent available figure for the total number of persons employed on a full-time basis, or full-time equivalent, by regional, islands and district councils in Scotland.

Mr. Lang *[holding answer 26 October 1987]:* This information is published quarterly in the "Joint Manpower Watch Survey", which is available in the Library of the House. The most recent figures available are for June 1987.

PRIME MINISTER

Hospital Services (Oswestry)

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Prime Minister whether she is satisfied with the co-ordination between the Welsh Office and the Department of Health and Social Security with regard to the services provided by the Robert Jones and Agnes Hunt orthopaedic hospital at Oswestry; and if she will make a statement.

The Prime Minister: Yes. I assume the hon. Member's question relates to the recent decision of the Shropshire health authority to close a number of beds temporarily at this hospital. Health authorities are not obliged to consult over temporary closures, but should the authority decide to make a temporary closure permanent there is a set consultation procedure to follow. The Welsh Office together with local community health councils would be consulted formally.

Crown Employees

Mr. Campbell-Savours: To ask the Prime Minister whether all persons in public service who are paid from moneys supplied under Votes by Parliament are treated as employees of the Crown for all *(a)* legal, *(b)* pensions and *(c)* other purposes.

The Prime Minister: Civil Servants, including those whose salaries are borne directly on Votes, are regarded as servants of the Crown for all relevant purposes.

Mr. Campbell-Savours: To ask the Prime Minister if she will introduce legislation to render all persons in public service who are paid from moneys supplied under Votes by Parliament and who are employees of the Crown liable to prosecution under the criminal law where they are alleged to have committed criminal acts.

The Prime Minister: No. Employees of the Crown are not exempt from the criminal law.

WALES

Privatisation

Mr. Nicholas Bennett: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will list, by each Welsh local authority, each service which has been privatised or put out to tender and the savings which have been made; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Grist: All local authorities in Wales have complied with the competition regulations introduced under part III of the Local Government, Planning and Land Act 1980 and put out to tender as appropriate highways and sewerage work, new building works, new works and maintenance work. The Local Government Bill currently in the House of Lords will extend compulsory competition to refuse collection/street cleaning, building cleaning, school/welfare catering, other catering, vehicle maintenance and ground maintenance. In addition, the Government are considering extending competition to the management of local authority sport and leisure facilities.

Information on the savings made is not held centrally. However, from time to time selective information on savings is published in the *Local Government Chronicle* and the "Public Service Review".

Neonatal Units (Staffing)

Mr. Gareth Wardell: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will list for each year since 1976, for each neonatal unit in Wales *(a)* the number of sister posts, *(b)* the number of staff nurses or staff midwives, *(c)* the number of support nursing staff, including nursery nurses and nursing auxiliaries and *(d)* the number of medical staff with specific commitment to neonates.

Mr. Grist: Data on hospital midwifery staff, analysed by district health authority, are available annually in "Health and Personal Social Services Statistics for Wales", copies of which are in the Library of the House. Detailed information on specific areas of work is not yet sufficiently reliable for the Department to give accurate staffing figures for each neonatal unit. Information on medical staff with a specific commitment to neonates is not held centrally.

Free Milk

Mr. Tom Clarke: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales, how many children under five years of age and cared for by registered childminders are currently in receipt of free milk; and how many childminders are involved.

Mr. Grist: There were 5,571 places with 2,361 registered childminders in Wales at 31 March 1987. Information is not available centrally on the number and age of children using these places or on the number of children in receipt of free milk.

National Museum of Wales

Mr. Sadds: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales, with respect to the 15th report of Session 1986-87 from the Committee of Public Accounts and the Comptroller and Auditor General's memorandum on the National Museum of Wales, and the agreement obtained in June 1979 from the Treasury for the purchase by instal the Rubens cartoons to be spread over three yea reservations concerning these cartoons were voice Department at the time that its agreement was o

Mr. Wyn Roberts: I refer the hon. Gentle paragraph 3 of the Comptroller and Auditor G memorandum (PAC 37).

Rent Arrears

Mr. Nicholas Bennett: To ask the Secretary of Wales if he will list in the *Official Report* in ran starting with the local authority with the proportion of rent arrears, the total arrears outstanding for domestic properties owned by eac local authority at the latest available date, toget the percentage figure which their arrears represen authority's total rent roll and the number of tena arrears of more than four weeks.

Mr. Grist: The information requested on ren for 1986-87 is shown in the following table. Dat number of tenants with arrears of more than fou are not collected centrally.

	1986-87 (provis *Rent arrears*[1]
	£
Ogwr	538,105
Lliw Valley	168,587
Glyndwr	81,301
Arfon	125,498
Wrexham Maelor	271,190
Delyn	120,246
Llanelli	159,149
Preseli Pembs	116,034
Rhuddlan	46,281
Ynys Mon	114,600
Dinefwr	48,337
Monmouth	114,878
Alyn and Deeside	89,393
Vale of Glamorgan	127,300
Neath	101,779
Brecknock	51,213
Torfaen	260,961
Swansea	301,254
Taff Ely	148,158
Port Talbot	100,770
Rhondda	85,847
Colwyn	42,661
South Pembroke	46,429
Cardiff	363,385
Carmarthen	52,035
Aberconwy	45,381
Ceredigion	50,336
Newport	191,000
Merthyr Tydfil	91,063
Cynon Valley	71,870
Radnor	15,160
Dwyfor	11,741
Meirionnydd	19,992
Rhymney Valley	110,043
Islwyn	53,406
Blaenau Gwent	111,843
Montgomeryshire	n/a

[1] Current and former tenants.

Electorates

Mr. Simon Coombs: To ask the Secretary of Wales if he will list the Welsh counties in

percentage growth in electorate since 1982; and what has been the percentage growth and the actual figures in each case.

Mr. Peter Walker: Increases in local governm electorate by Welsh county since 1982 are given in following table:

	Electorate		Increase 1982-1987	
	1982	1987	Number	Per cent.
Powys	85,199	90,239	5,040	5·9
Gwynedd	176,523	184,828	8,305	4·7
Clwyd	299,115	312,686	13,571	4·5
Dyfed	256,289	265,497	9,208	3·6
Gwent	329,734	335,829	6,095	1·8
West Glamorgan	283,663	286,436	2,773	1·0
Mid Glamorgan	405,615	407,227	1,612	0·4
South Glamorgan	291,825	292,213	388	0·1

Source: Office of Population Censuses and Surveys.

Oswestry Orthopaedic Hospital

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what discussions he has had with the appropriate authorities with regard to the problems at the Robert Jones and Agnes Hunt orthopaedic hospital at Oswestry; and if he is satisfied that this hospital is at present being run in a way which meets the needs of patients from Wales who depend upon it.

Mr. Grist: Officials of the Department are in touch with appropriate health authorities about the problems at the Robert Jones and Agnes Hunt orthopaedic hospital. The current closures are of a temporary nature and hence a matter for the Shropshire health authority. Shropshire health authority has undertaken to consult the Department, Welsh health authorities and other Welsh interests about any proposals for substantial permanent variation in the service provided at the hospital.

Winget-type Houses

Mr. David Marshall: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will list in the *Official Report* the total numbers of Winget-type houses in each housing authority area in Wales where such houses exist.

Mr. Grist: We have no record of any Winget houses in Wales.

Ambulance Services

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he has any plans to intensify his Department's monitoring on the state of the ambulance services in each part of Wales; whether he will review the procedure used for these purposes; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Grist: Responsibility for the management and operation of the ambulance services in Wales is that of the district health authorities. I am satisfied with the Deparment's existing arrangements for issuing guidance and for monitoring its implementation.

Library Authority (Newport)

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales when he will announce a decision on Newport borough council's application of 1984 to be designated a library authority under the provisions of the Local Government Bill 1972.

Mr. Grist: I expect to be able to do so shortly.

Hospital Closure Procedure

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for Wal pursuant to his answer of 18 January on hospital clo procedure, he will now undertake to review consultative documents issued by Gwynedd he authority on the future of *(a)* Mudog memorial hosp *(b)* Caernarfon cottage hospital and *(c)* the care facil for the elderly in Llangefni, with a view to determi whether these documents are prejudicial to pr consultation; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Grist: If the hon. Gentleman is concerned al the adequacy of the Gwynedd health author consultation documents on the future of these he services he should in the first instance bring this to attention of the authority. If, following such an appro his concern about the documents persisted we woul prepared to consider his representations.

Greencroft Hostel, Aston

Mr. Barry Jones: To ask the Secretary of State Wales what representations he has received regarding implications of the closure of the Greencroft hostel, As Deeside, for the standard of living and opportunit enjoy communal social life of residents and their fami and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Grist: None. I refer the hon. Gentleman to answer I gave to him yesterday, at colum *821*, on subject.

Higher Education

Mr. Nicholas Bennett: To ask the Secretary of State Wales if he is able to announce his decisions on l authority higher education provision in 1988-89; and i will make a statement.

Mr. Peter W[illegible]er: Having consulted the Welsh J Education Committee and the Welsh Counties Commi I have decided that the advanced further educa quantum for 1988-89 should be set at £36·6 million. T represents a 7·3 per cent. increase between 1987-88 1988-89. I have decided that £400,000 of the quan should be used to fund the following selective initiati
Continuation of support provided in 1987-88 for development of in-service training courses to increase supply of Welsh medium secondary school teachers and the development of commercial activities and professi updating (PICKUP) courses.
Development of a manufacturing systems engineering de

course at the Polytechnic of Wales.
Development of an engineering access course at the Polytechnic of Wales.
Support for research activities at the North East Wales Institute of HE and the Polytechnic of Wales.

I have received advice from the Wales Advisory Body for Local Authority Higher Education on the planned disposition of academic provision and the number of student places on higher education courses in local authority colleges in Wales. The WAB proposals provide for a growth of 1 per cent. between estimated enrolments of 13,498 full-time equivalents in 1987-88 and target student numbers of 13,589 for 1988-89. The proposals provide for continued emphasis to be given to courses in science, engineering and other vocational disciplines; and for sub degree and part-time provision to be protected.

The WAB has also provided advice on how the AFE quantum, net of the £400,000 for selective initiatives, should be distributed between local authorities. The proposals for distributing the quantum are related to the proposals for target student numbers for 1988-89 by institution, mode of attendance and subject; and they allow additional funding for degree and post-graduate courses. WAB have recommended that Dyfed should continue to receive some cash protection for 1988-89 in respect of the College of Librarianship Wales. WAB has considered bids from institutions against the £400,000 set aside for selective initiatives and has provided advice on how this sum should be allocated.

I have decided to accept the WAB's advice on academic provision and student numbers, on the methodology for distributing the net quantum and on the distribution of the £400,000 for selective initiatives. The local education authorities have been informed of these decisions and of their individual allocations.

Copies of a note explaining the methodology by which the AFE quantum for 1988-89 is being distributed have been placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

Non-Civil Servant Advisers

Mr. Galbraith: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will list his non-civil servant advisers, giving their present main employment and their field of expertise.

Mr. Peter Walker *[holding answer 21 January 1988]:* I have no special adviser.

ATTORNEY-GENERAL

Council for Licensed Conveyancers

Mr. Sean Hughes: To ask the Attorney-General what have been the costs under convenient headings, and in total, of the Council for Licensed Conveyancers since its inception.

The Attorney-General: The expenses of the Council for Licensed Conveyancers for the 15 months from its inception to 31 March 1987 extracted from the audited accounts for that period are as follows:

	£
Members' fees	16,654
Staff salaries	55,163
Examination costs	13,669
Accommodation	12,668
Travelling and subsistence	9,162
Telephone, stationery, printing, etc.	
Audit and consultancy fees	
Sundry expenses	

Mr. Rick Gibson

Mr. Cummings: To ask the Attorney-G Director of Public Prosecutions will prosecu Gibson for using aborted freeze-dried foe artistic display; and if he will make a statem

The Attorney-General: The Metropolitan forwarded a report to the Crown Prosecu concerning an exhibition at the Young Gallery. The papers are currently under con

Anthony Cavendish

Mr. Campbell-Savours: To ask the Atto (1) what representations he received from *The* 16 January relating to its proposed publicati relating to Anthony Cavendish; and what made;

(2) why he refused to make available to newspaper a copy of the revised terms of t previously granted against both *The Obser Sunday Times* in relation to Anthony Caven

The Attorney-General: On Saturday 16 Treasurer Solicitor received the following re from *The Observer* newspaper.

(a) The newspaper asked whether the Go not accept that the order which the court h previous day against *The Sunday Times* appli *Observer* (*The Observer* having decided not t court on that day for a variation of the s made against it).

The Treasury Solicitor replied that the Go not so accept.

(b) The newspaper asked the Treas whether the Government would consent making the same variation of the order *Observer* as the one made in the case of *The S*

The Treasury Solicitor replied that the would so consent.

(c) Late in the afternoon the newspape copy of the order against *The Sunday Time*

The Treasury Solicitor replied that it was length (its annex is 62 pages) and he had letting *The Observer* have a copy that day t to press.

ENERGY

Sellafield (Safety)

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of Sta how many workers at the British N reprocessing plant at Sellafield have exceede radiation at which an investigation has to b whether any of them is entitled to apply for c what plans Her Majesty's Government ha the safety of such workers; and if he will mak

Mr. Michael Spicer: I have asked the chairman of British Nuclear Fuels plc to reply to the detailed questions raised by the hon. Member.

BNF plc, like any other licensed nuclear operator, must continue to meet the requirements of the independent Health and Safety Executive. Good progress has been made in meeting those requirements specified in HSE's initial audit report on the implementation of safety changes at Sellafield.

Windscale Fire

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy if he will make a statement on the implications for current nuclear policy of the new information released under the 30-year rule on the 1957 Windscale fire.

Mr. Michael Spicer: The latest release of records included no information on the causes or effects of the fire that was not already in the public domain.

Nuclear Power Stations

Mr. David Nicholson: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what transmission line developments are to be made in association with the proposed Hinkley C and Hinkley D station developments; and what visual impact these would have.

Mr. Michael Spicer: An application has been received from the CEGB for the Secretary of State's consent under paragraph 10(*b*) of the schedule to the Electric Lighting (Clauses) Act 1899 for minor diversion of the transmission line entries to Hinkley point. The local planning authorities have objected to the proposal and it will therefore be necessary to hold a public inquiry into the matter.

Mr. David Nicholson: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy whether he has received an application for a pressurised water reactor power station at Helbury, Dorset.

Mr. Michael Spicer: No.

Mr. David Nicholson: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what are the estimates of radioactive emissions from *(a)* pressurised water reactors *(b)* advanced gas cooled reactors and *(c)* Magnox reactors.

Mr. Michael Spicer: Details of radioactive emissions from nuclear power stations are published by licensed operators as follows:

CEGB: "Report on Radioactive Discharges, Associated Environmental Monitoring and Personal Radiation Doses Resulting from Operation of CEGB Nuclear Sites."
BNF plc: "Annual Report on Radioactive Discharges and Monitoring of the Environment."

I am arranging for a copy of the CEGB report to be placed in the Library of the House. A copy of the BNF report is already in the Library.

Mr. David Nicholson: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy if he will give the estimated numbers of households not connected to the electricity grid in *(a)* England, *(b)* Scotland and *(c)* Wales; what are the comparable figures in (i) 1979 and (ii) 1973; and what measures exist to enable households to become connected to the grid.

Mr. Michael Spicer: The Electricity Council advises me that the electricity supply industry does not have these figures. Electricity boards are required to make available to premises situated within 50 yd of a distribution main. Beyond this distance boards can arrange connection for an appropriate payment. In some circumstances it is possible to requisition a board to provide a distribution main to enable connection to be made.

Energy Efficiency Office

Mr. Andrew MacKay: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy if he is in a position to announce his decision on the future role of the Energy Efficiency Office.

Mr. Peter Morrison: On 25 September I said that I intended to take stock of the Energy Efficiency Office programmes, to assess their cost-effectiveness, their continuing relevance and to consider the strategic objectives for the future. This I have now done, and conclude that there is a continuing role for the EEO to fund programmes, especially in the industrial and commercial sectors, continue to benefit the United Kingdom by improving energy efficiency, which is reflected in both export competitiveness and profits. In the domestic sector the EEO's activities promote the economic and energy efficient construction, insulation, heating and use of the nation's housing stock. Accordingly, I plan no change in the EEO's 1988-89 budget of £20·9 million.

However, general awareness of the case for energy efficiency is now well established and I have therefore asked the EEO to target its work in the most economically attractive areas. Moreover, I have also asked the EEO to examine how the contribution from those who benefit from the office's industrial and commercial programmes could be increased, including the feasibility of applying those programmes where appropriate to recover more of their costs, and the extent to which programmes could be taken over for operation by the private sector. Developments on both counts will be taken into account when the 1989-90 budget is finalised and I am committed to extending the present level of activity beyond 1988-89.

The EEO will shortly begin consultations with those concerned and I hope to announce the result of this review of its work before the summer recess.

Radiation (Research Study)

Mr. Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what evaluation he proposes to make of the implications of the radiation effects research foundation study report at the end of 1987 with particular reference to the implications for *(a)* the economics of nuclear power programme in the United Kingdom and *(b)* standards of radiological protection for workers in the United Kingdom nuclear industry.

Mr. Michael Spicer: The study by the Radiation Effects Research Foundation — "The Effect of Changing Dosimetry on Cancer Mortality Risk Estimates for Hiroshima Atomic Bomb Survivors"—was taken fully into account by the National Radiological Protection Board (NRPB) when issuing its GS-9 document, "Interim Guidance on the Implications of Recent Revisions of Risk Estimates and the ICRP 1987 Como Statement".

The implications of the NRPB's interim guidance statement are being considered by a working group which is advising the Health and Safety Commission.

Trawsfynydd Power Station

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy whether he has had any discussions with *(a)* the Central Electricity Generating Board and *(b)* the Nuclear Installations Inspectorate with regard to the implications for emergency services and health services in Wales of the proposed emergency shutdown experiment at the Trawsfynydd nuclear power station scheduled for 12 February; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Michael Spicer: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given to the right hon. Member for Strangford (Mr. Taylor) on Thursday 21 January 1988 at column *856*.

SOCIAL SERVICES

London Lighthouse

Sir George Young: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what financial assistance he has given to London Lighthouse.

Mr. Newton: The Government intend to make a further grant of £750,000 towards the capital costs of London Lighthouse the West London hospice and community support centre for people with AIDS.

The London Lighthouse centre will provide much-needed community support and hospice care for people with AIDS. The Lighthouse has caught the imagination of many people, and has done extremely well to attract funds from so many sources.

The Government have already approved a grant of £500,000 towards the costs of the premises. This additional £750,000 will bring the total Government contribution to £1·25 million. This should enable London Lighthouse to open on time with its finances on a firm footing.

NHS Statistics

Mr. Robert B. Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) if he will set out a table for England and Wales showing for *(a)* 1961 and *(b)* the most recent available date (i) numbers employed in the National Health Service and (ii) the number of hospital beds available to the general public;

(2) if he will set out a table showing the numbers employed in the National Health Service in England and Wales in *(a)* 1961 and *(b)* the most recent available date; and if he will list the population of England and Wales at the same dates.

Mr. Newton: The available information for England is given in the table. Information for Wales is a matter for my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Wales.

	[1]*1971*	*1986*
NHS directly employed staff 30 September (WTE)[2] [3]	629,500	801,600
Mid-year population (thousands)	46,131	47,255
Average daily available beds[4]	419,600	315,700

[1] 1971 is the earliest year for which staffing, population and bed information is available in England.
[2] The staffing figures for 1971 are not comparable with 1986 due to NHS reorganisation.
[3] Includes medical and dental locums and nursing and midwifery agency staff. Figures independently rounded to nearest 100 WTE.
[4] Figures are rounded to nearest one hundred.

Mentally Ill People

Mr. Cummings: To ask the Secretary o Services how many mentally ill people re as in-patients and out-patients in the authority area during the years 1985-86, to date.

Mrs. Currie: I regret that I am unable Member the exact information he requi on numbers of mentally ill people receiv not centrally collected.

The available information on admissi care and attendances at out-patient clinic table. It is possible for a person to be adr once in one year or to attend an out-pati times. Central records cannot identify attendances for one person.

Up until the end of 1986 information calendar year. No information is availab

Durham Health Authority: Mental illness ho

Admissions to mental illness hospitals and units	
Out patient attendances[1] (old and new patients) at mental illness clinics	

[1] Clinics conducted anywhere by hospital psyc

Geriatric Patients

Mr. Cummings: To ask the Secretary Services how many geriatric patients th Sunderland, Durham and Hartlepool hea each of the last three years.

Mrs. Currie: The requested informati table:

Geriatric patients treated in NHS hospitals in t Health Authorities

	19
Sunderland District Health Authority	
In-patient cases treated	4,7
Day cases	
New out-patients	9
New Regular day patients	2
Total regular day patients	6,9
Durham District Health Authority	
In-patient cases treated	6
Day cases	
New out-patients	1
New regular day patients	
Total regular day patients	2,3
Hartlepool District Health Authority	
In-patient cases treated	8
Day cases	
New out-patients	
New regular day patients	2
Total regular day patients	6,5

Hospital Construction (Spe

Mr. David Nicholson: To ask the Sec Social Services what was the total construction of new hospitals in England 1973.

Mrs. Currie: Following is the information available centrally for the years since National Health Service reorganisation (1 April 1974):

Capital expenditure on new and replacement hospitals and existing hospitals undergoing virtual reconstruction

	£000
1974-75	112,855
1975-76	139,949
1976-77	149,882
1977-78	136,840
1978-79	124,420
1979-80	125,615
1980-81	170,001
1981-82	209,444
1982-83	198,318
1983-84	184,113
1984-85	491,557
1985-86	224,896
1986-87	245,094

Source: Annual summarised accounts of health a England.

These figures do not take account of capital in smaller health building schemes in connecti upgrading and refurbishment of existing National Health Service capital expenditure ha in real terms in each year since 1979.

Electorates

Mr. Simon Coombs: To ask the Secretary Social Services if he will list the shire counti boroughs and metropolitan boroughs in ranking order according to the degree by electorates vary from the nationally average appropriate to the number of parliamentary co within them.

Mrs. Currie: The information requested is

Area	1987 Electorate	Average Electorate per Constituency	
		Number	Percentage difference from national average
England	36,393,203	69,585	
Isle of Wight	99,760	99,760	43·4
Wiltshire	418,708	83,742	20·3
Gloucestershire	404,523	80,905	16·3
Dudley	238,017	79,339	14·0
Solihull	158,291	79,146	13·7
Cambridgeshire	474,083	79,014	13·6
West Sussex	552,766	78,967	13·5
Haringey	157,835	78,918	13·4
Berkshire	550,173	78,596	12·9
Harrow	156,613	78,307	12·5
Suffolk	469,349	78,225	12·4
Hampshire	1,171,949	78,130	12·3
North Yorkshire	542,206	77,458	11·3
Hounslow	154,370	77,185	10·9
Sunderland	231,086	77,029	10·7
Buckinghamshire	461,401	76,900	10·5
Bedfordshire	383,437	76,687	10·2
Sefton	229,968	76,656	10·2
North Tyneside	152,645	76,323	9·7
Hertfordshire	753,542	75,354	8·3
Shropshire	300,615	75,154	8·0
Warwickshire	374,484	74,897	7·6
Calderdale	148,439	74,220	6·7
Leicestershire	667,016	74,113	6·5
Essex	1,181,599	73,850	6·1
Cheshire	734,959	73,496	5·6
Humberside	661,392	73,488	5·6
Doncaster	219,863	73,283	5·3
Dorset	512,764	73,252	5·3
Avon	730,224	73,022	4·9
Surrey	802,181	72,926	4·8
Hereford and Worcester	510,121	72,874	4·7
Kent	1,092,732	72,849	4·7
Lincolnshire	506,890	72,413	4·1
Staffordshire	791,913	71,992	3·5
Ealing	215,596	71,865	3·3
Kirklees	285,476	71,369	2·6
Norfolk	569,401	71,175	2·3
Wigan	234,836	71,162	2·3
Cornwall and Isle of Scilly	355,134	71,027	2·1
St. Helens	141,878	70,939	1·9
Derbyshire	850,236	70,853	1·8
Nottinghamshire	776,815	70,620	1·5
Somerset	352,302	70,460	1·3
Cleveland	422,661	70,444	1·2
Northamptonshire	422,587	70,431	1·2
Sheffield	421,939	70,323	1·1
Devon	771,876	70,171	0·8

Area	1987 Electorate	Average Electorate per Constituency	
		Number	Percen difference national ave
Bradford	346,000	69,200	
Hackney	138,190	69,096	
Oxfordshire	412,914	68,819	
Enfield	204,166	68,055	
Bury	134,615	67,308	
Camden	134,493	67,247	
Sutton	134,365	67,183	
Durham	468,998	67,000	
Stockport	227,629	66,950	
Walsall	199,949	66,650	
Lancashire	1,065,589	66,599	
Wandsworth	199,718	66,573	
Salford	179,445	66,461	
Bolton	197,674	65,891	
Gateshead	163,884	65,554	
Leeds	542,913	65,411	
Wirral	261,347	65,387	
Rotherham	194,250	64,750	
Wakefield	238,699	64,513	
Rochdale	154,025	64,177	
Newcastle upon Tyne	224,530	64,151	
Tameside	166,589	64,073	
Trafford	172,743	63,979	
Oldham	165,901	63,808	
Merton	127,576	63,788	
Cumbria	381,759	63,627	
Wolverhampton	189,944	63,315	
Manchester	334,959	63,200	
Brent	188,259	62,753	
Birmingham	752,719	62,727	
Liverpool	375,803	62,634	
South Tyneside	124,966	62,483	
Havering	186,926	62,309	
East Sussex	555,401	61,711	
Lambeth	184,464	61,488	
Croydon	243,150	60,788	
Lewisham	182,279	60,760	
Richmond upon Thames	120,477	60,239	
Coventry	240,834	60,209	
Knowsley	120,039	60,020	
Hillingdon	179,744	59,915	
Redbridge	178,401	59,467	
Bromley	237,293	59,323	
Northumberland	235,174	58,794	
Islington	117,496	58,748	
Cities of London and Westminster	117,157	58,579	
Sandwell	233,303	58,326	
Tower Hamlets	115,487	57,744	
Barnsley	172,600	57,533	
Barnet	230,035	57,514	
Southwark	172,186	57,395	
Barking and Dagenham	114,486	57,243	
Bexley	171,654	57,218	
Waltham Forest	164,902	54,967	
Greenwich	164,657	54,886	
Newham	160,106	53,369	
Hammersmith and Fulham	103,464	51,732	
Kingston upon Thames	101,253	50,627	
Kensington and Chelsea	98,201	49,100	

Mr. Simon Coombs: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will list the 30 English non-metropolitan districts which have shown the greatest percentage growth in their electorate has been the percentage growth and case.

Mrs. Currie: The information req

Non-Metropolitan County District (ranked by percentage growth)	Total electors 1982 Register	1987 Register	Difference	Percentage growth
Milton Keynes	90,251	114,252	24,001	26·6
Wokingham	83,321	101,633	18,312	22·0
Crawley	56,283	66,095	9,812	17·4
East Hertfordshire	79,942	89,722	9,780	12·2
Huntingdonshire	86,175	96,591	10,416	12·1
Peterborough	96,370	107,949	11,579	12·0
Wimborne	56,060	62,712	6,652	11·9
Redditch	48,423	54,094	5,671	11·7
Selby	60,434	67,394	6,960	11·5
Hart	54,406	60,260	5,854	10·8
West Oxfordshire	58,595	64,822	6,227	10·6
Fareham	66,633	73,706	7,073	10·6
Maldon	36,013	39,817	3,804	10·6
South Staffordshire	72,687	80,324	7,637	10·5
New Forest	114,752	126,690	11,938	10·4
Test Valley	67,263	74,253	6,990	10·4
South Cambridgeshire	79,331	87,571	8,240	10·4
Bracknell	60,523	66,764	6,241	10·3
Caradon	51,991	57,345	5,354	10·3
Basingstoke and Deane	95,287	104,967	9,680	10·2
Thamesdown	113,080	124,508	11,428	10·1
East Hampshire	67,644	74,463	6,819	10·1
Northampton	117,467	129,195	11,728	10·0
Richmondshire	28,268	31,067	2,799	9·9
North Cornwall	50,408	55,370	4,962	9·8
Daventry	42,647	46,786	4,139	9·7
Aylesbury Vale	96,180	105,466	9,286	9·7
Lewes	63,017	69,080	6,063	9·6
Chelmsford	105,314	115,438	10,124	9·6
Northavon	86,660	94,872	8,212	9·5

Cold-related Deaths

Mr Cummings: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what were the numbers by deaths by hypothermia and other cold-related complaints in the Seaham and Peterlee areas of his Department.

Mrs. Currie: The number of mentions of hypothermia on death certificates, irrespective of whether or not it was the underlying cause of death, registered for usual residents of Easington county district was one in 1986, which is the latest full year for which data are available.

Hospital Beds

Rev. Martin Smyth: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if his Department will encourage health authorities to conduct audits of beds available at 12 noon on each day; what information he has as to the likely information to be gained from this; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Currie: No. It is for health authorities to decide how best to monitor available beds each day. I do not consider any useful additional information would be obtained from specifying the time at which this should be done.

Social Fund Officers

Rev. Martin Smyth: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what grade social fund officers will be given within his Department; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Portillo: Social fund officers will be employed from existing grades of DHSS staff. They will be staff at the local officer 1 grade, higher executive officer grade and local office managers. The local officer 1 grade is the main grade at which decisions on applications to will be made. There will in addition b administrative support provided by officers and administration assistants.

Genetic Metabolic Diseases

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of S Services what representations he has receiv for recognition of a supraregional servi metabolic diseases; what is the Governmen regard to the funding of the work undert hospital after next April; and if he will mak

Mrs. Currie: A number of representati made concerning the application for designation of the services for genetic met at Guy's hospital. An application was con Supraregional Services Advisory Group in hon. Friend accepted the advice of the advis the service did not meet the criteria for designation.

A further application for designation o will be considered by the advisory group t

The funding of the service continues to the health authority.

Kidney Dialysis

Mr. Fearn: To ask the Secretary of S Services if he has any plans to make extra for kidney dialysis in 1988-89 in the Birm area; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Currie: Decisions on the levels of seven renal units in the west midlands are a West Midlands regional health author

Member may therefore wish to write to the chairman of that authority for further information. For our part we will be allocating some £1·21 billion to the west midlands health region in 1988-89 which represents a 6·7 per cent. increase over the current year.

Limited List Prescribing

Mrs. Ann Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what estimates he has made of the savings to his Department by the introduction of the restricted list of medicines that can be prescribed by general practitioners under the National Health Service.

Mr. Newton: In 1985-86 the selected list scheme saved £75 million on the drugs bill. It is difficult to make meaningful estimates for subsequent years, but we have no reason to doubt that significant savings continue to be made.

Oxford Regional Health Authority

Dr. Glyn: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what is the annual administrative cost of the Oxford regional health authority, for the most recent year for which figures are available.

Mr. Newton: I refer my hon. Friend to my reply to my hon. Friend the Member for Wokingham (Mr. Redwood) on 15 December at columns *493-95*.

Leicestershire FPC

Mr. Latham: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will set out in the *Official Report* in tabular form the resources made available for the last two financial years, and planned for the next financial year, to the Leicestershire family practitioner committee for the discharge of its functions.

Mr. Newton: The financial allocations made to cover administration costs incurred by the Leicestershire family practitioner committee were £810,100 in 1986-87 and, to date, £766,500 in 1987-88. The former figure includes non-recurring expenditure relating to a move to new premises, and the latter reflects the value of efficiency savings after the installation of computer facilities. The family practitioner committee has been informed of our willingness to increase this year's allocation by about £27,000.

Guardians Ad Litem

Mr. Cryer: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what proportion of the rate support grant allocated for the current year to Leeds, Calderdale and Bradford was to allow for increased expenditure on guardians ad litem; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Currie: Rate support grant is not paid in support of specified individual local authority services. Each authority is free to determine its own priorities between and within services. On provision for guardians ad litem, the position remains as set out in my letter of 1 December 1987 to the chairman of the City of Bradford metropolitan council, a copy of which was sent to the hon. Member.

Hospitals (Bradford)

Mr. Cryer: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what are the hospitals and services proposed by Bradford health authority for closure or reduction in the Bradford area; what representations have been made by the authority chairman for increased funding; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Currie: Bradford health authority is responsible for managing services in Bradford and I suggest that the hon. Member approach the chairman for details of any planned changes. I have received no representation about funding from the Bradford health authority chairman.

Special Payments

Mr. Goodlad: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services, further to the statement made on 18 December 1987 about special payments to certain social security recipients following the discovery of the error in the calculation of the retail price index, what plans he has to compensate people who retire or become widowed between the time the special payments are made, in the first week of February and April 1989.

Mr. Scott: In the case of individuals whose benefits become payable after the special payments are made in the first week in February, we have decided not only to compensate those who retire or become widowed, but to make payments to broadly the same additional groups as received the £8/£5 special payments. The only exceptions will be those who have not lost as a result of the error in the retail prices index: married women with retirement pensions based on their husbands' national insurance records, and those people who receive invalid care allowance, severe disablement allowance or the lower rate of attendance allowance.

Pensioners and others who enter after the first week in February one of the groups covered by the £8 special payments will receive a special payment of £5·50. In respect of mobility allowance, the special payment will be £3. We will aim to make these payments as soon as practicable after individuals come on to benefit.

There will be a cut-off point beyond which individuals entering the affected groups will not be eligible to receive special payments. This point will be the benefit week which ends on 2 October.

Special arrangements will be made to give extra compensation to severely disabled war and industrially injured pensioners who will lose significantly more than other groups.

AIDS

Mr. Robert B. Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services when he will respond to the report by the Select Committee on social services problems associated with AIDS.

Mr. Moore: I have today presented to the House the Government's observations on the report from the Social Services Committee on problems associated with AIDS. The committee's report provides a valuable focus on the issues raised by HIV infection and AIDS, and the Government's response sets out the strategy which they have adopted to meet the challenge of AIDS.

DEFENCE

UK-USA (Special Arrangements)

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will provide the dates of all agreements relevant to his Department and United Kingdom forces between the United Kingdom and the United States of America relating to special arrangements.

Mr. Ian Stewart: I refer the hon. Member to the lists of bilateral agreements between the United Kingdom and United States Governments in the answers given by my right hon. Friend the Member for Tonbridge and Malling (Mr. Stanley) to the hon. Member for Cynon Valley (Mrs. Clwyd) on 7 May 1987 at columns *532-34*, and to my reply to him on 2 December 1987 at column *593* about the special arrangements covering nuclear accident response issues, whose details remain classified.

Military Uniforms (Unauthorised Supply)

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) if he will introduce legislation to provide controls over the unauthorised supply of British armed forces military uniforms by private arms dealers; and if he will make a statement;

(2) what evidence he has of the incidence of the unauthorised supply of British Army uniforms by private arms dealers; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Sainsbury: I will write to the hon. Member.

National Trust Land

Mr. Ron Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what response he has received from the National Trust to his request for permission to erect military installations on National Trust land in Wales; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Freeman: The MOD approached the National Trust last year in relation to two projects connected with the upgrading of tracking and safety facilities for the Royal Aircraft Establishment Aberporth range in Cardigan bay. One project requires the provision of a mast and instrumentation system to cover the northern area of the range and, for this purpose, the MOD sought to lease a small area of National Trust land at Mynydd Rhiw. The second project involves the modernisation of a number of existing tracking stations around the bay. The MOD approached the National Trust about improvements to the access to two of these sites which adjoin National Trust land and about safety aspects of a third site. The National Trust turned down the Ministry's proposals just before Christmas and we are now considering this in relation to our plans for the development of the range.

SS Castillion

Mr. Ieuan Wyn Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what further steps his Department will take to ensure that all explosives are removed from the SS Castillion which sank off Ynys Môn in 1942; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Freeman: The practicalities of resuming the clearance task later this year are being considered.

Trident

Mr. Skinner: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what is his latest estimate for the cost of Trident.

Mr. Sainsbury: I refer to the answer given by my right hon. Friend on 21 January.

Employment (Suppliers)

Mr. Thurnham: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what is the latest estimate of those directly and indirectly employed in the United Kingdom providing goods and services to his Department.

Mr. Sainsbury: The latest figures available are for 1985-86, when it was estimated that 285,000 people were directly and 230,000 indirectly employed in United Kingdom industry providing goods and services to the Ministry of Defence. Estimates for 1986-87 should be available in the next two months.

Nerve Gases

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what complaints or representations he has received from service men or women or their representatives about ill effects following the testing of nerve gases or other chemicals upon them; whether any compensation has been paid or is being considered; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Sainsbury: In the last 10 years there have been 15 inquiries from service men or women or their representatives concerning the testing of nerve gases or other chemicals upon them, none of which have resulted in any claims being made.

Falkland Islands

Mr. Andrew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what was the cost of the recent non-stop flight from Britain to the Falkland Islands.

Mr. Ian Stewart: As part of an operational training exercise, an RAF VC10 flew non-stop from RAF Brize Norton to the Falkland Islands, leaving on 19 December 1987, and then returned non-stop. The aircraft was air-to-air refuelled both southbound and northbound. The direct operating cost was £140,000, all of which fell within the budget for the agreed flying activity levels for the RAF.

Chemical Weapons

Mr. Fearn: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what research his Department has carried out into verification of chemical weaponry.

Mr. Ian Stewart: Research is carried out at the chemical defence establishment into the detection and identification of chemical warfare agents. This work is part of the United Kingdom's programme to provide effective measures of protection for United Kingdom forces, and is also relevant to the development of methods and procedures to provide effective verification of a CW ban. In addition, the United Kingdom has contributed significantly to the thinking of the conference on disarmament on verification, for example, in the development of the concept of challenge inspection.

NATO Nuclear Planning Group

Mr. Wallace: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what matters he intends to raise at the next North Atlantic Treaty Organisation nuclear planning group meeting.

Mr. Ian Stewart: It would not be approprate for me to say; the details of nuclear planning group discussions are confidential.

China

Mr. Adley: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he has any plans to meet his counterpart from the People's Republic of China; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Ian Stewart; Defence relations between the United Kingdom and the People's Republic of China are good. My right hon. Friend does not, however, have any immediate plans to meet Mr. Zhang Aiping.

Low-Flying Aircraft

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what facilities are provided to United States Army helicopter units based in the Federal Republic of Germany to conduct low-level pilot qualification exercises in the United Kingdom; on how many occasions such facilities have been utilised; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Freeman: The United Kingdom provides facilities for training by helicopter aircrew of the United States in a variety of ways, including, on occasion, the use of the United Kingdom low-flying system for training purposes by aircrew based in the Federal Republic of Germany. Detailed records of such usage are not maintained, but my Department is not aware of any occasion during 1987 when such usage included low-level pilot qualification exercises.

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) what procedures exist to permit military aircrew to report their own breaches of low-flying regulations to the relevant authorities;

(2) how many breaches of low-flying regulations were reported to the relevant authorities by the aircrew involved in 1986 and 1987.

Mr. Freeman: It is standard procedure for aircrew to debrief, normally to their authorising officer, on all aspects of a training sortie in order to confirm that the requirements of a sortie have been met. The debrief provides the opportunity for the aircrew to report any difficulties encountered during the sortie, including breaches of low-flying regulations. If a breach of the regulations were sufficiently serious it would be reported to relevant authorities, otherwise the matter would be dealt with at station level. Central records of breaches reported during the debrief sessions are not held.

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many confirmed breaches of low flying regulations in each year since 1974 were caused by negligence on the part of aircrew.

Mr. Freeman: The information requested cannot be provided without disproportionate effort.

Holsworthy (Exercises)

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Defenc (1) what minimum separation distance was authorised fo fixed wing aircraft participation in the exercise held in th vicinity of Holsworthy, Devon, on 11 and 12 July 1987 (2) what minimum separation distance was authorised fo fixed wing aircraft participating in the no light exercis held in the vicinity of Perranporth and Mullion, Cornwal from 10 to 16 October 1987.

Mr. Freeman: The minimum separation distanc authorised was 250 ft.

Tactical Fighter Exercise

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Defenc if a tactical fighter meet exercise is to be held in the Unite Kingdom in the current year; and if he will make statement.

Mr. Freeman: No such exercise is planned.

Decimomannu Range, Sardinia

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Defenc what is the minimum height at which Royal Air Forc aircraft are permitted to fly over land at the Decimomann range in Sardinia.

Mr. Freeman: RAF aircraft on temporary detachmen to Decimomannu in Sardinia for training purposes mak use of the air to ground range at Capo della Frasca. It i standard procedure that, in the course of that training RAF aircraft on the range are not authorised to fly belo 85 ft above ground level.

Copper Flag Exercises

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Defenc if he will list Royal Air Force participation in Copper Fla exercises in the United States since 1977, giving th number and type of aircraft involved and dates of th exercise on each occasion.

Mr. Freeman: The Royal Air Force has participate once in a Copper Flag exercise, which took place from 1 to 25 July 1986. Eight Phantom aircraft were involved.

Nuclear Weapon Tests

Mr. Churchill: To ask the Secretary of State for Defenc pursuant to the reply to the hon. Member for Davyhulm of 18 January, when he received the initial report of th National Radiological Protection Board into the mortalit and cancer incidence in the United Kingdom participant in the United Kingdom atmospheric nuclear weapon test and experimental programmes.

Mr. Sainsbury: My hon. Friend is presumably referrin to a preliminary draft of the report which the NRPB plan to publish towards the end of this month. This draft wa sent to the Department and others in late December fo comment on factual accuracy.

Bates Project

Mr. Campbell-Savours: To ask the Secretary of Stat for Defence whether the contractor providing software fo the Bates project has been changed since the contract wa originally let in 1981.

Mr. Sainsbury: Bates as a project has always been managed on a prime contractor basis with numerous subcontracts for various elements. Marconi Command and Control Systems (MCCS) employed subcontractors on the development of the software. However, since 1985 MCCS has increasingly taken on this work itself.

RAVC, Melton Mowbray

Mr. Campbell-Savours: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether horses in the ownership or control of the Royal Army Veterinary Corps at Melton Mowbray are used for foxhunting purposes.

Mr. Freeman: Seven horses held on the strength of the RAVC centre, Melton Mowbray, have been used in fox hunts this season.

M16 and SA 80 Rifles

Mr. Campbell-Savours: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what considerations other than price influence the Government decisions on the procurement of either M16 or SA 80 rifles.

Mr. Sainsbury: Whilst price is of major importance in any value-for-money assessment, the Department also makes an analysis in detail of the performance characteristics of alternative weapons against the user's requirements before any decision is taken on a particular purchase.

DROPS

Sir Ian Gilmour: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what criteria have been used in the course of demountable rack off-loading pick-up systems/RTE procurements *(a)* for deciding whether to pursue trial equipments in preference to off-the-shelf equipments and *(b)* in deciding to whom to permit participation in the second round of procurement trials; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Sainsbury *[holding answer 11 January 1988]:* Following the initial DROPS evaluation trials in 1984-85, it was decided that the Department's production requirement for DROPS RTE equipment should be the subject of a full open competition to determine best value for money. As a consequence, the contract was awarded to Arbau Klaus in November 1987. Further RTE trials will be limited to pre-production evaluation and validation.

Sir Ian Gilmour: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) what respective numbers of the two types of demountable rack off-loading pick-up system trailer are now envisaged; what factors persuaded him of the advantages of a proliferation of types; to what extent the latter procurement is *(a)* to meet a new requirement not foreseen in 1982 and *(b)* to fulfil a role the previously selected trailers have proved unable to fulfil by virtue of not being manoeuvrable or operable by one man; and if he will make a statement;

(2) what recent announcements he has made to industry on forthcoming competition for a further substantial procurement of demountable rack off-loading pick-up system trailers; what will the relationship of such procurement be to the original 1982 demountable rack off-loading pick-up low mobility requirements in respect of manoeuvrability and one-man operation; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Sainsbury *[holding answer 11 January 1988]:* As a result of the 1982-83 DROPS competition and subsequent trials, an order is already in hand to provide 295 trailers for the low mobility roles and requirements for DROPS operation in rear zones. A requirement for some 209 trailers has since been identified for the improved low mobility roles specific to DROPS support of the multi-launch rocket system. In addition to their timings the trailer requirements are distinct in calling for equipment of significantly different performance characteristics. No question of proliferation thus arises. The MLRS requirements were announced in the "Contracts Bulletin" on 28 October 1987 and were presented to interested firms at a conference on 29 November 1987. Tender invitations are now in the process of preparation.

Sir Ian Gilmour: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence which companies and equipment were selected in 1983 for rail transfer equipment trials following the original demountable rack off-loading pick-up system/CLOTS submissions from industry; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Sainsbury *[holding answer 11 January 1988]:* Ralph Blatchford and Co Ltd and EKA Ltd.

Sir Ian Gilmour: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether the off-the-shelf German rail transfer equipment now ordered meets the original specification published in the 1982 demountable rack off-loading pick-up system/CLOTS tender documents; whether he has changed the specifications required; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Sainsbury *[holding answer 11 January 1988]:* The original performance requirements specified have not changed in significant regards although the engineering specifications for the supply of equipment are now more refined and detailed. The ordered equipments meet all essential requirements other than in regard to minimum clearance of overhead power cables and full ability to operate at different step heights.

Sir Ian Gilmour: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how much money has been spent on equipment, development and trials of the aborted design of rail transfer equipment for demountable rack off-loading pick-up systems; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Sainsbury *[holding answer 11 January 1988]:* Costs of providing and supporting RTE equipment for the 1984-85 DROPS trials were some £500,000. Trials costs cannot be separately identified.

Sir Ian Gilmour: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what decision he has reached on further use of the rail transfer equipment for demountable rack off-loading pick-up system flatracks selected in 1983 for trials; what consideration is being given to off-the-shelf German equipment used by the Army for concept trials in 1979-80; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Sainsbury: No final decision has been reached on the further use or disposal of the RTE trials equipment

evaluated in 1984-85. The Department is currently giving no procurement consideration to German equipment used in concept trials in 1979-80.

Sir Ian Gilmour: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) what estimate he has made of the likely costs resulting from the failure of the medium mobility demountable rack off-loading pick-up system truck to meet its specifications; and by whom these costs will ultimately be borne; and if he will make a statement;

(2) what effect the problems of the medium mobility demountable rack off-loading pick-up system truck will have on the in-service date of this equipment; and if he will make a statement;

(3) if redesign will be required to remedy serious instability of the medium mobility demountable rack off-loading pick-up system truck; and if he will make a statement;

(4) if he will make a statement on the failure of trials involving a cross-country demountable rack off-loading pick-up system truck turning over on hard level ground; whether any injuries resulted from this failure; and if he will make a statement;

(5) if he will provide further details on the failure of the demountable rack off-loading pick-up systems truck during trials at the Royal Armament Research and Development Establishment; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Sainsbury *[holding answer 11 January 1988]:* In the course of handling trials on 17 November at RARDE Chertsey a fully loaded medium mobility DROPS pre-production validation vehicle toppled over on to its side whilst executing a figure of eight manoeuvre on the slip bed, causing slight leg injuries to its civilian driver. The vehicle is one of 12 medium mobility and seven improved mobility vehicles commissioned for the trials: three medium mobility vehicles had previously completed the manoeuvre without mishap. Further examinations by the Department's project and engineering staff in association with the main contractor for the vehicles have indicated that the incident resulted from the fitting of a larger pattern of road wheel to provide enhanced off-road mobility in the vehicle for validation purposes.

In the normal way the trials experience is to result in a number of detailed modifications involving the fitting of smaller wheels and other minor engineering changes. Accurate estimates are not yet available but the Department's modification costs are not expected to be substantial and will be contained within the approved programme limits. Major redesign work will not be involved and the vehicles are continuing to undergo their validation trials. The incident is not expected to have any major adverse affect upon the continuation of the DROPS programme or the in-service date of the vehicles.

Sir Ian Gilmour: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if, in view of the closure of Scamell's plant at Watford and the departure of Multilift's chief design engineer, he is satisfied that sufficient design expertise will continue to be available to ensure that the redesign of the demountable rack off-loading pick-up system trucks will be successful; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Sainsbury *[holding answer 11 January 1988]:* There is no requirement to redesign DROPS equipment. Therefore, the question does not arise.

Sir Ian Gilmour: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what lessons have been learnt from the procurement of DROPS; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Sainsbury *[holding answer 11 January 1988]:* DROPS procurement is still proceeding and will not be complete for some years. None the less the programme has demonstrated how the widest possible competitive approach to industry based upon a performance specification can achieve real value for money solutions and at the same time avoid unnecessary research and development costs for the taxpayer. It has also demonstrated the importance of full internal recording of all procurement assessment considerations and processes.

TRANSPORT

A20 (Improvements)

Mr. Higgins: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what criteria were used in deciding to impose a 50 mph speed limit on the latest major A20 road improvements; and what discussions he has had with the police regarding the resources necessary to enforce this.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: The first two kilometres of the recently completed improvement to the A20 Sidcup bypass have a speed limit of 70 mph. The 50 mph speed limit on the urban section of the bypass was imposed to increase safety through the interchanges at Crittal's corner and Frognall corner and to reduce the speed of traffic approaching the sharp bend at Kemnal corner which has a speed limit of 40 mph.

Discussions were held with the police before the speed limits were imposed. I understand that they have the necessary resources to enforce them.

Motorways (Hunting)

Mr. Tony Lloyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if, pursuant to his answer of 14 January, *Official Report*, column *360*, relating to hunting adjacent to motorways, he has received any response from the Fell Hounds Association; and if he will place relevant papers in the Library.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: No.

Early-morning Flight

Mr. Higgins: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what aircraft passed over central London at 5.25 am on Sunday 17 January en route for Heathrow; what height it was flying; what was the maximum height at which it could have flown while still landing at Heathrow safely; and if he will, following his review of aircraft noise, ban such flights in future.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: The aircraft was a Gulf Air Tristar.

I shall draw the request for height information to the attention of the chairman of the Civil Aviation Authority and I shall ask him to write to my right hon. Friend.

We are still considering the responses to the proposals for future night restrictions at Heathrow which my noble Friend has discussed with the right hon. Member. The consultation document made it clear that we do not propose to ban flights arriving at Heathrow at this hour but we shall continue to restrict the total numbers of night movements.

Park and Ride (Cambridge)

Mr. Chris Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will indicate the grounds on which his Department has refused to accept for transport supplementary grant in 1988-89 the Cambridge park and ride scheme proposed by Cambridgeshire county council and Cambridge city council; what alternative proposals for relieving congestion will attract support from his Department; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: TSG is intended to support capital improvements and traffic management measures on local roads which carry substantial flows of longer distance through traffic. The benefits from a park-and-ride scheme would be local in character. The scheme did not satisfy the criteria for TSG which are set out in the Department's circular 1/87; there is a copy in the Library. The responsibility for relieving local congestion rests with the local authorities to whom rate support grant is available.

New Railway Stations

Mr. David Marshall: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what information he has about plans to open new railway stations in Scotland in 1988, 1989, and 1990; and at what locations.

Mr. David Mitchell: I understand that British Rail is planning to open new stations at Musselburgh in 1988 or 1989, and at Wallyford in 1989.

It is also considering the recommendation of the Strathclyde rail review about stations on the rail network managed by Strathclyde passenger transport executive.

Rail Crash, Colwich (Report)

Mr. Heddle: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when he now expects to publish his inspector's report on the rail crash which occurred at Colwich, Staffordshire, in September 1986; what is the reason for the delay; and what steps officials of his Department have taken to inform the widow of the train driver killed in the crash of the date of publication.

Mr. David Mitchell: The report on the inquiry into the collision between two express passenger trains at Colwich junction is in its final draft stage and will be published with the minimum delay as soon as essential consultations have been completed. The delay in publication is due to the extensive technical investigations that have to be carried out. The widow's son and her solicitor have been kept informed as to the progress of the report. The family will be informed in advance of the date of publication and arrangements have been made to send them a copy of the report.

School Transport

Mr. Gareth Wardell: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what information his Department holds on the incidence of injuries to, and deaths of children being conveyed in vehicles to or from school.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: The number of deaths, serious injuries and slight injuries to children conveyed in vehicles to or from school is given in the table.

Child casualties in vehicles including family cars travelling to or from school: by severity: Great Britain: 1982 to 1986.

Year	Fatal	Serious	Slight	All
1982	10	168	1,195	1,373
1983	3	142	1,092	1,237
1984	6	184	1,322	1,512
1985	5	157	1,327	1,489
1986	7	129	1,372	1,508

Cannibalised Cars

Mr. Ted Garrett: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what progress has been made in discussions with local authorities to extend the protection of the public from the sale of cannibalised cars; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: My hon. Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Corporate and Consumer Affairs and I discussed the sale of unroadworthy cars with the Director General of Fair Trading, local authority, motor trade and consumer organisations on 15 December 1987. We are working with the Office of Fair Trading and the other organisations on the possible extension of trading standards officers' powers to inspect cars on garage forecourts. The repair of accident-damaged cars has been considered by a working party set up by the Association of Chief Police Officers, whose report I look forward to seeing. Buyers of second-hand cars would be well advised to arrange a pre-sale inspection.

Nuclear Material (Transport)

Mr. Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement on the progress of the ACTRAM committee of the International Atomic Energy Agency on nuclear material transport and security with regard to the obligations discharged by his Department.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: ACTRAM is an independent body appointed to advise the Secretary of State for Transport and the chairman of the Health and Safety Commission on major issues relating to the safe transport of radioactive materials. It has no connection with the International Atomic Energy Agency.

ACTRAM's first report ("Transport of Radioactive Materials for Medical and Industrial Use") was published earlier this month. A copy has been placed in the House of Commons Library.

A second report, dealing with quality assurance and compliance assurance arrangements for the United Kingdom regulations covering the transport of radioactive materials, is expected to be published in the spring.

Cabotage

Mr. Loyden: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment he has made of the potential implications for the competitiveness of the road transport industry when EEC rules on cabotage come into force in the United Kingdom, with specific reference to the differing safety standards applicable in the road transport and cabotage industry; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: A recent study on the impact of cabotage carried out by the Polytechnic of Central

London has shown that there are likely to be more opportunities to be grasped by United Kingdom hauliers when cabotage is carried out under conditions of fair competition than there will be for foreign hauliers.

Work within the EC is directed at gradually achieving common conditions. There is already agreement on drivers' hours and tachograph recording.

London Regional Transport

Mr. Cryer: To ask the Secretary of State for T if he will give the revenue support for London Transport for each year, in constant terms, from 1 what was the investment support for each year fr excluding money, for the docklands light railwa

Mr. David Mitchell: Capital grants and resources used to finance investment are not hypo to programmes. The figures requested (at Novem prices) are as follows:

	1980	*1981*	*1982*	*1983*	[1]*1984-85*	*1985-86*	*1986-87*
Revenue support grant required	142	113	156	213	214	105	69
Investment							
DLR net of external contributions	—	—	—	—	15	17	8
Other	190	203	162	204	192	212	241
Total	190	203	162	204	207	229	249
Funded by:							
Capital grant	179	186	161	200	151	244	240
Internal resources	11	17	1	4	56	(15)	9

[1] Fifteen months.
[2] Forecast.

AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FOOD

Hedgerows

Mr. Warren: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what is his policy on the loss of hedgerows and their value to wildlife and the community.

Mr. Donald Thompson: Hedgerows play an important role in the countryside and provide a wide variety of benefits. In addition to their agricultural role they can form an integral feature of the landscape, provide a valuable habitat for wildlife and, in some cases, be of considerable historical interest. Their value is, however, dependent upon positive action and sympathetic management to keep them in good condition.

It is my Department's policy to enlist the voluntary co-operation of the farmers and landowners to whom the management of hedgerows necessarily falls. Our Agricultural Development and Advisory Service provides expert advice on hedgerow management, and initial advice for conservation purposes is free of charge.

A certain amount of hedgerow removal has occurred in recent decades due to changing agricultural circumstances, but we would not condone the unnecessary removal of, or damage to, hedgerows. We no longer grant aid the amalgamation of fields which often involved hedgerow removal. On the contrary, we provide capital grants at very favourable rates for both the laying of hedgerows and the planting of new ones.

Dead Sheep (Disposal)

Dr. David Clark: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will place in the Library any literature relating to the disposal of dead sheep circulated to farmers in the restricted area of Cumbria between 20 June 1986 and 8 April 1987.

Mr. Donald Thompson *[holding answer 21 January 1988]:* I refer the hon. Member to the reply that I gave to him on 14 January, at column *376*.

EMPLOYMENT

Skillcentre (Newham)

Mr. Leighton: To ask the Secretary of S Employment when he expects a skillcentre to Newham.

Mr. Cope: There are no present plans to skillcentre in Newham.

Radiological Protection

Mr. Cousins: To ask the Secretary of S Employment what action his Department ha following interim guidance on revised stand radiological protection issued by the Radiological Protection Board in November 198

Mr. Nicholls: As announced on 18 November Health and Safety Commission has set up a worki on ionising radiations which met for the first ti December 1987. The working group will cons recent guidance from the National Rad Protection Board as part of its remit and will ad commission on an appropriate course of actio content to await any subsequent recommendatio

Government Employment Schemes

Mr. Allen McKay: To ask the Secretary of S Employment if he will give for each year since 197 the number of persons employed on Gov employment schemes.

Mr. Lee: Figures for each year since 1979 employment measures run by my Department Manpower Services Commission on which par have contracts of employment are as follows:

	1979-80	1980-81	1981-82	1982-83	1983-84	1984-85	1985-86	1986-87	198
YWS[1,2]	—	—	—	174,266	130,000	66,182	66,000	2,800	—
CI[2]	8,865	8,176	8,985	8,849	9,612	9,532	9,517	9,813	[5]6,90
STEP/CEP/CP[3]	22,400	18,400	34,300	51,645	134,400	161,437	241,159	307,999	[5]189,13
JSS/JS[1]	—	—	—	180	656	260	268	297	[6]45
NWS[1]	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	37,552	[6]18,70
VPP[4]	—	—	—	—	945	961	1,282	1,634	[5]1,55

[1] Approved applications.
[2] Entrants.
[3] This scheme closed on 31 March 1986.
[4] These are estimated staff employed by sponsors to run projects.
[5] April to November 1987.
[6] April to December 1987.

Labour Statistics

Mr. Allen McKay: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will give for each year from 1979 to date the numbers in employment by, categories, for *(a)* the United Kingdom, as a whole, *(b)* Yorkshire and Humberside, *(c)* Barnsley metropolitan council area and *(d)* Barnsley, West and Penistone constituency.

Mr. Lee: The available information is as follows:

Employees in employment

Thousands

September of each year	*All industries and services*	*Agriculture forestry and fishing*	*Energy and water supply*	*Metal manufacturing and chemicals*	*Metal goods, engineering and vehicles*	*Other manufacturing*	*Construction*	*Distribution Hotels Catering and Repairs*	*Transport and Communication*	*Banking Insurance and finance*	*Other Services*
SIC 1980	*0-9*	*0*	*1*	*2*	*3*	*4*	*5*	*6*	*7*	*8*	
United Kingdom											
1979	23,262	403	724	1,186	3,386	2,742	1,252	4,289	1,490	1,685	6,14
1980	22,768	403	729	1,048	3,188	2,529	1,237	4,268	1,480	1,754	6,13
1981	21,816	385	706	927	2,903	2,350	1,108	4,180	1,421	1,755	6,08
1982	21,337	382	676	868	2,697	2,236	1,073	4,114	1,371	1,810	6,10
1983	21,182	377	642	814	2,534	2,169	1,061	4,158	1,346	1,910	6,16
1984	21,346	368	612	808	2,467	2,162	1,034	4,276	1,347	2,017	6,23
1985	21,509	367	577	803	2,433	2,172	1,019	4,371	1,351	2,129	6,37
1986	21,676	355	529	781	2,333	2,140	998	4,425	1,351	2,250	6,51
1987	21,978	349	498	780	2,282	2,140	1,026	4,494	1,371	2,386	6,65
Yorkshire and Humberside											
1979	2,012	33	119	164	246	298	111	362	113	100	46
1980	1,945	31	119	150	228	271	109	359	112	103	46
1981	1,843	31	116	126	203	251	96	348	105	106	46
1982	1,801	31	112	114	186	237	93	344	105	106	47
1983	1,776	30	105	102	171	229	93	351	105	112	47
1984	1,774	29	100	98	161	227	93	363	105	116	48
1985	1,796	29	90	93	157	233	90	376	105	135	48
1986	1,791	29	79	85	131	226	88	390	103	142	50
1987	1,814	29	74	80	149	227	91	390	108	145	52

Information about employment in local areas is available only for years in which censuses of employment are conducted. The available employee estimates for the Barnsley local authority district and the Barnsley, West and Penistone constituency, taken from the September 1981 and September 1984 censuses of employment, is as follows:

Employees in Employment[1]

(Thousands)

Divisions SIC 1980	*District*[2] *Barnsley*		*Constituency*[2] *Barnsley West and Penistone*	
	1981	*1984*	*1981*	*1984*
All industries and services	78·5	73·0	27·5	25·5
0 Agriculture, forestry and fishing	0·5	0·5	n.a.	0·4
1 Energy and water supply	19·1	16·1	n.a.	4·5
2 Extraction of minerals and ores other than fuels: manufacture of metals, mineral products and chemicals	4·6	3·7	n.a.	1·8
3 Metal goods, engineering and vehicles	4·3	3·1	n.a.	1·7
4 Other manufacturing industries	10·3	9·6	n.a.	3·3
5 Construction	5·4	4·4	n.a.	2·4
6 Distribution, hotels and catering; repairs	11·0	10·6	n.a.	4·4

Divisions SIC 1980	District[1] Barnsley		Constituency[2] Barnsley West and Penistone	
	1981	1984	1981	1984
7 Transport and communication	3·2	3·5	n.a.	1·4
8 Banking, finance, insurance, business services and leasing	2·0	2·3	n.a.	1·0
9 Other services	18·1	19·1	n.a.	4·7

[1]. The figures exclude the self-employed and members of HM Forces.
[2]. The district and constituency are defined in terms of ward boundaries as at 1981.
n.a. An industry breakdown for the constituency is not available for 1981.

Mr. Meacher: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what has been *(a)* the annual percentage change since 1979 in the total (i) employed and (ii) unemployed, and *(b)* the aggregate percentage change since 1979 to the latest available date in the total (i) employed and (ii) unemployed, in each of the categories of employment listed in tables 1.2 and 1.3 of the *Employment Gazette*.

Mr. Cope: I will write to the hon. Member as soon as possible.

Job Creation

Mr. Jack: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will list in the *Official Report* the job creating schemes and training help for which companies located in the Blackpool travel-to-work area qualify.

Mr. Cope: The Manpower Services Commission administers the following schemes/programmes which are available to companies located in the Blackpool travel-to-work area:

YTS
New job training scheme
Training grants for employers
National priority skills scheme
Training for enterprise
Community programme

These schemes/programmes have individual qualifying criteria and these would need to be satisfied before companies were able to participate.

Local employer networks and local collaborative projects also offer employers a chance to influence the provision of training in the area and there is a training access point which may help companies identify appropriate training.

Departments Cash Limits

Mr. Quentin Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment whether any changes will be made to his Department's cash limits or running costs limits for 1987-88.

Mr. Cope: Subject to parliamentary approval of the necessary Supplementary Estimates, the following changes will be made. The cash limit on class VII, vote 1, will be increased by £10 million from £1,414,276,000 to £1,424,276,000. This is due to additional expenditure of £15 million on the community programme, on which take-up is running higher than expected, partly offset by reduced expenditure of £5 million on the scheme, where take-up is slightly lower th net £10 million increase in the cash limi on cl 1, is more than offest by a reduction of £13,9 cash limit on class VII, vote 5, (Manpo Commission), from £1,949,853,000 to £1,935, to lower than expected take-up of the new scheme. There is a token £1,000 increase administration cash limit (class VII, vote 2 overall there is a net reduction in DE group £3,998,000.

The Department of Employment's runnir on class VII, vote 2, will be reduced by £2,5 £474,347,000 to £471,757,000 and the MS costs limit on class VII, vote 5, will be cor increased by £2,590,000 from £346, £349,133,000. This is to adjust for an over- DE's running costs when expenditure for the service was transferred from MSC to DE i Supplementary Estimates. The running costs Department of Employment Group as a w unchanged at £924,159,000.

Community Programme (Greater Lo

Ms. Ruddock: To ask the Secretary Employment how many Manpower Services community programme places were allocate London in 1987-88 if he will itemise the nun places managed under the scheme by *(a)* authority, *(b)* each voluntary sector managin *(c)* each private sector managing agency; and main categories of beneficiary for each sche

Mr. Lee: The number of community progr allocated to the Manpower Services C London region for 1987-88 was 17,330.

It is not possible to itemise these places b managing agencies as requested as this inform held centrally and could be obtained only a tionate cost. However, the following inf available.

The total number of community progra and authorised places for the London region, project and sponsor type is as follows. T information about projects, and table 2 auth as at 14 October 1987, the latest date for wh are available.

Table 1 Total number of projects by sponsor type MSC London Region

London

	Total	Local authority	Local education authority	Voluntary organisation	Nationalised Industries	Private Sector	Health Authority	Government Department	Other	Educational Institution	Ex Offenders Organisations	C
Total	506	119	0	0	4	18	20	3	0	22	23	
Environmental	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Building and Landscaping	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Home Insulation	18	1	0	0	0	10	0	0	0	0	1	
Research and Surveys	22	4	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	2	0	
Library	29	12	0	0	0	1	3	1	0	3	0	
Youth work	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Voluntary Acts	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Other social services	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Cultural	31	10	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	3	0	
Workshop	20	2	0	0	0	2	1	0	0	0	0	
CP agent MGMT	55	13	0	0	0	2	2	1	0	2	7	
Environmental and Landscaping	41	17	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	1	
Building and Construction	54	9	0	0	1	1	2	0	0	0	6	
Archaeological digs	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	
Childrens services	29	6	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	3	2	
Young peoples services	55	10	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	3	1	
Services for the elderly	82	24	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	1	3	
Services for the disabled	66	9	0	0	1	1	6	0	0	1	3	
Centres for the unemployed	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	

Table 1 *Total Number of Places by Project Type and Sponsor MSC London Region*

	Youth Organisations	Old Peoples Groups	Disability Groups	Ethnic Groups	Environmental and Conservation Groups	Other Voluntary Organisations	Com
Total	24	4	34	37	13	105	
Environmental	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Building and Landscaping	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Home Insulation	0	0	0	0	2	4	
Research and Surveys	0	0	3	2	0	6	
Library	0	0	0	1	0	7	
Youth Work	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Voluntary Acts	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Other Social Services	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Cultural	1	0	0	3	1	5	
Workshop	0	0	0	2	0	9	
Community Project Agent Management	3	0	1	4	0	10	
Environmental and Landscaping	0	0	2	1	8	8	
Building and Construction	4	0	0	1	0	13	
Archaeological Diggings	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Childrens Services	7	0	1	2	2	3	
Young Peoples Services	9	0	4	4	0	17	
Services for the Elderly	0	3	0	15	0	14	
Services for the Disabled	0	1	23	2	0	9	
Centres for the Unemployed	0	0	0	0	0	0	

Table 2 Number of places by project type and sponsor (Total)

	Churches	Youth organisations	Old people's groups	Disability groups	Ethnic groups	Environmental and conservation groups	Other voluntary organisations	com
Authorised places								
Total	551	741	86	763	1,125	315	3,243	
Environmental	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	
Building and landscaping	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	
Home insulation	—	—	—	—	—	96	138	
Research and surveys	7	—	—	79	81	—	92	
Library	20	—	—	—	40	—	114	
Youth work	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	
Voluntary acts	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	
Other social services	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	
Cultural	—	81	—	—	85	31	216	
Workshop	—	—	—	—	89	—	301	

	Churches	Youth organisations	Old people's groups	Disability groups	Ethnic groups	Environmental and conservation groups	
CP agent management	62	67	—	4	165	—	
Environmental and landscaping	—	—	—	114	[illegible]	157	
Building and construction	173	103	—	—	17	—	
Archaeological digs	—	—	—	—	—	—	
Children's services	11	172	—	12	38	31	
Young people's services	25	318	—	60	167	—	
Services for the elderly	220	—	74	—	371	—	
Services for the disabled	33	—	12	494	44	—	
Centres for the unemployed	—	—	—	—	—	—	

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PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

OFFICIAL REPORT

SIXTH SERIES **VOL**

SESSION 1987–88

11th January-22nd January 1988

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